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Fighting for Home Abroad:  
Remembrance and Oblivion of World War II in Brazil

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Uri Rosenheck  
M.A. Tel Aviv University, 2005

Advisor: Jeffrey Lesser, Ph.D.

An abstract of  
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the James T.  
Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in History  
2011

Abstract

# Fighting for Home Abroad: Remembrance and Oblivion of World War II in Brazil

By

Uri Rosenheck

Four and a half centuries after Europeans first set foot on the South American continent, it was the Brazilians' turn to explore, wage war and conquer European soil as Allies in the Italian Campaign during the Second World War. The arrival of the 25,000-strong Brazilian Expeditionary Force (*Força expedicionária brasileira*- FEB) was a unique episode in Brazilian and Latin American history. Brazilians interpreted this inverted encounter between the New World and the Old in several ways, and they assigned it diverse meanings.

*Fighting for Home Abroad: Remembrance and Oblivion of World War II in Brazil* explores how Brazilians negotiated their past, and while doing so, how they understood what it meant to be Brazilian. Despite the scholarly claim that Brazilians forgot the FEB, I demonstrate how heavily they commemorated it, and how their memories of it changed over time. I argue that Brazilian communities of memory interpreted the FEB in three principal ways. First, they viewed the FEB as a symbol of democracy, civic spirit and liberal virtues. Second, they promoted the FEB as the embodiment of military valor unifying the armed forces and as the bearer of democracy, understood as the opposition to communism. Third, they questioned the military establishment and saw it as victimizing the soldiers, and by doing so, blackened the reputation of the military regime that ruled Brazil between 1964 and 1985. Despite the constant presence of each of these interpretations, each predominated in a different period according to the political setting.

The competing meanings surrounding the FEB also reflect debates about Brazilian national identity. In order to promote their perception of the past, Brazilian agents of memory offered different models of what it meant to be a Brazilian. The main vehicle for articulating national identity was through expressions of pride and the claim for the existence of a "racial democracy" and, conversely, criticism of Brazil's racial relations.

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## Acknowledgments

<sup>1</sup>lim·bo noun \ˈlim-(.)bō\

plural limbos

1 often capitalized : an abode of souls that are according to Roman Catholic theology barred from heaven because of not having received Christian baptism

2 a : a place or state of restraint or confinement

b : a place or state of neglect or oblivion <proposals kept in limbo>

c : an intermediate or transitional place or state

d : a state of uncertainty

<sup>2</sup>limbo noun

: a dance or contest that involves bending over backwards and passing under a horizontal pole lowered slightly for each successive pass<sup>1</sup>

In the space between the cover page and the Table of Contents, the Acknowledgments hang in a limbo. Barred from the textual heaven that awaits from the other side, regulations require them to pause. Not even assigned with the lesser Roman numerals which testify to a page's minor significance, the pages of the Acknowledgements are confined—how appropriate to this dissertation's subject matter—to oblivion. An optional text only, their uncertain existence saddens the reader's heart.

If we take a step back from the mere text and examine its nature, the second definition resonates. To the sound of syncopated drums beating to Caribbean rhythms, the dancer bends his back and to the cheers of the crowd he awkwardly passes under the lowered pole (let us ignore the inverted direction in the learned moral). Once successful, he is now accepted, patted on his back, and take his place watching other victims while waiting for the next round. Rumor has it that a proposal to constitute the marry ceremony might appear in one of the next issues of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

I, however, resent these cynical interpretations. I am not rejecting them because of my personal theology, nor because I dislike regulations, nor even because of my poor

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<sup>1</sup> "Limbo," in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2004), 721.

dancing skills, but because I am an optimist (and this is not an easy type to be these days). At this emotional moment of composing the acknowledgments, I abandon Merriam-Webster—from which the above definitions are taken—and find refuge in my native tongue, the Language of the Prophets. When I entered first grade—the same step that my eldest daughter, who was born two months before I started my PhD program, is taking now—I was taught that the cover page is “a gate” (רשע), the entrance to the paper and the corridor that leads to the content. Although unnumbered, these acknowledgments passed the gate. They count. They are not aimlessly floating between substance and nothingness. They are a necessary bridge, a required path that enables what is about to follow. Without it, the next 300 or so pages would have never come into being.

At first I thought this journey would be a secluded one. I imagined how, confined to a library and yellowish papers, the scholar-in-training would struggle with himself to resolve his anxieties, satisfy his interests, and seek to realize his aspirations. I was wrong. While the road was marked by my own footsteps, I did not walk it alone.

First I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, mentor, and role model, Jeffrey Lesser. Much more than a professional guide, he opened for me the door to the magnificent, enchanting Brazil and gave me his hand when I needed it while crossing all sorts of troubled water. Patient with all of my mistakes, forgiving all my faults, he was always there for me. I am also in debt to my dissertation committee: Professors Raanan Rein, Marina Rustow, and Yanna Yannakakis, who were kind enough to share their thoughts, criticism, suggestions, and sound advice with great intellectual zeal and a friendly hand. Professor Rein especially has done so since my second undergraduate year, longer than I am willing to admit. I am thankful for his faith in me,

which was a source of strength and comfort and for his seminar on Latin America in the 1930s, where I first learned of the *Força expedicionária brasileira*. Professor Susan Socolow also played an important role in my graduate training and contributed greatly to the writing of this dissertation.

Many colleagues were gracious enough to listen to my crude ideas, offer direction, lend advice, and share with me their passion for and knowledge of Brazil. I wish to thank Frank McCann, Jerry Dávilla, Tom Holloway, Shawn Smallman, Peter Beattie, Ruben Oliven, and James Green for their help and encouragement. My colleagues and friends at Emory University shared with me the experiences of going through graduate school: they read my papers, corrected my chapters, discussed historiographical trends over lunch, and debated about scholarly arguments and sources over burnt North-American coffee. They also watched mine and my wife's children, helped us to move, lent their shoulder in times of need, celebrated their and our holidays with us, and made a foreign place feel like home. These activities were crucial to the completion of this dissertation. I thank Robert and Catherine Elder, Amanda Madden, Alex Borucki, Fabricio Prado, Carrie Williams, Lena Suk, Cathy Marie Ouellette, and Daniel Dominguez da Silva for their friendship, for sharing the burden, for being the best running mates I could have wished for.

My preliminary and extended research trips to Brazil were made possible thanks to the generous support of the following Emory institutions: the Laney Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the History department, the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program, the Institute for Comparative and International Studies, and the Conference on Latin American History. Without people, however, institutions and universitarian units



are nothing but empty rooms. The beating hearts of these rooms deserve my thanks and gratitude. I wish to thank Patricia Stockbridge, Becky Herring, Marcy C. Alexander, and Allison Rollins for their wonderful work at the History Department; to Rebeca Quintana who administered the Latin American studies program with knowledge and affection; and to Virginia Shadron from the Graduate School, whose door was always open, and who made it her mission to know all the graduate students and assist them overcome all the professional, social, familial and personal obstacles during their time at Emory. Phil MacLeod, Emory's able librarian for Spanish, Portuguese, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, and the dedicated team at Woodruff Library's office of Inter Library Loan were always patient to my strange requests, and made sure I will always have something to read. I would not have been able to write half this dissertation without their help.

In my trips to Brazil, I was fortunate to meet scholars who shared my passion and were willing to guide a stranger into the maze of their own national history. They opened their personal archives to me, shared sources, introduced me to people, places, and food, accommodated me in their homes, and offered me their friendship. To Bruno Pessoa, Roney Cytrynowicz, Sami Katz, Dennison de Oliveira, Francisco César Alves Ferraz, and Cesar Campiani Maximiano – Obrigadão. In Brazil many people opened their hearts to assist me with my research, and to my family as a whole, as we adjusted to our lives in Brazil. I am deeply grateful to Silvana Shavit and her family for treating us like family and for being a surrogate grandmother to our daughter. To the Abramovitch family, who was an island of familiarity, thank you for your love. In addition, I offer my thanks to the Rosenhek family, who might or might not be our distant relatives, but nevertheless adopted us as their kin. They all taught me the meaning of the Portuguese term *saudade*.

So many veterans helped me along the way that it is impossible to name them all. In Rio de Janeiro Sérgio Gomes Pereira, then the President of the Central directory of the *Associação nacional dos veteranos da força expedicionária brasileira* was patient with my ignorance and trusted me with the association's precious archives. In the Associação dos ex-combatentes do Brasil in São Paulo I spent many hours and met wonderful people. Veterans Jairo Junqueira da Silva, João Samuel Silva, Antonio Gonzales, Rubens Béra, and the caring Lúcia Pedroso shared with me their knowledge, experience, wisdom, and their sense of humor. Veterans Raul Kodama, Boris Schnaiderman, and Geraldo de Camargo Vidigal too agreed to meet with me and to confide their stories with me. It was a privilege and honor to know you. Beyond scholarship, as a soldier, as a human being, and as a descendent to holocaust survivors—and many who perished in this great darkness—I would never be able to repay you my debt.

Studying the history of a culture that speaks a language other than your native one is sometimes complicated. Writing the research in yet another foreign language is even more so. Fabricio Prado and Soraia Kunihiro were instrumental in helping me through their mother tongue. Jenny Heil translated my Hebrew-in-Latin-characters into English and wisely edited the text. I am in grateful to all three. David Cooper, Jeremy Sobel, Cari Williams, Glen Goodman, Catherine Elder, and Amanda Madden too revised and commented on the parts of the text. All the remaining mistakes are the result of my stubbornness.

My greatest debt, however, is to my family. We all say that family comes first, but the truth is that we make many—if not most—of our decisions by prioritizing our professional needs. Such was also our case during the past few years. My dear parents,

Sonia and Danny, trusted, believed in, and supported me throughout the way. They, as well as my wife's family, even sacrificed their proximity to their grandchildren on the altar of my own interests. My daughter Shani endured a childhood of being a foreigner and of heartbreaking farewells. My sons Oded and Omri were born in the New World, and I hope that they will experience more stable lives than their sister did. My wife Naama followed me across the ocean and three continents allowing me to pursue my dreams and ambitions. She held us all together and constantly reminded me of what is important. They are the source of my strength, the reason for my persistence, and the object of my pride.

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## Abbreviations

AESP	Arquivo do Estado do São Paulo
AHEX	Arquivo Histórico do Exército
ANVFEB	Associação nacional dos veteranos da Força expedicionária brasileira
APERJ	Arquivo Público do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
APM	Arquivo Público Mineiro
APP	Arquivo Público do Paraná
APRACE	Associação dos amigos das praças da rua Curitiba e Entorno
Bibliex	Biblioteca do exército
COFI	Correio Filatélico (journal)
DIE	Divisão infantaria expedicionária
DOPS	Departamento de ordem política e social
DEOPS	Departamento estadual de ordem política e social
DPS	Departamento Política e Social, also Divisão de Policia Política e Social do Ministério da Justiça
EBAL	Editora Brasil América Ltda.
ECT	Empresa Brasileira de Correios e Telégrafos
ELO	Esquadilha de ligação e observação
FAB	Força área brasileira
FEB	Força expedicionária brasileira
JBUSDC	Joint Brazilian United States Defense Committee
L.B.A.	Legião Brasileira de Assistência
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer



PCB Partido comunista brasileiro/do Brasil

RI Regimento de infantaria

UDN União democrática nacional

USP Universidade de São Paulo

## Introduction

One can only imagine the anthropologist's astonishment when he realized that his informant had no idea the war had ended two years earlier. One day in July of 1947 on Buzios Island, Emilio Willems, a notable anthropologist of Brazil, heard from his interviewee, an ex-serviceman "proud in his worldliness," that "a few weeks earlier two American warships 'arrested' a German cruiser." Willems concluded that the *Buzianos* had demonstrated only a vague knowledge about and limited understanding of Brazil's recent war experience in particular and of major national and international events in general.<sup>1</sup> Why is it that two years after the war, *caiçaras*—the residents of the Brazilian southeastern littoral—knew so little about the World War in which their state and country participated?

Almost sixty years later, when I started delving into the history of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (*Força expedicionária brasileira* or FEB), I wondered why so many Brazilians I met knew so little of their country's participation in the Second World War. Motivated in part by my own combat experience and disillusionment, as well as my (self-diagnosed) posttraumatic stress syndrome, I sought to rescue the experience of the rank and file from what I imagined to be the nation's bear hug. I started reading memoirs and familiarizing myself with the historiography, but my first preliminary research trip changed my plans. An incidental conversation with a cab driver, who bitterly pointed out to me that the officers and the military institution appropriated the soldiers' glory, turned

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<sup>1</sup> Emilio Willems, *Buzios Island: A Caicara Community in Southern Brazil* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1952; reprint, 1966), 101. Ilha de Búzios is a small island off the shore of the Brazilian state of São Paulo near the larger Ilha de São Sebastião. Its residents are called *Buzianos* and it should not be confused with the famous Buzios Beach in the state of Rio de Janeiro. I wish to thank Dr. Thomas Holloway for turning my attention to Willems's observation.

my interest away from the social and cultural history of the FEB on the Italian front toward the post-war memory of the campaign.

Similar and repeated encounters with young, urban, middle-class Brazilians helped me to sharpen this dissertation's question. Almost every time I explained that I was interested in the FEB, which I pronounced "fe-bee" according to the Brazilian custom of formulating acronyms as word, my interlocutors would correct me and suggest that I meant "fa-bee," the common acronym for the *Força aérea brasileira* (Brazilian Air Force). Immersed in linguistic insecurities, at first I adopted the locals' assumption and excused my poor pronunciation. After a while, I insisted that I knew what I was saying, and the expression on my kind correctors' faces would change—revealing that the term FEB was recognizable, but that they were struggling to remember why it was familiar. More often than not, all they could remember was that some Brazilians fought in Italy during World War II. The foggy expression they wore suggested that they knew little about Brazilian participation in the European campaign.

They were not alone. According to a 1990 survey at the *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP), less than a third of Brazil's most prestigious university freshmen knew what the FEB was, and fifty-one percent did not even recognize the acronym. A similar number did not remember ever learning about it in school, and many respondents demonstrated fragmented and factually wrong knowledge regarding Brazil and the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> The survey's results confirm historians' claims that Brazilians forgot about the FEB.<sup>3</sup> This dissertation explains why and how the FEB was forgotten.

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<sup>2</sup> Paulo Rogério D'Amaro, "Alunos da USP Sabem Pouco," *Jornal do campus*, 26 de abril de 1990. I wish to thank Cesar Campiani Maximiano for sharing this source with me.

<sup>3</sup> On the forgetting of the FEB see, for example: Luis Felipe da Silva Neves, "A Força Expedicionária Brasileira: 1944 - 1945," in *Segunda Guerra Mundial: Um Balanço Histórico*, ed. Oswaldo Coggiola (São

Commentating on the USP survey's findings, João Ferreira de Albuquerque, then president of the São Paulo section of the veterans' association *Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil*, explained that "The lack of knowledge is due to the absence of a Brazilian tradition of a cult of the past," and he attributed the lack of interest to "[t]he attitude of teachers nowadays."<sup>4</sup> By attributing the oblivion of the FEB to a broader national characteristic, Ferreira de Albuquerque simply added the FEB to the list of things forgotten by the Brazilian people, which Gustavo Barroso had lamented seven decades earlier. During the early twentieth-century, Barroso, a prominent Brazilian intellectual and the first director of the National Historical Museum, expressed his dismay at the lack of a "culto da saudade"—roughly translated as "cult of nostalgia"—in Brazil.<sup>5</sup> Barroso complained that modern Brazilians disregarded traditions and did not preserve their nation's past. The popular Brazilian idiom "o brasileiro não tem memória" (Brazilians do not have [historical] memory) articulates the same notion.

At least in relation to the FEB, assertions about the lack of a cult of the past, or a cult of *saudade*, are not convincing. Although Ferreira de Albuquerque's criticism of the formal education system may have been true, collective memory is not limited to the

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Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 1995), 295.; Cesar Campiani Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis* (São Paulo: Editora Santuário, 1995), 102.; Roney Cytrynowicz, *Guerra Sem Guerra: a Mobilização e o Cotidiano em São Paulo Durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial* (São Paulo, SP, Brasil: Geração Editorial: Edusp, 2000), 287 - 320.; Fernando Lourenço Fernandes, *Estrada Para Forno: A FEB – Força Expedicionária Brasileira, Outros Exércitos & Outras Guerras na Itália, 1944 – 1945* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2009), 312 - 20.

<sup>4</sup> D'Amaro, "Alunos da USP Sabem Pouco." The quote is from D'Amaro's rephrasing of Ferreira de Albuquerque.

<sup>5</sup> Gustavo [João do Norte] Barroso, "Culto da Saudade," *Anais do Museu Histórico Nacional* 29(1997 [1912]). For an analysis of the essay and its importance in Brazil's cultural history see Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 136 - 39. Williams translates "saudade" as "nostalgia," and it is often translated as "longing" as well. Nonetheless, "saudade" is a more complex term, and Brazilians often proudly claim that the term is unique and untranslatable. Daniel Toro Linger describes the term as "a bittersweet emotion," which has "a profound, melancholy sense of physical separation, or apartness, of being literally out of touch with a person, a place, a time." Daniel Touro Linger, *Dangerous Encounters: Meanings of Violence in a Brazilian City* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 7.

classroom but is also a political, social and cultural phenomenon. During more than six decades after the soldiers returned to Brazil, civilian and military authorities of all levels, veterans and veterans' associations, artists, journalists, businesspeople, writers, dramaturges, filmmakers, educators, and others have commemorated the FEB. Hundreds of communities erected monuments to commemorate their sons who fought abroad and named their streets and plazas after them. Dozens of veterans—maybe even hundreds—published personal narratives about their wartime experiences. Teenagers and young adults read dozens of comic magazines dedicated to the FEB and collected trade cards and stamps on the topic. Book lovers read novels, history books, and children books on the ordeals of the *pracinhas*—as the soldiers were fondly nicknamed. Millions still cheer World War II veterans as they lead the civil-military Brazilian Independence Day parade in cities and towns all over the country to the sounds of World War II songs. Movie-watchers learned about the FEB both in newsreels played before the film started and from the comfort of their homes, where they could watch abundant documentaries on the subject. It is evident, then, that Brazilians heavily commemorated the FEB and that the FEB was accessible and present in their cultural lives. In light of so many arenas of commemoration, how could Brazilians claim the FEB was forgotten?

Perhaps the heavy commemoration diminished over time. After all, Ferreira de Albuquerque did blame his contemporary teachers for not teaching the past, an accusation that exempted previous teachers from responsibility. Francisco Cesar Alves Ferraz recorded a stable decrease in the space allocated to the representations of the FEB in history textbooks and attributed it to a wider tendency of rejecting things military in

Brazilian culture, especially in its post-dictatorial phase.<sup>6</sup> Even if one accepts the importance of textbooks in the shaping of collective memory and the premise that applying a quantitative approach to textbooks is a useful indicator for changes in collective memory, Ferraz's assertion does not seem to apply to the wider cultural scene.<sup>7</sup> After the 1985 re-democratization, and especially after the 1995 celebration of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the FEB enjoyed great prominence in the public sphere. Dozens of new memoirs were published and several others were re-printed for the second and third time. Several dissertations about the FEB were defended and turned into scholarly publications. Protagonists of a popular *telenovela* "enlisted" in the FEB, and their fans followed their adventures in Italy. Curators remodeled museum exhibitions. Academic conferences dedicated to the FEB conferred for the first time. If Brazilians did not forget the FEB over time as well, why would so many argue they did?

The answer is grounded in the human geography of those who remember the FEB and the agents of memory who claim that it was forgotten. The regional imbalance and the geographical discrepancies between the rural areas of the biggest states—where the memory of the FEB is strongest but its impact is local only—and the major urban centers—where the memory of the FEB is weaker but most of the agents of memory operate—explains the gap between claims and practice.

A second explanation of the supposed forgetfulness can be found in the manner in which Brazilians remembered the war because not all Brazilians remembered the FEB in

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<sup>6</sup> Francisco César Alves Ferraz, "Os Livros Didáticos e a Participação Brasileira na Segunda Guerra Mundial," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 47, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>7</sup> For the importance of the textbook for the study of collective memory see, for example: Arie Kizel, *Subjective History: A Critical Analysis of History Curricula and Textbooks in Israel, 1948-2006* (MOFET Institute, 2008). Porat questions textbooks' importance in his study on how students from different cultural backgrounds understand the same text. Dan A. Porat, "It's Not Written Here, but This Is What Happened: Students' Cultural Comprehension of Textbook Narratives on the Israeli–Arab Conflict," *American Educational Research Journal* 41, no. 4 (2004).

the same way. In *Fighting for Home Abroad*, I identify three main competing narratives about the meaning of the memory of the FEB. The first is of the FEB as a symbol of a civic spirit and democratic values; the second is of the FEB as the unifying symbol of the armed forces that glorifies the military establishment; and the third is as story of the FEB's rank and file, who were victimized by the state and the military but nevertheless demonstrated personal bravery on the front. Distinct communities of memory shaped and promoted each view of the FEB. A community of memory may be defined as a shared extraordinary experience that is absorbed by a wider collectivity. It might include a generation understood as people sharing a particular time in history rather than age-cohorts. It might include small circles where daily interactions happen in local places of familiarity. It might also include the ongoing articulation of the past by active remembrance.<sup>8</sup> Studying different communities of memory, as well as the attendant tensions and negotiations among them, enables one to understand the creation and maintenance of the broader national collective memory.

While all three interpretations existed alongside the other from the end of the war to the present, sometimes a single view achieved prominence in the political arena. Those who held dissimilar views would probably express their dismay in terms of "forgetfulness." Not only members of a remembering community claim forgetfulness in light of the prominence of other interpretations, but they might also do so concerning the less interested majority. By definition, members of a community of memory are more passionate about the remembered subject than non-members, and they might view with disapproval others who are less interested. Their only comfort was the other communities

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<sup>8</sup> Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 47 - 64.

of remembrance who cared as much as they do, but, alas, “misunderstood” the meaning of the remembered event. It is important to note that the relations between members of a remembering community and non-members are not dichotomous and their characterization as “remembrance” against “oblivion” is false. Rather, the relations differ by degree. *Fighting for Home Abroad* is about remembering communities’ struggles to make the broader society aware of their own views about the past and their efforts to influence national perception—and degrees of remembrance—of non-community members. They did so by defining what it means to be Brazilian, and thus their quest is our window into the delicate ongoing process of negotiating Brazil’s national identity.

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The ways Brazilians commemorated the FEB after the war relate to their interpretations on what soldiers did in Italy and how and why they got there in the first place. *Fighting for Home Abroad* picks up the story on the eve of the Second World War. The first chapter, “Progressing to Take Order Down,” examines the diplomatic, political, and military history of Brazil’s role in the global conflict with special attention to the FEB itself. It starts with Brazil’s decision to side with the Allies and the ways in which it contributed to the war effort. Brazil’s involvement in the conflict grew rapidly, and the chapter focuses on the nation’s decision to create the FEB as well as the outfit’s mobilization, composition, deployment and training. After examining the course of the war in Italy, the chapter concludes with an account of the demobilization of the FEB upon returning to Brazil.



Immediately after the war, veterans put down their guns and picked up their pens. To this day, veterans' personal narratives—and especially the war memoir—are the most abundant textual memorials to the FEB available to the public. By analyzing a corpus of such memoirs, the second chapter, “Writing the Past, Narrating the Present: Memoirs, Memories and War Stories,” uncovers the common denominators, which cross geographical and temporal boundaries, that are common to most of the memoirs. Since memoirs are retrospective accounts that are written according to the corpus's unwritten rules, and since authors share some preconceptions, attitudes, and assumptions with their readers, memoirs—although personal and subjective stories—are an excellent window to collective conceptions. Memoirs reveal veterans' attempts to police and control who is authorized to tell the story of the FEB.

In this story, the authors construct their own image as all-Brazilian soldiers who joyfully served their country while asserting their moral superiority over soldiers of other nationalities and Italian civilians alike through their advanced race relations and generosity. At the same time, the way authors use racial and ethnic categories shatters the harmonious society in which they claim to live. In contrast to explicit claims about racial harmony, these texts reveal a set of patronizing racial assumptions about the nation. While racial categories are formulated in ways meant to include Brazilians of all races into the nation, specific ethnic preconceptions are used to exclude these minorities from the national whole. Despite their conceptual similarities, then, Brazilians do not use the categories of “race” and “ethnicity” in the same way.<sup>9</sup> Authors chose to articulate their

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<sup>9</sup> On the differences between the categories of “race” and “ethnicity” in Brazil see also Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).; Livio Sansone, *Blackness without Ethnicity: Constructing Race in Brazil*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

national identity and distinguish Brazilians from other nationalities through a racialized prism. By doing so, they demonstrated how central race was to their thinking about national identity.<sup>10</sup> They also demonstrated the strength of the ideology of “racial democracy,” which claimed that Brazil enjoyed relaxed race relations and suffered little from racism thanks to centuries-long miscegenation.<sup>11</sup>

Like any other kind of evidence, however, memoirs are documents that not only relate the past on their authors’ terms but are also interpreted by readers. I offer a reading of the criticism of wartime military performance as a criticism of the readers’ contemporary military institution, especially during the period of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985). I support my interpretation by demonstrating how some Brazilians critiqued their state by commenting in the margins of historical accounts. One such source is a hand-written conversation that took place on the pages of a library book. There, three interlocutors negotiated the meaning of the FEB and offered their ideas about the role of the armed forces in elevating a euphemized version of a shameful past. A similar critique may be found in a censored theatre play by one of Brazil’s leading dramaturges.

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<sup>10</sup> For the centrality of race to the Brazilian national identity see, for example, Marquinaldo Borges de Sousa, *Rádio e Propaganda Política: Brasil e México Sob a Mira Norte-Americana Durante a Segunda Guerra* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2004), especially ch. 3.; Michael George Hanchard, *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).; Carmen Nava and Ludwig Lauerhass, *Brazil in the Making: Facets of National Identity*, Latin American Silhouettes (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006). For the relations between “race,” national identity and regional identity see: Stanley E. Blake, *The Vigorous Core of Our Nationality: Race and Regional Identity in Northeastern Brazil*, Pitt Latin American Series (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> The classic articulation of the ideology of “racial democracy” is Gilberto Freyre, Samuel Putnam, and Jay I. Kislak Reference Collection (Library of Congress), *The Masters and the Slaves (Casa-Grande & Senzala): a Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (New York,: Knopf, 1946). In the past few decades a prolific historiography has criticized Freyre’s ideas and seen “racial democracy” as a “myth” about a lack of racism that in fact masks a deep discrimination. For such criticism see, for example: Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).; Jerry Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1917-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

While the second chapter emphasizes common characteristics of the ways Brazilians commemorated the FEB, the following three chapters focus on gradual change in diverse cultural scenes. The third chapter, “Commemoration without Remembrance: FEB Monuments in Time and Space,” focuses on the physical commemoration of the FEB in public spaces, particularly monuments. The minor scholarly attention dedicated to the FEB monuments is limited to the state-sponsored national monument in Rio de Janeiro. By contrast, I study hundreds of smaller, often intimate, monuments all over the country. The monuments dispersion exposes an important phenomenon in the history of the memory of the FEB, which is the difference in the volume of the collective memory and its contextual meaning between small towns and communities and the big urban centers. The difference correlates with Brazilian elites’ view of the city as the embodiment of modern Brazil and the countryside as its past.<sup>12</sup>

This dissimilarity, in turn, suggests one possible answer to the questions posed earlier in this introduction regarding the perception of forgetfulness. Most of scholars claiming the FEB was forgotten reside and operate in the big centers where the memory of the FEB is weaker. The manner of commemoration in the public sphere offers a second answer to the question of how the FEB could be perceived as having been forgotten. After the Second World War, in many countries around the world, commemoration took the shape of “living memorials,” that is structures and institutions that not only commemorate the past, but also host communal activity in community centers, libraries, and veterans’ homes, in which the community interacts with the physical structure and the commemorating space is a useful one. Brazilian preference for

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<sup>12</sup> For a review on the scholarship on urban and rural relations and community studies in Brazil see: Jr. Cowell, Bainbridge, "Defining "Urban" and "Rural" in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 14, no. 1 (1979).

monumental commemoration in the public sphere—i.e., monuments and very often abstract ones—might contribute to the diminishing presence of the past in the social lives.

The shape, form, and iconography of Brazilian monuments to the FEB differ from other countries as well in their lack of religious symbolism and feminine allegories and especially in their emphasis on masculine and combatant action over expressions of grief and bereavement. The monuments are not dedicated to the fallen, but rather commemorate the participation of the community in the conflict and the national cause. As such, I argue the monuments are a communal expression of local identities and that they express a memory of the FEB as bearer of democratic and civilian values that demonstrate a civic spirit rather than a military achievement.

These civilian and democratic attitudes were constantly contested and negotiated. By making a case study of the plans for and the struggles over the form and location of the FEB monument in the city of São Paulo, I show the gradual militarization of the meaning of the FEB in the monuments and its association with military institutions over time. Movie watchers were exposed to images of FEB monuments—especially the national one in Rio de Janeiro—when movie theatre newsreels covered events taking place next to the monuments. Using representations of the monuments in newsreels as my evidence, I show how the military tried to re-interpret them to appropriate the FEB's legacy and transform it from a representation of civic virtues to one symbolizing the united armed forces. While the military was quite successful in achieving this goal, it was not the only institution trying to appropriate the FEB monuments to its needs. An under-current of protestors against the military dictatorship persistently used the monuments to advance their claims as well, although less successfully.

Monuments and memoirs are rich sources and their creative analysis provides interesting insights. This kind of battle over interpretations of collective memory happens in other, less studied realms. The fourth chapter, “The Other War Illustrated: Comics, Criticism, and Generational Shifts,” examines collective memory in the comic book. The comic book is a source worthy of analysis because of its young audience and because it offers readers messages about values in a less direct way than public memorials. War comics in general and Brazilian war comics in particular, is a little studied field. Yet from the late 1950s to the middle of the 1970s, no less than ten comic magazines offered Brazilians war stories, and some of them were dedicated exclusively to the FEB. The FEB comics were read by young male adults and adolescents, and I estimate that each issue was read by 120,000 to 360,000 readers, a smaller number than other types of comics—such as those featuring Disney figures and superheroes—but still impressive.

The FEB comics were developed in two succeeding waves. The first wave appeared in the late 1950s and consisted of one magazine that offered its readers educational and moral lessons, which were controlled by the veterans’ association. The second wave, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, was more pluralistic in every sense: it included more magazines, more artists, more sources for the FEB stories, and more complex stories.

Like other nations’ war comics, the FEB comics emphasized the soldiers’ bravery and heroism through the illustration of a hyper-masculinity, their enemies’ fear and admiration as well as their allies’ favor. In contrast to other nations’ war comics, however, the Brazilian FEB comics did not adopt a single hero whose adventures unfolded from one comic book to another. In Brazilian war comics, the hero is an

anonymous soldier who represents all Brazilians. This is a significant break from the previous representations of the FEB. The protagonist neither symbolizes a civic spirit, or a democratic mission, nor the armed forces and their glory. Now it is the soldier himself—and the Brazilian people he symbolizes—who is the center of attention.

From their privileged position as fictional war heroes, characters express anti-militaristic attitudes and criticize war, useless killing, the corrupting effect of war on men, the military institution, and violence in general. While these views echo the interpretation of the FEB as representative of liberty and democracy, the difference from earlier interpretations is the shift in the focus from the citizen who sacrifices for the greater good to the individual soldier who is caught in a conflict greater than he is. Like the censored theatre play analyzed in the second chapter, anecdotal evidence on the military's silencing of one of the most prolific and critical comics' artist suggests that the armed forces, and probably others as well, perceived the comics as subversive.

When examining how commanders are represented in the comics I conclude that the high command is illustrated favorably—even when the FEB commander is criticized, it is done with grace—but the general rule is to valorize the rank and file. The same may be argued for the common blueprint plot about small units commanded by sergeants and first lieutenants, who are often abandoned and commit heroic acts that their higher commanders do not appreciate. The valorization of the low ranking officers and Non-Commissioned Officers over the high military and the humanization of the German enemy functions as a criticism of the contemporary military regime and expresses sympathy toward the resistance to the dictatorship.

The final chapter, “Collectable Memories of War: Narratives of Pastime,” continues the focus on visual popular culture objects. It analyzes trade cards and stamps, two artifacts given relatively little attention in scholarship. For collectors, however, these artifacts are objects of great attention and affection. They arrange stamps and cards in ways that assign them new meanings, and when examining the representations of the FEB in these corpuses, new patterns emerge.

A late 1940s’ series of trade cards distributed in soaps exemplifies an early narrative about what the FEB was. The cards—in their visual and textual aspects alike—present a euphemized history of the FEB. As in the comics, the cards praise the soldiers, but as a collective, and like the early monuments, they assign the soldiers democratic and national values. At the same time, the cards celebrate the armed forces and portray the newly elected president Gaspar Dutra as the military initiator of the FEB, its patron, and the political leader that fulfilled the FEB’s historic destiny of democratizing Brazil. Unfortunately, the cards provide us with only a glimpse of a moment in time, but the stamps offer an opportunity to observe change.

While most political and historical themes appear and disappear from the philatelic view because of their political baggage, the representations of the FEB on stamps are enduring. Juxtaposing FEB-related stamps with other thematic series reveals the popularity of the subject in Brazilian philately. I argue that the FEB was a theme in Brazilian history that all regimes could use and relate to, and it proved useful to all of them in promoting their own values. Early stamps depicted a local and limited perspective of the conflict, expressed great pride in the FEB and its military achievements, celebrated international cooperation, and generously emphasized Brazil’s

contribution to the Allied war efforts. Similar to the process described in the third chapter on the militarization of the monuments, the military regime linked the FEB stamps to the unity of the armed forces and emphasized its role in unifying the nation.

The later stamps commemorate the FEB in a new way. From the 1990s onwards, the stamps glorified the rank and file and not the military institution. While this change echoes earlier tendencies observed in the comics of the 1960s and 1970s, the state expressed this popular interpretation and embraced it from the artistic margins. The new interpretation corresponded with similar attitudes in the historiography on the FEB, which now started focusing on the experience of the soldiers and adopted oral history as its main source.

*Fighting for Home Abroad* is about the construction of collective forgetting. It argues that the core values of Brazilian national identity were negotiated in competing interpretations of the FEB in the public memory. The struggle over the ways in which the FEB would be remembered was also a struggle about the meaning of democracy, the role of civil society in the state, the role of the armed forces in national life, and the relations between the individual and the collective. While this struggle indicates that interpreting the FEB meant to consider what it means to be a Brazilian, it also meant a consideration of Brazilians' place in the world. Remembering and forgetting the FEB is not about things past, but about understanding the present, and shaping new, brave, futures.



## Chapter 1: Progressing to Take Order Down

Collective memory studies focus on the society remembering and not the event they remember. The event, however, is an important part of the story. Societies do not grab images of the past out of thin air. Rather they mold them from the clay of actual deeds and experiences. If history is the first draft of memory, then in order to understand the making of the final product, it is essential to examine earlier versions as well. This chapter focuses on the process that led the Brazilian government to send troops to join the Allies in Europe during the Second World War. It further examines who these troops were and what they achieved on the Italian front. The chapter ends with the soldiers' return to Brazil and their initial acceptance, which laid the groundwork for society's perceptions of them during the following decades.

The Brazilian national motto, "*ordem e progresso*" ("Order and Progress"), characterized the "Vargas Era"—the period in Brazilian history between 1930 and 1945 during which Getúlio Vargas ruled the country. The slogan emphasizes the aspiration to reconcile the tension between the ideal of "progressing" with the social tension and unrest this process can create through maintaining "order." Vargas's authoritarian—and after 1937 dictatorial—rule enforced such stability while modernizing Brazil at a rapid pace never seen before. The Vargas regime leveraged the Brazilian participation in World War II to modernize the country and bring it closer to the progressive ideal, and it did so using the most orderly institution of all: the armed forces.

Ironically, the purpose of the campaign was to overthrow Asian and European authoritarian regimes that shared many similarities with Vargas's. The contradiction between Brazil's political regime and its expeditionary force's mission did not escape

contemporaries, and all waited to see what the impact of the war would be on the internal politics. Furthermore, the U.S. Army influenced the Brazilian troops in Italy, who copied a model of command that emphasized the values of egalitarianism and reason over fear and blind obedience to hierarchy in a way that shook the order among the ranks and threatened to transform the army. As we shall see in the following chapters, the U.S. Army was no role model for the Brazilians in other aspects, such as race relations. The Brazilian attempt to progress through military participation, then, was also a threat against order. This threat and its consequences—examined in this chapter—are the social, political, ideological background against which Brazilians constructed later collective memories.

### ***The Brazilian Road to World War II***

In August 1942, after remaining neutral in the world conflict, Brazil declared war on Germany and joined the Allied Forces. Opponents to this move criticized it by claiming that Germany posed less of a threat to Brazil's economic independence than the United States and Britain. Critics pointed to the Brazilian *Estado Novo's* (New State) similarity to the European Fascist regimes rather than to the Liberal Democracies. On the other hand, supporters of Brazil's entry into World War II on the Allied side believed the United States alone had the ability and resources to reward Brazil with heavy industry to advance its industrialization and reduce its dependency on foreign production. In siding with the Allies politically, supporters hoped that despite the differences in their regimes, the wartime alliance might provide the New State enough room to maneuver to secure its existence. Moreover, supporters of Brazil's move could see that by the second half of

1942, the Allied Forces had gained the upper hand over the Axis Forces—a trend that was obvious even to the Germanophile head of the army.

Although Brazil formally recognized the existence of a state of war between the Axis states and itself in August 1942, the government had already been making executive decisions that favored the Allies. Early in 1942 Brazil agreed to permit the United States to build air force bases on Brazil's north-eastern tip, the closest point in the western hemisphere to Africa, to supply the Allies fighting in the Western Desert with needed materials. At the same time, Brazil was suffering casualties from merchant boats sunk by German and Italian U-boats.

Brazil's contribution to the Allied war effort included patrolling the South Atlantic and supplying it with raw materials, such as rubber, by allowing the north-east to serve as a trampoline to Africa. Politically its support enabled the United States to present itself as a representative of the Western Hemisphere. In many ways, Brazil had to side with the Allies because a new front in the world conflict threatened to open in South America if neutral Argentina joined the Axis Forces. Important as these reasons might have been, Brazil desired above all to be an active participant in the post-war world, which it could not hope to achieve if it passively contributed to the World War II effort.

### **Trading in Turbulent Times**

As early as 1934, the Brazilian Army predicted that the contemporary international balance of power would not last and that a global conflict in which Brazil would be involved was likely to erupt. In light of its weaknesses—i.e., the lack of industry, in particular military industry—Brazil would be dependent upon an alliance

with a strong industrialist power, probably the United States, to survive the upcoming war.

Brazilian decision-makers reacted not only to external threats in terms of international political, economic and diplomatic developments, but they were also concerned with internal issues, such as their need to modernize and strengthen the federal armed forces. In 1932 the Vargas regime faced a full scale regional armed uprising by the powerful state of São Paulo, which lost its grip in national politics with the collapse of the Old Republic. In 1935 the Communist party launched a failed coup that paved the way for Vargas's coup in 1937 and the establishment of the dictatorial New State. The following year the fascist-inspired, right-wing Integralist movement failed in its attempts to overthrow the government.

During the 1930s, Brazilian leadership believed that national development and security were connected to international trade and finance. Therefore, in order to meet the external and internal challenges Brazil faced, it fostered trading with more than one partner and sought out an ally that would support its modernization. In 1935, Brazil signed treaties with both Germany and the United States and thus was able to minimize economic dependency and political vulnerability.

For the next five years, Germany proved the better partner. There were three major reasons for this: a profitable barter system, demand for Brazilian products, and Germany's willingness to support civil and military modernization. Conversely, the Brazilian economy did not benefit from trade with the United States. Managed under Franklin Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" policy, trade was based on eliminating tariffs to create a free bilateral market where merchandise was bought in hard currency. Not only

did Brazil not have enough hard currency to benefit from the system, but also the North American government favored its own export industries while not offering any stimulation to encourage Brazilian imports to the United States. Germany, on the other hand, offered Brazil a more lucrative barter system, which was balanced by “Aski Marks.” Brazil profited from Aski Marks because they had a greater buying power than hard currency.

Germany also proved to be a better consumer of Brazilian goods than the United States. Germany was an important market for Brazilian products, and several sectors of the Brazilian economy were dependent upon their German buyers as there were no real alternative buyers for their products. Germany was such a significant market to the Brazilians that by 1938, Brazil had a surplus of thirty-five million Aski Marks. In contrast, the United States erected trade barriers between it and Brazil in the form of quotas and even excluded the import of cotton.

More than a temporary balance of trade, Brazil sought an ally that would be willing to support its civil and military modernization. At the time Brazil had no arms industry, and in 1938 the German company Krupp was the only one willing to trade weapons to Brazil. Four shipments arrived: two before the mid-1940s and two after, which were seized by the British blockade on Germany until pressure from North America, per Brazil’s request, caused Britain to release them in the late summer of 1941.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. protested Brazil’s arms purchases in Germany but itself refused to sell arms to the modernizing army. The U.S.’s refusal made some Brazilians suspicious of U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," (Pretoria: Unisa Center for Latin American Studies, 1992), 3.

motives and thus pushed Brazil closer to Germany in more than economic ways.<sup>2</sup> No less important than military growth was Brazil's aspiration for civil modernization, but above all Brazil wanted to modernize its economy and industrialize independently. As such it needed heavy industry, specifically a steel mill, and the country that would fulfill this need would gain Brazil's support in the approaching global conflict.

### **Hemispheric Gravity**

On September 2, 1939—a day after Germany invaded Poland and a day before Britain and France declared war—Brazil stated its neutrality. The neutrality policy was meant to ensure Brazil's autonomy as well as to maintain Getúlio Vargas's delicate coalition.<sup>3</sup> The declaration had immediate local meaning to the South Atlantic, which had been engaged in war from the beginning: on September 30, 1939 the German armored cruiser "Admiral Graff Spee" sank the British merchant ship "Clement" in front of the Brazilian state of Pernambuco, near Recife. Two and a half months later "Admiral Graff Spee" was defeated in the "Battle of the River Plate" (December 13, 1939) near Uruguay. The South Atlantic remained a secondary theatre until the end of the war.<sup>4</sup>

Geo-strategic and economic considerations eventually influenced Brazil to side with the Allies. The Axis' initial success in Europe and North Africa made Brazil vulnerable to a possible Axis invasion in the Western hemisphere. Brazil's north-easternmost tip was the Americas' closest point to Africa and, after the fall of France and the institution of the Vichy regime in July 1940, it was under potential threat from the Axis-dominated French West Africa. Moreover, with the Brazilian Army stationed

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<sup>2</sup> Frank D. McCann, "Brazil and World War II: The Forgotten Ally. What Did You do in the War, Zé Carioca?," *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 6, no. 2 (1995).

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 2-3.; McCann, "Brazil and World War II."

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 2-3.

mostly in the south ready to confront Argentina and Paraguay in the event of war and with the lack of airfields in the north-east for Brazil's recently created Air Force to use, the region was poorly defended. Recognizing this hemispheric vulnerability, the U.S. Army drafted plans to control the region if needed.

During the beginning of hostilities, the British blockade on Axis countries cut most of the economic ties between Brazil and its German trading partner.<sup>5</sup> The Brazilian ship "Siquiera Campos," which carried military supplies that Brazil purchased from Germany before the war, was halted by the British Navy and released only months later after North America intervened. Meanwhile, wartime production in the United States created new markets for Brazilian products. Despite German promises for post-war economic cooperation and for extending help to modernize Brazil, Brazilians were concerned that Germany, who would control much of Europe and Africa, would soon no longer need Brazilian raw products. In September 1940 the U.S. offered to construct a steel mill in Volta Redonda—a long desired crucial instrument of industrialization—which further encouraged Brazil's commitment to the Allied cause.

During the subsequent year, Brazil maintained its diplomatic neutrality while assisting the Allies. Its main contribution to the Allied cause was providing them with the primary materials crucial to the war industry and by allowing them to use its territory for air and naval bases. Brazilian rubber and quartz became essential to the war industry, and coffee and sugar kept the sentinels awake and thus productivity high.<sup>6</sup> In September

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<sup>5</sup> Commerce continued until Brazil broke diplomatic relations with Germany in January 1942 via air routes and especially the German airline "Condor." Ibid., 10.

<sup>6</sup> The Brazilian government mobilized about 100,000 north-easterners to tap rubber in the Amazon. On the campaign of the "Rubber Soldiers," as they were known, and their fate, see: Lúcia Arrais Morales, *Vai e Vem, Vira e Volta: as Rotas Dos Soldados da Borracha*, 1a ed., Coleção Outros Diálogos (Fortaleza, Brazil, São Paulo, SP, Brasil: Governo do Estado do Ceará, Annablume, 2002).; Maria Verónica Secreto,

1941, the Brazilians authorized the United States' fleet to use Recife and Bahia's facilities, and in the following month the German U-boats appeared in the South Atlantic torpedoing a British ship near St. Helena. The Brazilian Navy taught the merchant fleet to use convoys, escorted them with "Carioca"-class minelayers and also patrolled the area. There were no land roads to the northeast at the time, so Brazilians did not fear a German invasion, but they did fear that Germans could interrupt their international and domestic trade if they used French Vichy naval bases in Africa.<sup>7</sup> As a result, Brazil agreed in September 1941 that the U.S. would build airbases in Recife, Belém and Natal (the camp was called "Parnamirim") in return for building the promised steel work in Volta Redonda.

Thus, Brazil was able to start modernizing its armed forces and enjoy the protection of the Allies. The Allies' development of the airfields benefitted Brazil's newly created air force, which became independent in 1941.<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that the United States could not spare many arms, in April 1941 the Lend and Lease Act was extended to Latin America, which offered military aid to Brazil.<sup>9</sup> Later that year Brazil received aid under the Lend and Lease program, which doubled after the breaking of diplomatic relations between Brazil and the Axis Forces and grew even more after Brazil's declaration of war so that Brazil received 70 per cent of all the Lend and Lease aid to Latin America.<sup>10</sup> Despite Brazil's inclination toward the Allies, Vargas was able to

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*Soldados da Borracha: Trabalhadores Entre o Sertão e a Amazônia no Governo Vargas*, [1a ed., História do Povo Brasileiro (São Paulo, SP, Brasil: Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> The Brazilian Air Force had an equipment problem. Although it had 200 aircraft, only a few of them were for combat, and none was modern (mainly due to rapid technological advance). The US had no aircraft to give Brazil, and Brazil had no trained pilots for modern planes. *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Smith, "Brazil: Benefits of Cooperation," In *Latin America During World War II*, ed. Thomas M. Leonard and John F. Bratzel (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: 2007), 150.



maintain the nation's neutrality for more than a year. However, after the Japanese attack on the United States, and the United States' entry into the war, Brazil was forced to make a decision.

The December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor made Brazil see the United States as a victim and in thus reminding Brazil of its hemispheric commitments, it turned its sympathies toward the Allies.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Brazil recognized that the United States could not have accepted a pro-axis South American state in a strategic location like Brazil's.<sup>12</sup> In the Rio conference of January 1942, Brazil announced its breaking of diplomatic relations with Axis Forces. In so doing, it froze the Axis' credits, closed their new agencies and suspended the operations of the German civilian air agency Condor.<sup>13</sup>

Despite economic and developmental considerations that led Brazil to favor the United States over Germany, factions in the high military and in the government—such as those led by War Minister Eurico Gaspar Dutra, the army's Head of the Chief of Staff Pedro Aurélio Góis Monteiro, and the Head of the Federal District's Police Filinto Müller—still favored the Axis Forces. The Axis' initial military success impressed many professional officers, encouraged the Germanophile attitudes some of them already shared, and put fear into the hearts of others. Even Vargas spoke against the democracies.<sup>14</sup> The Axis' reaction to the break of diplomatic relations, however, united the government and most of the public against the Axis Forces.

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<sup>11</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 10.

<sup>12</sup> It could, however, tolerate a pro-Axis state in other South-American locations, such as Argentina and Chile. Ricardo Bonalume Neto, *A Nossa Segunda Guerra: Os Brasileiros em Combate, 1942-1945* (Expressão e Cultura, 1995), 31.

<sup>13</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 31.; Joaquim Xavier da Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1989), 38.

The Axis' reaction to the breaking of diplomatic relations was harsh, brutal and quick. Beginning in February 1942, German submarines attacked Brazilian merchant ships. The Brazilian Navy armed merchant ships and the Germans replied in May by ordering attacks on all Latin American merchant ships except Argentina's and Chile's, the only American nations to maintain their relationships with the Axis Forces. The attacks effectively interrupted connections between the north and the center of the country as no roads or railroads existed and Brazil was dependent upon maritime transportation along its coasts. In July, Germany ordered its submarines to launch a submarine "blitz" against Brazil, and in August the attack escalated significantly. In mid-August, Brazil lost five ships in less than a week. Four of the ships carried passengers and the death toll was heavy. The news provoked demonstrations—in front of United States embassy in Rio de Janeiro (July 4), in the Praça da Sé, Salvador (August 8), in the Praça da Sé, São Paulo (August 18), and in front of the Palácio Guanabara in Rio de Janeiro on the same date—as well as riots throughout Brazil where mobs attacked German and Italian-owned property.<sup>15</sup>

Most historians, such as Vigevani, Sodré and Silveira, argue that the mass demonstrations influenced the decision-makers' resolution to go to war.<sup>16</sup> Vargas said as much in a speech he delivered on September 7, 1942: "[you] demonstrated with indignation, applied all the means to express the popular wish that the government

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<sup>15</sup> Alípio Freire and Paulo de Tarso Venceslau, "Memória: Jacob Gorender - O Pcb, a FEB e o Marxismo," *Teoria e Debate* 11(1990).

<sup>16</sup> For such claims see, for example, Tullo Vigevani, "Questão Nacional e Política Exterior: Um Estudo de Caso: Formação da Política Internacional do Brasil e Motivações da Força Expedicionária Brasileira." (Tese de Doutorado, USP, 1989), 244-5, 353.; Nelson Werneck Sodre, *História Militar do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, : Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1965), 286.; Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 36.

declare war on the aggressors, and so it has been done.”<sup>17</sup> Alves, however, who has studied the decision to go to war from an institutional perspective, qualifies this assertion by reminding us that the censorship on the press by the DIP and the illegality of opposition intensified the autonomy of the decision makers in comparison to a democratic regime.<sup>18</sup> False rumors about an Allied conspiracy to attack Brazilian ships in order to mobilize them against the Axis Forces circulated as well and were still heard decades after the war.<sup>19</sup> Whatever weight public opinion carried in influencing the Brazilian government’s decision to declare war, on August 22, 1942, Brazil entered World War II with strong popular support.<sup>20</sup>

### **Brazil at War**

In the months following Brazil’s entry to the war, its ships continued to sink under German U-boat attacks. The main mission in the Atlantic was to protect ships and to intercept Axis blockade runners. This mission was impaired by the Brazilian Navy and Air Force’s weaknesses. The Brazilian northern fleet was small, and some of its ships were not suitable for the job. Brazil’s Italian-designed submarines stayed in harbor to prevent confusion with the Italian submarines that—despite their low effectivity—arrived to the theatre in April 1943. Anti-submarine warfare also suffered from the fresh Amazon waters that created sonar-reflecting layers in the sea.<sup>21</sup>

In light of the continuing war at sea, Brazil’s most urgent need was to strengthen its air and sea power and especially its anti-submarine abilities. Britain returned Brazilian

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<sup>17</sup> Vágner Camilo Alves, *Da Itália À Coréia: Decisões Sobre Ir ou não a Guerra* (Belo Horizonte e Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFMG e IUPERJ, 2007), endnote no. 56, p. 230.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>19</sup> Silveira, *A FEB por um Soldado*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 11.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 15.

ships back to its Navy, which received additional ones from the United States. The Navy and the Air Force re-organized and started cooperating with United States' forces in joint training and patrols. Even earlier Vargas entrusted the American Admiral Ingram with direct command over the Brazilian Navy and the coastal defense.<sup>22</sup>

Their ships, faster than 14.5 knots, were quicker than the U-boats and thus sailed independently and relatively safely, but all other boats had better chances in convoys—the best known measure against the threat posed by submarines. It took almost four months, until December 1942, for Brazil to launch and receive regular maritime convoys. The U.S. Navy escorted the multi-national convoys to the Caribbean and from Port-of-Spain, Trinidad to Recife. In Recife the Brazilian Navy took charge and escorted the convoys to Salvador da Bahia, where convoys dissolved and each ship continued independently. The convoys included ships of all nationalities with destinations in Latin America, South Africa, and the Red Sea. Several months later, in June 1943, the Brazilian Navy lengthened its escorts, and the convoy system reached Rio de Janeiro, where smaller convoys continued southward in what North Americans called “coffee coast convoys.”<sup>23</sup>

The Allies' growing success in the North Atlantic—especially after May 1943 when they balanced seventeen sunken merchant ships with seventeen sunken U-boats—drove Germany to search for easier targets elsewhere, and the Brazilian convoys in the South Atlantic were one such target. The “July blitz” collected eighteen merchants—mostly outside convoys—and its end was marked by the Brazilian Air Force's first success in destroying a U-boat (U-199) about 100 kilometers from Rio de Janeiro in late

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<sup>22</sup> Not all Brazilians and North Americans coped well with this operational subordination. *Ibid.*, 12-3.; Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 34-5.

<sup>23</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 13-6.

July 1943. The Germans deemed the Brazilian coast to be a difficult target and the assault concluded. Axis U-boats continued to operate in the South Atlantic but avoided Brazil.<sup>24</sup> Overall Brazil lost thirty-one ships and 971 men to the U-boats.<sup>25</sup>

Toward the end of 1943 Brazil's and the Allies' control of the South Atlantic strengthened. In October a new airstrip was prepared in Fernando de Noronha lengthening the aircrafts' range, and in the following month the Brazilian Navy was equipped with three new destroyers. In 1944 the Navy gained eight new ships from the United States, and the Air Force grew as well. As Brazil took on more responsibility for the anti-submarine operations along its waters, the United States gradually started withdrawing its soldiers from northern Brazil.<sup>26</sup>

As the Brazilian contribution to the maritime war in the South Atlantic was important to the Allied war effort, so were the airfields in northeastern Brazil. With the Allied victory in North Africa, an Axis invasion of Brazil no longer appeared to be a threat, yet the airfields in north-eastern Brazil continued to be crucial for the Allies' logistical war effort. The Brazilian "Trampoline for Victory" was essential in supplying the Allies in Africa, in the East, and even in Europe. During the crucial winters of 1942-43 and 1943-44, the northern route from North America to Britain was closed and the southern, Brazilian route was the only alternative.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 15, 21-2.

<sup>25</sup> Manoel Thomaz Castello Branco, *O Brasil na II Grande Guerra* ([Rio de Janeiro]: Biblioteca do Exército, 1960), 56.

<sup>26</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 23.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 24-5.

## ***The Creation of the FEB***

### **The Decision to Create the FEB**

Several factors motivated support for the mobilization of Brazilian troops to fight overseas. Those in the government who favored diplomatic considerations—headed by the Foreign Minister Osvaldo Aranha—realized only active participation would secure Brazil a favorable position within the international community after the war. Moreover, nationalistic consideration gave preferentiality to such participation since it would promote national unity and a virile, combatant national image. Different groups and individuals had different interests and hopes invested in such an expeditionary force. Vargas, for one, could distract the public, which would buy him time to consolidate his image as a populist, rather than as an authoritarian leader. His political opponents hoped that the evident contradiction between the nature of the New State and the Allied cause would take the fight against fascism in Europe to Brazil, which they hoped would result in a democratic state. The army saw an opportunity for a United States-funded modernization since earlier promises for arms seemed to be respected only if Brazil would actively use those weapons.<sup>28</sup> This in turn would strengthen the army's position both within Brazilian society and in relation to other Latin American armies. Finally, when the tables seemed to turn on the European front, such an expeditionary force provided an opportunity for several officers to shake their pro-Nazi image.<sup>29</sup> On a practical level, one of Brazil's most important war objectives was to attack the Axis

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<sup>28</sup> For figures on the army's growth in enlistment and percentage of the federal budget see: José Murilo de Carvalho, "Armed Forces and Politics in Brazil, 1930-45," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 62, no. 2 (1982): 211-2.

<sup>29</sup> Frank D. McCann, *The Brazilian-American Alliance, 1937-1945* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1973), 343 - 5.

Forces because of their blockade of its coastal area by submarines and its threats to coastal navigation, which caused an economic crisis. After losing more than thirty ships and almost 1,000 people who died at sea, attacking the Axis powers became a question of national honor for many.<sup>30</sup>

Yet other considerations required that troops stay in Brazil, especially those already armed by the U.S. One such consideration included the German troops who landed in southern Brazil in the state of Santa Catarina, which was heavily populated by German and Italian immigrants; another was that Argentina would take advantage of the chaos and attack, opening a new front in the world conflict.<sup>31</sup> On the other side of Brazil, some army officers worried that the United States would be reluctant to leave the strategic bases in the north-east and with Brazil's best troops abroad, they might damage Brazil's political integrity, exploit its resources and harm its interests. Furthermore, many in the Army's leadership were Germanophiles and opposed Brazil's alliance with the US.<sup>32</sup> Finally, many feared that until the end of the war, a Brazilian expeditionary force would be no more than an insignificant or would result in failure and would only bring shame to Brazil. A national inferiority complex caused others to doubt that such a force would ever win a battle against the Germans.<sup>33</sup>

Given these concerns, the government preferred sending an expeditionary force to the front. The government encouraged journalists to support such a deployment, which built anger at the casualties from conflicts at sea, and the public demanded war. Brazil's desire to send troops could not be realized without the help of the United States on which

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<sup>30</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 119.

<sup>31</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 345.

<sup>32</sup> Shawn C. Smallman, "The Official Story: The Violent Censorship of Brazilian Veterans, 1945-1954," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 2 (1998): 233-4.

<sup>33</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 404.

it depended for arming, training, equipping and transporting such a force. Therefore, the Americans had to be persuaded to accept the Brazilians first.

The United States' Army was not interested in integrating small forces into their huge campaign and had already rejected help from Mexico.<sup>34</sup> United States diplomats, however, were concerned that rejecting the Brazilians would cause them to reconsider their war efforts, which despite the victory in North Africa that decreased the strategic importance of the air bases in northeastern Brazil, still supplied the Allies with raw materials and secured the South Atlantic.

The diplomats had the upper hand, and in January 1943 the American members of the *Joint Brazil-United States Defense Commission* (JBUSDC) supported the Brazilians and agreed to fully equip three infantry divisions under the wartime Land-and-Lease terms. Presidents Roosevelt and Vargas ratified the commitment while meeting in Natal in January 1943 and on March 29, Vargas authorized General Estevão Leitão de Carvalho, the head of the Brazilian delegation to the JBUSDC, to plan the FEB. Two days later United States' newspapers announced Brazil's intentions to launch an expeditionary force as soon as possible and that it would probably fight in North Africa.<sup>35</sup> During his visit to Brazil, General George Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army,

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<sup>34</sup> Towards the end of the war, the Mexicans accepted Roosevelt's invitation to fight and the 201<sup>st</sup> Mexican Fighter Squadron fought in the Southwest Pacific between May and August 1945. The Squadron flew fifty-three combat missions, four long-range missions and conducted many ferrying operations. Stephen I. Schwab, "The Role of the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force in World War II: Late, Limited, but Symbolically Significant," *The Journal of Military History* 66, no. 4 (Oct. 2002) (2002): 1117. For further reading see: William G. Tudor, "Flight of Eagles: The Mexican Expeditionary Air Force, Escuadrón 201 in World War II" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Christian University, 1997).

<sup>35</sup> "Brazil Said to Plan Expeditionary Force: Size and Destinations Undecided -- Troops May Be Ferried," *New York Times*, March 30, 1943.; "Brazil Planning Overseas Army," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1943. Four days later *The New York Times* cited Brazilian Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha's denial of sending troops to Africa. See: Special Cable to the New York Times, "Brazil Denies Army Will Fight in Africa :Foreign Minister Spikes Rumor of Expeditionary Force," *New York Times*, April 4, 1943. The possibility of deploying such a force was speculated on even earlier in the North American press: Special Cable to the New York Times, "Brazil Registers 500,000: Exact Figure Is Not Revealed -- Enthusiasm Spreads," *New York Times*, December 18, 1942.; "Reunion at Natal," *The Washington Post*, January 31, 1943.



accepted the Brazilians' tentative plan for sending four divisions, and General James Ord, Chairman of the JBUSDC, was sent to Brazil to work out the details. While Ord was examining Brazilian conditions the JBUSDC agreed that a Brazilian Expeditionary Force would cross the Atlantic and on June 1943 Ord returned to the U.S. confirming that the Brazilians wanted to fight and could do it after four to eight months of training with modern equipment.<sup>36</sup> The Brazilian Government published its formal decision on August 9, 1943.

### **The Formation and Mobilization of the FEB**

The first obstacle in transforming the governmental resolution to send troops overseas into a concrete reality was deciding which units would compose the expeditionary force. The Americans wanted the already-trained north-eastern troops to be deployed, according to earlier agreements and because the Germans had surrendered in North Africa (May 7, 1943), which did no longer necessitated a large standing army in the region.<sup>37</sup> The Brazilians, on the other hand, were reluctant to withdraw these forces while the 100,000 American troops were still in the area.

A second division between the Americans and the Brazilians occurred over the training of the troops. The Brazilians wanted the three divisions to be trained in three training camps that the Americans would build. The Americans insisted that this would be a waste of critical arsenals and that only one base should be built where the divisions could train with the facility's equipment and then be re-equipped upon arrival in the

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<sup>36</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 25.

<sup>37</sup> As early as April 1943 the North American press speculated that the Brazilian force was most likely to fight in North Africa, unless the campaign there ended by the time they were ready, and that the most likely troops to be deployed would be the well-trained troops of the Northeastern "Bulge." "Brazil Said to Plan Expeditionary Force: Size and Destinations Undecided -- Troops May Be Ferried."; "Brazil Planning Overseas Army."

theatre of operations. Eventually the army decided not to mobilize the North-eastern troops, and Vargas accepted the American proposal for one training facility only.

The regional structure of the Brazilian Army did not allow deployment of an existing unit and hence necessitated the creation of a new force. The Brazilian Army was armed, trained and constructed according the French model as a result of the long French mission to the Brazilian Army. This structure, however, was outdated and did not fit in with the American Army's organizational model, doctrine and equipment tables. As a result, the expeditionary divisions had to be constructed from scratch, or at least from smaller units that would then be modified. These units, in turn, had to be transported to the Rio de Janeiro region, but the lack of roads and the perils of maritime transportation prolonged their arrival to a central location.

Beyond practical difficulties, conflicting national interests, political concerns, and ideological tendencies contributed to the slow mobilization process. The heads of the military hierarchy delayed the creation and mobilization of the FEB with the hope that the war would end first.<sup>38</sup> Vargas himself, although he favored the creation of the FEB, hesitated because of the possible political implications of such a force, such as the prestige some opposition members who would fight in the war might enjoy upon returning to Brazil.<sup>39</sup>

An additional factor that hampered the prompt mobilization of the FEB was the difficulty in manning a single, full modern infantry division, not to mention three such divisions. Not only was the mere size of the army not enough to supply so many trained

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<sup>38</sup> Smallman, "The Official Story," 234.

<sup>39</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 129-30. The argument on Vargas' hesitations is strongly related to the analysis of the demobilization of the FEB upon returning to Brazil as being ordered by Vargas who feared the victorious troops would contribute to his deposition. See discussion on the subject below.

and fit men, but also it was difficult to find and mobilize suitable recruits from the Brazilian population. As a result, the initial rigorous medical examinations had to be relaxed.<sup>40</sup> Manning difficulties were not confined to the masses of enlisted but also applied to the more selective, smaller group of officers. The size of the regular officer corps, the need to continue and train new units in Brazil, to maintain the barracks, to stimulate fear from a possible Argentinean attack to the south, and to watch the concentrations of population of people descended from Axis countries (Germany, Italy and Japan) made the enlistment of reserves officers mandatory.<sup>41</sup>

The majority of the enlisted men were twenty-two to twenty-four years old when they arrived in Italy.<sup>42</sup> Although the order for the organization of the FEB demanded that eighty per cent of the soldiers be literate, it seems that this benchmark was not met. Seventy-six per cent had only primary education, seventeen per cent had a secondary education and seven per cent alone had postsecondary education.<sup>43</sup> The majority of the soldiers came from rural areas, and for most of them the FEB gave them their first opportunity to travel outside Brazil, to see snow or climb a mountain.<sup>44</sup> Even though all twenty one states were represented in the FEB, the composition of the FEB did not reflect

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<sup>40</sup> Cesar Campiani Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas: a Experiência Brasileira de Combate na Itália (1944/45)," in *Nova História Militar Brasileira*, ed. Celso Castro, Vitor Izecksohn, and Hendrik Kraay (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2004), 246.; Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 126.

<sup>41</sup> Elber de Mello Henriques, *A FEB Doze Anos Depois* ([Rio de Janeiro]: Biblioteca do Exército, 1959), 197.

<sup>42</sup> Lins sampled 500 members of the São Paulo section of the *Associação dos ex-combatentes* and found that 60.4 per cent were of the classes of 1920-2, 24.6 per cent were twenty-four years old, 16.8 per cent were twenty-three and 19 per cent were twenty-two years old. While Lins chose to analyze the data in relation to the year 1943, the probable year most of them were enlisted, I prefer calculating their age in 1944, when the majority arrived in Italy and saw battle. The largest group was the Maria de Lourdes Ferreira Lins, *A Força Expedicionária Brasileira: uma Tentativa de Interpretação* (São Paulo: Editoras Unidas, 1975), 91-2.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, comment no. 1 on p. 96.

<sup>44</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 58.

the relative distribution of the national population.<sup>45</sup> Sixty-two and a half per cent were from the Federal District and the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais where forty two and a half per cent of Brazil's population resided in 1940. Together with Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná these five regions composed almost seventy seven per cent of the soldiers but only fifty three and a half per cent of the general population.<sup>46</sup> Finally, while a small minority, especially of officers, consisted of veterans of the 1932 constitutional revolution, the majority of the *febianos* had no combat experience.<sup>47</sup>

Most of the *febianos* were conscripts of the Brazilian draft system and summoned reservists; a few thousand either volunteered or were dragooned to the expeditionary force. Of the 2,500 Brazilians who volunteered to serve in the FEB, a bit more than half of them were accepted, and some only by using connections after initially being rejected.<sup>48</sup> Many others, though, avoided service through personal connections and by integrating into non-combatant units.<sup>49</sup> Those who had such connections and were enrolled in such prestigious clubs were often the sons of the elite. As in many other

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<sup>45</sup> During the war Brazil was composed of twenty-one states, including the Federal District. Later changes fragmented some of the states, and today Brazil is composed of twenty-seven states, including the Federal District (which was changed with its movement in 1960 from Rio de Janeiro to the newly created Brasília).

<sup>46</sup> For the regional origin of the soldiers see João Baptista Mascarenhas de Moraes, *A F. E. B. pelo seu Comandante* (São Paulo: Instituto Progresso Editorial, 1947), "Quadro da contribuição dos estados, em praças, para a organização da F.E.B.," 304.; for census data see Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil: Ano VII - 1946* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 1947), Table "Estado da população: I – População do Brasil, na data dos recenseamentos gerais: 2. Distribuição, Segundo as unidades da federação – 1872/940." p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*.

<sup>48</sup> Out of 2,500 volunteers, 1,357 were accepted. Maximiano argues that only a few volunteers, the majority of whom were communists, were motivated by ideology. Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 97. Jacob Gorender too testifies in an interview that one of the volunteers from Bahia, his state, were motivated by unemployment, and were educated ideologically only in Italy. Freire and Venceslau, "Memória: Jacob Gorender." One such famous volunteer was Oswaldo Aranha Filho, the son of the Minister of Foreign Relations. Eurípedes Simões de Paula, a history professor at USP was accepted in the second attempt only after friends from the faculty of medicine testified to his ability to serve. See: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 131.

<sup>49</sup> Francisco César Alves Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB e a Sociedade Brasileira," in *Nova História Militar Brasileira*, ed. Celso Castro, Vitor Izecksohn, and Hendrik Kraay (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2004), 369.; Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas," 247-9. Carvalho describes draft dodging as a "time-honored national practice." Carvalho, "Armed Forces and Politics," 202.

armies, those with higher levels of education often served in the rear thanks to their intellectual and technical abilities.<sup>50</sup>

Some political opponents of the regime were dragooned to the FEB. Out of the USP law school alone, a nucleus of anti-Vargas resistance, twenty-five students and professors were called to service in the FEB during 1944 and few more were called to other non-expeditionary units. At the same time, others were barred from serving out of fear that they would gain prestige through service. Scholar Shawn Smallman argues, for example, that Dutra and Góis Monteiro excluded communist officers from serving in the FEB to prevent them from gaining any political advantage.<sup>51</sup> On its behalf, the opposition, especially the Communist Party, was divided about serving in the FEB. As in other countries some of the Communist Party favored service in order to help the Soviet Union in its fight against Fascism, while others preferred staying in Brazil to fight against what they perceived as domestic Fascism and to fight for a socialist republic in Brazil.<sup>52</sup> Eventually many communists and other anti-fascists served in the FEB, including Salomão Molina and Jacob Gorender, both future leaders of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and leaders to many students.<sup>53</sup> The contradictory evidence on the government and the army's attitude toward political opponents suggests that there was no

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<sup>50</sup> Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 90-1.

<sup>51</sup> Smallman, "The Official Story," 235.; On the dragooning of opposition members by the regime see: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 129.; John W. F. Dulles, *A Faculdade de Direito de São Paulo e a Resistência Anti-Vargas, 1938 - 1945* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1984), 305-9.

<sup>52</sup> For the communists' will to fight the USSR's enemies see: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 129. According to Falco, the Communist Party encouraged its militants to enlist. João Falcão, *O Brasil e a Segunda Guerra Mundial: Testemunho e Depoimento de um Soldado Convocado* (Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 1998), 215.

<sup>53</sup> On communist service in the FEB see: Smallman, "The Official Story," 235. Gorender also argues that the FEB had a "base comunista." According to him, in spite of the communication difficulties among the members who were scattered across a wide front and many units, the communist febianos contributed to two important initiatives: a public manifestation in early 1945 pronouncing the FEB was against the fascist regime at home, and the ex-combatants association after the war. Freire and Venceslau, "Memória: Jacob Gorender."

official policy on the matter and that personal and local initiatives on behalf of formal officials brought either institution to opposing practices.

The same phenomenon is observable within the armed forces. Some career soldiers and officers eager to battle simply complied with their contractual obligations or saw in the FEB a professional opportunity. At the same time, units used their obligation to enroll soldiers in the FEB to get rid of troublemakers.<sup>54</sup> Some officers, like the civilians, used their connections to avoid the Italian battlefields for an array of reasons including pessimistic assessments on the future of such a force, concerns about being distant from their patronage networks, Axis-favoring ideologies and cowardice.<sup>55</sup> When the FEB proved its value a few months later, some of them volunteered and served in the personal depository in the rear in order to clear their names and reap their share of the prospective glory.<sup>56</sup>

All potential *febianos* faced medical examinations. At the beginning of the medical selection process, during the second half of 1943, the future expeditionaries were required to match a “special class.” To be included in this class they had to reach, in addition to the regular health requirements, a height of one point sixty meters (for officers, soldiers were allowed to be five centimeters shorter) with compatible weight, to need no correction to their vision, to have a correctable level of tooth decay as well as good hearing, to be mentally and emotionally stable, and to have the mental health of at

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<sup>54</sup> Henriques, who was an aerial artillery observer, testified that upon officially hearing of the FEB for the first time, his commander told him that “todo o soldado má-conduta será imediatamente transferido para as unidades que vão combater.” Henriques, *A FEB Doze Anos Depois*, 26.

<sup>55</sup> For the claim that career officers avoided the FEB see: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 129. One of Maximiano’s interviewees argued boldly that most of the officers did not wish to join the FEB and that any other explanation is simply an excuse to cover their cowardice. See: Maximiano, “Neve, Fogo e Montanhas,” 349.

<sup>56</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 130.

least ten-year old.<sup>57</sup> The initial bar was set too high, so in 1944 it was lowered, and cases that were overruled were reconsidered.<sup>58</sup> Out of the 107,609 candidates inspected to serve in the FEB, 3,111 officers and 63,013 soldiers were eligible for the special class and the most common reason for failure to meet the requirements was insufficient number of teeth.<sup>59</sup> The less rigorous selection process directly influenced the febianos' performance in Italy as most of the casualties resulted from illness. Maximiano argues that the health requirements contributed to the regional imbalance in the composition of the FEB as conscripts from the south and southeast tended to meet the health requirements more easily due to the better sanitary conditions in their regions compared to other parts of Brazil.<sup>60</sup>

The selection of the FEB's high commanders was sensitive because it was more politically than professionally motivated. Dutra had wanted to personally command the expeditionary force, but Vargas did not allow it to happen because he was anticipating post-war political conditions.<sup>61</sup> This decision was sound for other reasons as it is probable that Dutra would have lost enthusiasm about the commission when it became clearer that the FEB would be significantly smaller than initially planned. Many Brazilian sources note that several candidates emerged for who would command the FEB, but these sources fail to indicate who they were.<sup>62</sup> The U.S. press cited Brigadier Eduardo Gomes as a probable commander. Eventually General João Batista Mascarenhas de Moraes was chosen because, in addition to being Vargas' friend, he was a professional soldier who

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<sup>57</sup> Carlos Paiva Gonçalves, *Seleção Médica do Pessoal da F.E.B.* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército, 1951), 91.; Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas," 345-6.

<sup>58</sup> Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 18.

<sup>59</sup> Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas," 346.; Gonçalves, *Seleção Médica do Pessoal da F.E.B.*, 118-42.

<sup>60</sup> Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas," 246.

<sup>61</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 53-4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-4.

thought the army should stay out of politics, and he lacked political ambitions, abilities and charisma.<sup>63</sup> Dutra, and not Mascarenhas de Moraes, selected the other high officers, and according to the critical and bitter Chief of Staff Floriano Lima Brayner—who had an important position under French doctrine but a less important one under the new American doctrine—they were chosen for their loyalty and not for their ability.<sup>64</sup> The other generals were the Infantry commander, Zenóbio da Costa, who was the only general who requested assignment to the FEB; Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias, the artillery's commander; and Olímpio Falconière da Cunha, the “inspector.”<sup>65</sup> The high command fractured along political lines over questions of relations to the United States' command and over personal prestige. Twice during the campaign Dutra attempted to replace Mascarenhas. As early as Dutra's visit to the FEB in Italy in September 1944, he suggested promoting Mascarenhas, who refused the honor. Later Dutra suggested rotating the officers with those who stayed behind in Brazil so more officers would gain experience, but Mascarenhas fought the ill-advised suggestion with the help of Lucian K. Truscott, the new 5<sup>th</sup> Army commander. Finally, Vargas himself promised Brayner—who flew to Brazil on January 1945—so that Mascarenhas could stay in his post.<sup>66</sup>

The First Expeditionary Infantry Division of the FEB (1<sup>a</sup> Divisão Infantaria Expedicionária, 1<sup>a</sup> DIE), which was the only Brazilian expeditionary division and thus called simply the FEB, was built according to U.S. Army specifications. In its main combat element were nine infantry battalions organized into three regiments (RI – regimento de Infantaria), the 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup>, from Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and São

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<sup>63</sup> Smallman, "The Official Story," 235.; Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Smallman, "The Official Story," 235.

<sup>65</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 414.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 423-4, 26.



João del Rei, and Minas Geras respectively. Its main firepower came from three 105mm Howitzer and one 155mm Howitzer battalions with twelve canons in each battalion. Engineering and medical battalions and a motorized reconnaissance company completed the main auxiliary elements. A few additional administrative and maintenance units supported the troops, including a platoon of Military Police and a musical band. The FEB also included a Personal Deposit where 40 per cent of all *febianos*—about 10,000 soldiers—trained and prepared to battle, although the majority never arrived on the front. Brazil also sent to Italy an aviation squadron, which operated independently of the FEB. It included a unique and small unit of air-born artillery observers (*Esquadilha de ligação e observação*), which was a joint air-ground unit.<sup>67</sup>

The designated units, however, were spread all over Brazil and were under their old regional command. Sub units were scattered as well. The 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiment from the State of São Paulo, for example, stretched over three locations: Caçapava, Taubaté and Limeira. Only in March 1944 did all units arrive to their concentration point in the garrison of Vila Militar near Rio de Janeiro. The preparations of the FEB also included the assembly of a new military knowledge that would correlate to the U.S. Army's rather than the outdated French's. Beginning in 1939 about a thousand of Brazilian officers and pilots trained in the U.S. Army's different schools and training facilities.<sup>68</sup> The troops finally started to train, but they failed to prepare for some of the difficulties they were about to face in Italy, most notably the mountainous terrain.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> On the FAB during World War II see: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 87-117.

<sup>68</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 26.

<sup>69</sup> Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 16, 358.; Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 57-8.; Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 26.

### ***Toward the Baptism of Fire***

Following several farewell parades—some in the units’ home towns and some in Rio de Janeiro—the troops were finally ready to embark on the large North American maritime transportation vessels and set sail due east. The main combatant body of the FEB was divided into three echelons according to the capacity of the transporters. The 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment, reinforced by one artillery group and some small units from the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment, left Brazil on July 2, and two weeks later, on July 16, 1944, it arrived in Naples. The ship snuck away at night—after a presidential farewell from Vargas—to minimize the risk that Axis spies would report its departure. It was soon followed by the second and third echelons, which carried the two other regiments, the artillery and the auxiliary forces, which arrived together in November 1944. A fourth echelon arrived on December 7 and brought replacements, but the FEB could not use them effectively. On January 1945, Brayner asked Dutra that no more men be sent due to equipping problems and fears that they would spread in the 5<sup>th</sup> Army. In spite of that the fifth echelon arrived on February 22.<sup>70</sup> One hundred thirty eight officers and female nurses arrived in Italy by air.

**Table 1: FEB Personnel and Echelons**

	Departure from Rio de Janeiro	Arrival in Naples	Personnel
1 <sup>st</sup> echelon	July 2, 1944	July 16, 1944	5,081
2 <sup>nd</sup> echelon	September 22, 1944	October 6, 1944	5,133
3 <sup>rd</sup> echelon	September 22, 1944	October 6, 1944	5,243
4 <sup>th</sup> echelon	November 23, 1944	December 7, 1944	4,722
5 <sup>th</sup> echelon	February 8, 1945	February 22, 1945	5,128
By air	-	-	138
<b>Total</b>			<b>25,445</b>

**Source:** Castello Branco, Manoel Thomaz, *O Brasil na II Grande Guerra* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército – Editora, 1960), 167-169.

Crossing the Atlantic was not a pleasant experience. At mealtime, the 5,000 men were herded from their crowded quarters to line up at the entrance of the dining rooms to

<sup>70</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 425.

eat unfamiliar food and were then herded back. The soldiers—constantly attached to their lifejackets—trained daily in case of a U-boat attack and then spent the nights in blackout hoping not to be called to use their newly acquired skills. Their tension eased upon leaving the Atlantic and entering into the Allied-controlled Mediterranean where soon after the ships would arrive in Naples.

There was nothing glorious or proud about the 1<sup>st</sup> echelon's arrival in Italy. The Italian population mistook the Brazilians—who held no weapons and whose uniforms resembled the German uniforms—for Nazi prisoners and booed them. The Brazilians had no equipment for an independent existence and thus spent their first night unsheltered in the crater of an extinct volcano.

Despite the lack of adequate training facilities, the Brazilians then moved to Agnano, where they started training, and then to Bangoli, where the 5<sup>th</sup> Army was able to better train them. A shortage of arms and transportation prevented any large-scale training, but some specialized courses proved essential to the Brazilians' practical military education. Such was the "mine warfare" course and the "combat leadership" course, which were offered for lieutenants and captains.<sup>71</sup> At the end of July the Brazilians moved to Tarquinia, which was more suitable for training and where they finally received their equipment. In Tarquinia the "Regimental Combat Team" was formed from the 6<sup>th</sup> regiment, an artillery group, an engineering company and a medical company.

On August 22, 1944, again in a new location in Vada, the Brazilians started a three-week intensive training period under the guidance of about 250 combat-veteran North American officers and NCOs. The training period was concluded in early

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 410.; Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 17.

September in a two-day long, live-ammunition, full combat team tactical exercise. Major General Mark Clark, the commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, who observed the exercise, was satisfied by the Brazilians' performance. As a result, he declared the combat team operational and assigned it to General Willis D. Crittenger's 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.<sup>72</sup>

According to Frank McCann, the training period, and especially its climax in Vada, changed the troop's mentality from one of hesitation to an eagerness for battle, and "was symbolic in the transformation from French to American preeminence in the intellectual and cultural life of the Brazilian Army and society."<sup>73</sup> The symbolism of the change was evident on August 25, the Brazilian "Soldier's Day," when the troops marched and sang in English "God Bless America" in the presence of the North American General Clark and the French Chadebec de Lavallade, who was the last chief of the French mission in Brazil.<sup>74</sup>

The Brazilians were equipped by the U.S. Army according to their tables of organization and equipment for an infantry regiment with one exception. Since no new M-1 Garand rifles were shipped from the United States to Italy, the first echelon was issued M-1903 Springfield rifles, which had five rounds and bolt-action rather than eight rounds and semiautomatic action. Despite the difference, the older rifle was functional, and it was more important to equip the soldiers and start training them than to wait for newer weapons, which the Brazilians had no experience operating anyway.<sup>75</sup> While the

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<sup>72</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 28.

<sup>73</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 413.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 412-13.; Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 66.

<sup>75</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 411.; Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 37.

majority of the equipment was Brazilian, its poor quality became evident as early as during training when uniforms lost their color and were torn easily.<sup>76</sup>

Upon their arrival, the second and third echelons—which composed two-thirds of the FEB's fighting force—faced equipment difficulties. To their dismay, they had received second-hand equipment, and delays in issuing it contributed to the shortening of their training period to about one week only.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, even before the main contingent of the FEB left Brazil, the first echelon, trained and equipped, performed its terminal exercise in Vada. Four days later the Regimental Task Force—commanded by the FEB's infantry commander General Zenóbio de Costa—entered the line.

## **War**

The North American 5<sup>th</sup> Army welcomed the arrival of the first Brazilian echelon as it was in great need of new troops. During the previous months it had transferred three French divisions and four American ones to the southern French front for the planned invasion of Normandy (June 6, 1944). Between May and July the 5<sup>th</sup> Army suffered 18,000 casualties while breaking the German “Gustav Line” in Monte Cassino (May 1944) and pursuing the retreating Germans to the newly formed “Gothic Line,” which ran roughly from Pisa to Rimini where the front went to static warfare in late 1944. Hence when the Brazilian Regimental Task Force, reinforced by three U.S. Army armored

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<sup>76</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 406.; Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 20. For a detailed study and magnificent illustrations of the FEB's equipment, see: Ricardo Bonalume Neto and Cesar Campiani Maximiano, *Brazilian Expeditionary Force in World War II* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2011).

<sup>77</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 418-9.

companies, entered the line, it was one of the few fresh units on the front.<sup>78</sup> The Brazilians were inexperienced, but they were eager to prove themselves.<sup>79</sup>

### **The Regimental Task Force in the Serchio Valley (Sept. 15 – Oct. 31)**

General Clark assigned the Regimental Task Force to the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, which lost some of its troops on the French front and held a quiet front left (west) of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, where the Brazilians could gain experience.<sup>80</sup> The Regimental Task Force (*Destacamento FEB*) entered the line in the Serchio Valley near Viareggio on September 15, 1944, and for the next month and a half they advanced rapidly against the retreating Germans who showed little resistance.<sup>81</sup> They liberated several towns, the first of which was Massarosa (September 16, 1944) and suffered their first combat casualties in the attack on Camaiore (taken September 18, 44) and Monte Prano (taken September 23-26).<sup>82</sup>

After two weeks, the Brazilians were ordered east to advance along the Serchio River Valley northward. The advance began on October 4, 1944, was held due to the borrowing of forces (one infantry battalion and the artillery) by the British, and resumed on October 14. At the same time, two major developments occurred: the First Brazilian Air Force squadron became operational, and due to the Luftwaffe absence, it supported

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<sup>78</sup> The North American 5<sup>th</sup> Army fought in the western half of the Italian peninsula while to its east fought the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army (composed of British, Indian, Canadian, New Zealand and Polish troops). The two armies made up the Allied 15<sup>th</sup> Army Group under General Sir Harold Alexander. On the importance of the Brazilians for the 5<sup>th</sup> Army at the time of their arrival see: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 139.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>80</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 414. In Portuguese the Regimental Task Force was called “Destacamento FEB.”

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>82</sup> These attacks cost the FEB 4 dead and 7 wounded. Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 29-30. - from Dulls, 1978, 80-1.

the ground forces, and the second and third echelons arrived in Italy and started training.<sup>83</sup>

On October 21, the Brazilians began their attack on Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, which was held by the Italian Monte Rosa Division.<sup>84</sup> Successful at first, the Brazilians' over-confidence and lack of experience resulted in a reverse during the night of October 30-31 as Nazi SS troopers surprised one battalion that was poorly defended. The Brazilians fought forcefully until the afternoon of the 31<sup>st</sup> when they started withdrawing due to a lack of ammunition. The Regimental Task Force was driven back to Sommocolonia, which it had taken earlier on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Mascarenhas blamed the troops for cowardice and a lack of preparation, but the command was supposed to expect the counterattack based on the intelligence it had.<sup>85</sup> In spite of the general's harsh judgment, the Brazilians fought as well as the Americans who replaced them.<sup>86</sup>

This battle marked the end of operations in the Serchio Valley as the Allied command had decided that it was not a promising route, so the Brazilians were moved to the Reno River Valley, 120 km to the north-east.<sup>87</sup> This battle also marked the end of the Regimental Combat Team as in early November the division was organized in full under General Mascarenhas's command. Under Zenóbio de Costa's command, weather and terrain, rather than the enemy, were the combat team's major obstacles. However, during the one-and-a-half months during which the team was in combat, it advanced forty

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>84</sup> Not to be confused with Castelnuovo, which the FEB liberated on March 5, 1945.

<sup>85</sup> According to Silveira ELO observed German forces near Castelnuovo de Garfagnana the day before the failed attack and reported it. Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 91.

<sup>86</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 415-7.

<sup>87</sup> This was decided in a meeting of all the commanders of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army in Passo de Futa on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1944. Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 68.

kilometers, took 208 prisoners, lost thirteen killed, eighty-seven wounded, 183 injured in accidents, and eight captured.<sup>88</sup>

### **The First Expeditionary Infantry Division and the Shadow of Monte Castelo (Nov. – Dec. 1944)**

By the end of October 1944, most of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army's veteran troops were exhausted from continuous fighting and the thinning of the staff position. The fresh Brazilian Division thus moved to the Reno Valley and freed the North Americans and South Africans that fought there. While two regiments were still organizing, equipping and training, the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment occupied the line between November 3 and 7. The Reno Valley was dominated from the north by a steep mountainous ridge. The Germans observed the basin and Road 64 which ran through it. The region turned out to be quieter than expected and the troops spent most of their time patrolling between posts to maintain connections among the scattered units.

Toward the end of November, the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps ordered a joint attack of three locations by two American battalions and the III/6<sup>th</sup> Regiment under US Task Force 45 command. The Brazilians' position in the attack was on the 987-meter high Monte Castelo in a region that was defended by the well-entrenched German 232 Grenadier Division. On November 24, 1944, after 68 straight days in combat, the Brazilians—tired and low in morale—attacked the mountain. They were pushed back with heavy casualties, some because a company of the U.S. 92<sup>nd</sup> Division on their left withdrew without notifying them and thus exposed the III battalion's flank. The following morning

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<sup>88</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 415.; Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 31-2.



the III/6 attacked again after neither rest nor replacements, and they failed for the second time.<sup>89</sup>

The 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps was anxious to gain the high ground around Monte Belverde before winter came and thus insisted on a third attack. While Cittenberger was not happy with the Brazilian performance and the two failures, Mascarenhas was not happy with launching a third attack with one tired regiment and two inexperienced ones. The tension between the two commanders rose and when Mascarenhas was determined not to put his troops under U.S. command again, the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps' commander "gave him the ball" and the responsibility for the attack, which Mascarenhas accepted although it was "in bad shape."<sup>90</sup> Mascarenhas ordered Zenóbio de Costa to attack with the III/11<sup>o</sup> and the I/1<sup>o</sup> backed by artillery and one US tank platoon on November 29, 1944. The missing units had to march rapidly to get there despite the rough weather (the III/11<sup>o</sup> was pulled from training, not fully equipped, and arrived in its position two hours before the attack). Although the U.S. troops withdrew from Monte Belverde—a nearby elevation that supported Monte Castelo with fire and was temporarily taken by the Task Force 45 a few days earlier—the Brazilians stormed the mountain in another frontal assault of two battalions that attacked separately with neither support nor functional reserves (the III/6<sup>o</sup> was too beaten). They were driven back to their starting point by a fierce counter attack and suffered 29 dead and 128 wounded in the I/1<sup>o</sup> and 5 dead and 25 wounded in the III/11<sup>o</sup>.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 419-20.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 420.; Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 33. – from Dullas, 1978, p. 99.

<sup>91</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 420-2.; Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 33. – from Dullas, 1978, p. 99

The rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Regiments entered the line on December 2 and heard about the horrors of the failed attacks. When the Germans started patrolling aggressively during the night, their line was broken.<sup>92</sup> Comparing several versions of that night, Neto concludes that it is more probable that the Germans did not patrol the area but only fired upon the Brazilians. He believes that some company commanders and the battalion's commander panicked, ordered retreat and lost control of their troops.<sup>93</sup> For the Americans it was merely a small setback to be mentioned in the campaign diary, but for the beaten and proud Brazilians it was yet another failure that jeopardized the higher U.S. command's confidence in them and produced ammunition for the skeptics at home.<sup>94</sup>

#### **Fourth attack on Monte Castelo (Dec. 12)**

On December 5, 1944, the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps ordered the FEB to attack Monte Castelo one more time, although intelligence indicated that the Germans were strengthening their positions. It seems as if everything conspired to prevent the Brazilians from accomplishing their mission. The attack was postponed by bad weather from December 11 to 12, but fog and clouds persisted during the day of the attack and prevented artillery and air support to the troops. U.S. artillery started before schedule, and thus the commander of the III/1<sup>st</sup> Regiment decided to start the battalion's attack half an hour earlier in fear that the Germans would be alerted by the early bombardment. The II/1<sup>st</sup> Regiment almost achieved its objective, yet it was caught under heavy fire, did not

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<sup>92</sup> For Silveira these were no regular German troops, but special elite troops trained for mountain fighting. Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 83.

<sup>93</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 177-81. Silveira also blames the failed leadership of the company commanders for the poor performance in holding the line on December 2-3 and points to the bravery of the companies, and their new commanders, on the fourth attack on Monte Castelo ten days later. Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 83.

<sup>94</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 422.

advance for an hour and a half and failed to support the III/1<sup>st</sup> Regiment. A mistake led the artillery to think that some German positions had been taken and thus to stop bombing them, which freed the Germans to counter attack. Facing this attack the Brazilians called the U.S. tanks for assistance, but they were stuck in the mud. By the afternoon, Zenóbio de Costa called off the attack after the Brazilians suffered 145 casualties and achieved no gain.<sup>95</sup>

The failure was staggering. After the battle, American commanders criticized the premature retreat, which was a stance taken up years later by Brazilian communist soldiers who blamed Zenóbio de Costa for disregarding his soldiers' lives.<sup>96</sup> Although they initially blamed external circumstances for the defeat, the Brazilians eventually assumed responsibility, and Mascarenhas seriously considered resigning and flying to Brazil to explain the fiasco and the FEB's difficulties to the military and political authorities.<sup>97</sup> He was persuaded by his staff to maintain his command and to send his chief of staff Bryner to Rio instead.<sup>98</sup>

### **Winter (December 1944 – February 1945)**

Brayner arrived in Rio de Janeiro on January 12 and told Dutra not to send additional soldiers, as the fourth echelon, which arrived December 7, was to be the last. The Brazilians were concerned about equipping the new troops and feared that, like the Indians and liberated Italians troops, the new divisions would not be under Brazilian command but rather spread within the 5<sup>th</sup> Army according to its needs. However, a fifth

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<sup>95</sup> The 1° RI suffered 112 casualties and the 11° RI, which was in reserves for the attack, suffered 33. Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 33-4.; McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 424-6.

<sup>96</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 34. On the accusation against the US commanders see: Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell, *Tug War: The Battle for Italy: 1943-5* (London 1986), 322.

<sup>97</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 211-3.

<sup>98</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 424-6.

echelon arrived on February 22. It trained heavily but did not see battle. On January 25, Brayner met Vargas and explained his reasons for the bad news.<sup>99</sup>

Back in Italy, the December cold froze activity on the front. The FEB occupied a 15 km front on the extreme right of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. The troops received ski training, took leaves for recreation in the rear, and kept “aggressive contact” with the enemy through patrols, which built up their morale.<sup>100</sup>

In January, the 4<sup>th</sup> Army corps began forming plans for the spring offensive where the newly arrived elite 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, on the immediate left (west) of the FEB, was to play a key role.<sup>101</sup>

### **The Spring Offensive and the Fifth Attack on Monte Castelo (Feb. 21)**

On February 18, 1945, the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps’ Spring Offensive took the Germans by surprise. By February 20 the spearheading US 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division took Monte Belvedere, Monte Gorgolesco and Mazzancana with the support of, among others, the FEB artillery and the FAB. On February 21, when the 10<sup>th</sup> Division attacked Monte Torracchio, north of Monte Castelo, the FEB attacked their mountain for the fifth time. The 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment launched a diversionary attack to the east and the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment attacked Monte Castelo with some support of the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Friendly fire from the 10<sup>th</sup> Division, whose soldiers mistook the Brazilians for Germans due to their olive-green uniforms, delayed the battle a bit, but by 6:30 PM the mountain was taken.<sup>102</sup> On the slopes of Monte Castelo the Brazilians recovered fourteen frozen bodies of Brazilian soldiers who had been missing since December 12.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 424-6.

<sup>100</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 34-5.; McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 426-7.

<sup>101</sup> Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 35.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 35-6.

With Monte Castelo's shadow no longer haunting them, the Brazilians with their newfound morale continued helping the 10<sup>th</sup> Division on the night of February 23-4, 1945 in Monte della Torraccia by capturing the nearby La Serra. They liberated several towns to the east, as planned, and then divided them into two: one half under Zenóbia da Costa formed the "western" part and protected the 10<sup>th</sup> Division's line of communication, and the second "eastern" half, under the command of Mascarenhas de Moraes, made its way to Castelnuovo. On March 5, 1945, the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiments took Castelnuovo, the last German position above Highway 64, with the cost of about 70 casualties.<sup>103</sup>

### **Montese, the Po Valley and the End of the War**

After Castelnuovo, the FEB advanced from the north-west to the eastern side of the Panaro River Valley.<sup>104</sup> In early April the FEB held a 10 km front to the left of the 10<sup>th</sup> Division and was assigned to support it. The 10<sup>th</sup> Division was worried by Montese, a well-fortified city located on the last ridge of the Apennines on the slopes of the Po Valley. It was defended by about 3,000 Germans of various units, and Mascarenhas offered to attack it. However bad weather prevented air support, and the attack was delayed by two days. On April 18, 1945, the whole division, strengthened by U.S. tanks, participated in the FEB's last big battle. It was a successful battle for the FEB, but it was also their bloodiest one. The FEB suffered 435 dead and wounded, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment alone suffered 183 casualties. The Germans also suffered heavy casualties, losing about 500 in the city and its surroundings.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 37.

The FEB's rapid advance stood out among the entire 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps and led the Germans to believe that they were the Army Corps' spearhead supported by the 10<sup>th</sup> Division and not vice versa. Therefore, the Germans concentrated their artillery on the Brazilians. Of the 2,800 German artillery rounds fired on the entire 4<sup>th</sup> corps during the first 24 hours of the offensive, 1,800 fell on the FEB side. The Germans' mistake allowed the 10<sup>th</sup> Division to advance and successfully break the final German defense, but the FEB lost 34 dead and 392 wounded and missing in three days. After that, the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps ordered the FEB to stop fighting and to secure the left flank of the 10<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>106</sup>

Once the allies made it to the north Italian plains, they engaged in rapid pursuit of the Germans. The FEB was not motorized, so Mascarenhas stripped the artillery from their vehicles, and the infantry advanced in 606 jeeps and 676 assorted trucks, accompanied by only two of the 12 artillery batteries. They were on the left of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps advancing to the west on the south bank of the River Po.<sup>107</sup>

On April 26, 1945, the FEB's reconnaissance squadron reported concentrations of German soldiers near Collecchio. Mascarenhas rushed in with his forces, and the next morning the town was in Brazilian hands. About 400 Germans from the vanguard of the 148<sup>th</sup> infantry division, now to the south of the FEB, were captured. The Germans (including elements from the 90<sup>th</sup> Panzer Grenadier division and the Fascist Italian Bersaglieri Division) tried to escape north and reached Fornovo. Mascarenhas positioned the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> to the north-east and north-west respectively and ordered the 6<sup>th</sup> to attack. They began attacking on April 28, 1945, the same day that Fascist leader Benito Mussolini was executed, and on the following evening, unable to break through the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 38.

Brazilian line, the Axis division surrendered. The Brazilians rounded up 14,779 prisoners, most of them German. During the following days the FEB, together with other Allied units, cleansed the Po Valley from Germans, and Italian partisans raced to liberate other towns and localities. On May 1, Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker, and the FEB arrived in Alessandria. On May 2, 1945, all Axis Forces in Italy surrendered, and the Allies in Italy met troops that came from Austria.<sup>108</sup>

### ***The Homecoming***

#### **Reception and Demobilization**

When the guns ceased firing on the European continent, the victorious Allies turned into an occupation army. Brazil declined the Allied military commanders' invitation for the FEB to participate in the occupation army in Austria under General Clark because it had no political interests in Europe and was not part of the Allied council governing Italy.<sup>109</sup> Instead, after taking part in the occupation for a month, the FEB units began making their way toward the Italian harbors and sailed homeward in five echelons on board North American and Brazilian ships.<sup>110</sup> On July 6, 1945, the day the first soldiers began their return home, the Minister of War signed the order to demobilize the FEB upon arriving in Brazil. The veterans were permitted to use their uniforms for eight

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>109</sup> Frank D. McCann, "Brazilian-American Military Alliance, 1942-1977," in *Panel on Inter-American Security Alliances in the 20th Century* (Orlando, Florida 2008).

<sup>110</sup> The first left Naples on July 6 with 4,931 soldiers and arrived in Rio on July 18; the second set sail on August 12 with 6,187 soldiers and arrived on August 22<sup>nd</sup>; the third, with only 1,801 soldiers, left Italy on August 28 and arrived on September 19; The fourth left September 4 with 5,342 soldiers and arrived on September 19; The last echelon left on September 19 with 2,742 soldiers and entered the Guanabara Bay on October 3, 1945. Two more ships carried mostly equipment. Both left Naples on July 12 and 26 and arrived in Rio de Janeiro the following month on August 3 and 13 respectively. Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 229-30.; Campbell, "Brazil in the Second World War," 40.

days only after arriving and were not allowed to comment on the FEB or the war in order to diminish the political impact of their return.<sup>111</sup>

Early Brazilian military historians explain the demobilization of the FEB as an effect of the government's fear of rebellion. In 1960 the military publishing house (Biblioteca do Exército – BIBLIEX) published Manoel Thomaz Castello Branco's authoritative book *O Brasil na II Grande Guerra*, which is the most extensive study of the military aspects of the FEB to this day. The short chapter on the demobilization addresses the question of why with a laconic, somewhat apologetic, argument about military doctrine: "[t]he Military Demobilization is a routine act, the opposite of Mobilization, it is designated to reconvert the forces and allocations of gear to their earlier proportions, as they become unnecessary to the war."<sup>112</sup> The usage of the upper case letters for the term "Military Demobilization" and "Mobilization" suggests that these terms are routine and formal. However, the 1992 Brazilian Army glossary for military terms, while offering a definition for different kinds of "mobilization," including "military mobilization," does not define the term "military demobilization."<sup>113</sup> In addition to his technical explanation, Castello briefly comments on the rapidity of the demobilization in the FEB's case and says it was due to "[t]he government's concerns with a rumored rebellion against the established order, which was said to be ongoing among the expeditionaries ..."<sup>114</sup> For Castello, then, the reason was political and was ordered by the worried, undefined "Government" under the guise of military technicalities.

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<sup>111</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 372.

<sup>112</sup> Castello Branco, *O Brasil na II Grande Guerra*, 539.

<sup>113</sup> Estado-Maior do Exército, *Glossário de Termos e Expressões Para Uso no Exército*, 2da ed. (1992).

<sup>114</sup> Castello Branco, *O Brasil na II Grande Guerra*, 539. Castello Branco denies the rumors and says that the soldiers were preoccupied by returning home and not by political reforms.



Thirteen years later Frank D. McCann Jr. developed this argument in the most comprehensive book on the subject in the English language to date. McCann explains that the “regime” was afraid that returning troops would be used by the two candidates for the presidency, the minister of war General Eurico Gaspar Dutra and the Brigadier Eduardo Gomes, to overthrow the government, “because eighty to ninety-five percent of the officers were reportedly opposed to the dictatorship.” Moreover, Dutra himself, as part of the regime, was more concerned with such usage of the FEB by Gomes.<sup>115</sup> The *febianos* were said to “absorb” democratic ideals on the Italian front from their fellow North Americans and to carry the “democratic virus” with them back to Brazil as a country and its army as an institution. This argument was widely accepted in Brazilian and North American historiography until the end of the century.<sup>116</sup>

In 1998, Shawn C. Smallman suggested a different interpretation by arguing that the majority of the *febianos* favored Vargas, held nationalistic and anti-North American views, and prompted Vargas’ popularity upon returning. Thus, the FEB was demobilized by Vargas’ political opponents in the army who feared that authoritative leaders would use it to hold on to power. Smallman further argues that the image of the FEB as a source of liberalism and democracy originated in a small and isolated group of officers who held these views as a result of their institutional location in the military hierarchy and not

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<sup>115</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 440. McCann bases his argument on internal memos by American officials, but assertions about the anti-Vargas spirit among the officers can be found in the Brazilian historiography of the 1960’s as well. See Joel Silveira, *As Duas Guerras da FEB* (Rio de Janeiro, Idade Nova, 1965), 30-1. Smallman also argues that Dutra, whose candidacy relied on the army’s support, feared the FEB would side with Gomes not because he was part of the regime, but because he personally opposed the FEB while Gomes favored its creation and visited some of the troops in North Africa. Smallman, “The Official Story,” 240.

<sup>116</sup> For an important and frequently cited example see Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 217. Neto stresses, however, that the FEB was only one important factor in the bringing of democracy to Brazil, as democratization had already begun within society and the army. For a detailed survey of scholars who hold this view see Smallman, “The Official Story,” 229-31.

because they absorbed them in Italy. The army's hierarchy, which was successful in silencing the *febianos* in sometimes violent ways, then used their prestige to promote their own positions and "sold" the "official story" to historians.<sup>117</sup>

Scholar Francisco César Alves Ferraz concurs with Smallman and adds that Vargas lost the army's support when he started to base his power on the masses and legitimized the Communist Party.<sup>118</sup> The political elite watched how the opposition (*União Democrática Nacional* - UDN) used the FEB in its propaganda, and so did the communists, who predicted that the returning soldiers would bring down the domestic dictatorship. The elite feared that politically engaged officers would influence the coming elections, and it perceived the alliance between Vargas and his *febianos* supporters as a threat to their "conservative pact" of democratization with two generals as candidates. To explain the soldiers' lack of revolutionary agenda, Ferraz points to the fact that no anti-Vargas attitudes or manifestations were recorded in the homecoming celebrations.<sup>119</sup>

Ferraz does agree with McCann's argument about the army's institutional fear of the returning division. He explains that the "Army of Caxias," which included the summit of the army institution, feared the "Army of the FEB," which was more professional, liberal and democratic.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, six months earlier, during their meeting in Rio de Janeiro on January 25, 1945, Vargas interrogated Brayner on the attitudes toward the FEB among the army's high officers and learned that the "Army of Caxias" became

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<sup>117</sup> The argument was first suggested in an article in the HAHR and later appeared in a book in 2002, see: Smallman, "The Official Story.", Shawn C. Smallman, *Fear & Memory in the Brazilian Army and Society, 1889-1954* (Chapel Hill [N.C.]: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

<sup>118</sup> At that moment, Vargas and the Communist Party shared the interest of assembling a National Assembly before the presidential elections. Vargas's interest was manifested through the "*queremista*" movement, and the *Partido dos Trabalhadores Brasileiros* (PTB) as well as the CPB supported this line because they rejected both presidential candidates. See: Freire and Venceslau, "Memória: Jacob Gorender."

<sup>119</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 371-3.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

uneasy with the FEB while Vargas himself was not. McCann speculates that perhaps Vargas hoped that the FEB would turn the army from a praetorian guard to a professional one.<sup>121</sup> In light of his forced resignation on October 30, 1945, as a result of pressure from the armed forces—allies who turned into opponents, his hopes were in vain.

Under the shadow of the demobilization order, the first troops arrived in the capital on July 18, 1945 and paraded the main streets under victory arches. The rejoicing *cariocas* embraced them so enthusiastically that the marching soldiers had to make their way through the crowd in single file.<sup>122</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment arrived in the first echelon and was immediately demobilized, and one symbolic battalion of about 1,000 strong alone marched on August 1 through the *paulista* capital and then returned to its barracks in Caçapava, SP.<sup>123</sup> Such popular expressions of happiness, pride and gratitude recurred in other Brazilian cities, which honored their returning *expedicionários*.

Some returning soldiers encountered a less warm reception or none at all. When the 9<sup>th</sup> engineering battalion arrived in the “B” echelon on August 13, no reception awaited it, and the soldiers were not allowed to disembark the ship. After nine hours the battalion’s commander, Tenente-coronel Machado Lopez, spoke through the ship’s speakers. He said that they were returning victorious troops, and he rejected the official explanation for the embarkation delay given by the port authorities that it was a protection measure against communists. The commander then left the unit and went home.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 425-6.

<sup>122</sup> *Carioca* is the term used to designate all things in the city of Rio de Janeiro including its people.

<sup>123</sup> *Paulista* is the term used to designate all things in the state of São Paulo, not to be confused with *Paulistano/a* which refers to all things in the city of São Paulo.

<sup>124</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 95.

No welcoming committee awaited the FEB's commander General Mascarenhas in the capital. He first landed in Recife by plane. His flight to Rio de Janeiro was directed to another airport reportedly due to meteorological reasons, but some attribute other reasons to this diversion.<sup>125</sup> Immediately after his return, Mascarenhas was sent on a mission in Peru and then went on a tour in Europe and did not return until November 1945. He was transferred to the reserves in spite of public protest and returned to active duty only under Vargas's second presidency.<sup>126</sup>

### **Re-integration, Organization and Frustration**

The *febianos*' reacted to demobilization with confusion, which soon turned into frustration.<sup>127</sup> Active duty officers of all ranks were re-assigned promptly to new remote posts where many suffered socially and professionally at the hands of their colleagues who had stayed behind for political reasons or cowardice and now felt threatened by the returning war veterans. Many of FEB officers decided to leave the hostile army. Gradually, rights that were given to the veterans were extended to those who did not participate in the Italian campaign, a trend that diffused to the civilian sphere later.<sup>128</sup> Joaquim Xavier da Silveira has termed the effects of this process the "diaspora" of the FEB.<sup>129</sup> Some reserve officers and enlisted men remained and became career officers and Non-Commissioned-Officers, at least for several years, yet the majority of the *febianos* were swiftly released and returned to their civilian lives.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 232-3.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>128</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 375-6.

<sup>129</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 236.

The majority of the soldiers, who did not pursue military careers, experienced difficulties re-integrating into civilian society. A minority who had governmental, educational or professional jobs found it easier to integrate; others suffered in a recessive labor market. Protective and beneficiary legislation did exist in the form of pensions, study scholarships, work positions and other benefits, but it was poorly implemented. In some cases implementation of the law promising veterans priority in public jobs was distorted by political and social networks characterized by clientelistic ties between clients and patrons, in which the former offer service to the latter, who reciprocate with favors and protection. In the cities, most of the returning soldiers were well received in their former places of work, but those who had special needs were more often turned down. In the countryside, rural workers did not enjoy the same treatment as their urban counterparts due to traditionally less developed labor rights.<sup>130</sup> Even when laws protecting veterans were implemented, veterans who lacked information about their rights often did not see the benefits while “virgin sword’s officers” and bureaucrats received pensions.<sup>131</sup> Others were aware of their rights but encountered difficulties obtaining them since, in their haste to return to their home during the prompt demobilization, they did not have the patience to wait for the required documentation.

In the meantime, the veterans exhausted their military salaries and savings, which contradicted military propaganda advertising generous compensations. Many of these compensations never arrived. Some had already spent their funds in Italy on diversions like women and alcohol or on religious donations.<sup>132</sup> As a result many had to rely on their

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<sup>130</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 376-7, 82-3.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

families for support; others were left with nothing and died penniless in the streets.<sup>133</sup>

Hardship was not limited to veterans' economic well-being. Many of them suffered from war neuroses, in part because some soldiers were not mentally stable when the FEB first mobilized.<sup>134</sup> Veterans self-treated with alcohol, which claimed more lives. Others committed suicide.<sup>135</sup>

Wounded and mutilated veterans enjoyed fewer opportunities and had to bypass bureaucratic barriers in order to receive their rights in long struggles that sometimes took years.<sup>136</sup> Their situation was so desperate that in 1950, ex-combatants organized "the parade of silence" from the association's headquarters to the Câmara dos Deputados (the Brazilian lower house of congress) with thousands of veterans demonstrated their disappointment. The parade received public attention but resulted in no legislation.<sup>137</sup> Uncovered by their private insurance, if they had any in the first place, they were treated in military hospitals as an act of grace, a situation that was formalized years later in law 2.579.<sup>138</sup>

Not only were veterans denied material support for their sacrifices, but the government and military also took their symbolic fortune. War decorations were given to officers and sergeants who served in Brazil's defense during the war, not necessarily in the FEB, and to civilians who contributed to the war effort, but these decorations were

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 377.

<sup>134</sup> Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 19.

<sup>135</sup> Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas," 361-3.; Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 100.; César Campiani Maximiano relies on his communication with one of the heads of the ANVFEB in Rio who testified that during his two years of leadership, seven veterans committed suicide. Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas," 361.

<sup>136</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 377.

<sup>137</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 237.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 244.

denied to the rank and file who served in Italy. Other decorations and medals of merit were given in a bureaucratic manner.<sup>139</sup>

Neither was the general public attentive to the veterans' distress. After the initial parades and jubilation, public enthusiasm diminished, and there was no audience for war stories. Even worse, veterans confronted cynicism as many civilians thought that the Italian campaign approximated a vacation as the well-fed and tanned returning soldiers challenged their assumptions about the bad conditions of war.<sup>140</sup> Rejected by the military, the government, and the public, the veterans formed associations.

The idea to create a veterans' association was conceived in Italy and was first realized in Rio de Janeiro on October 1, 1945 with the creation of the *associação dos ex-combatentes*. Similar associations were founded in other cities, and at first they were led by low-ranking reserves officers. Through the association, veterans protested their condition, informed their members about their rights, offered professional courses to help them integrate into civilian society and promoted the legacy of the FEB and the commemoration of its fallen soldiers. No less important, the association provided a physical, social and cultural space for the veterans and their families for reunions, meetings, homage acts, dinners, social events and organized trips to the Italian battle fields.<sup>141</sup>

Soon after their creation, the associations were politicized and factions appeared. In the first National Convocation of the Associations in 1946 in Rio de Janeiro, the federal government and the city council of the federal district accused the Congress of being "communist" and closed its designated location at the last minute. Although the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 245-7.

<sup>140</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 374.

<sup>141</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 247-8.; Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 378.

Congress eventually gathered in the Brazilian Academy of Medicine, it enjoyed little political support. The following year, the political accusations proved to have some ground as the association's National Council was run by a group of communists. In the 1947 elections for the association's leadership role, the anti-communist faction won. The losing faction accused the Ministry of War of pressing high-ranking officers to join them in order to assume control.<sup>142</sup>

In four years the association's leadership changed in as many aspects: organizationally the original founders were replaced by newcomers; institutionally regular army officers took the reserves officers' place; hierarchically high-ranking officers defeated low ranking officers; and politically anti-communists won the communist faction. Because of this radical transformation, some members, mostly communists, left the association, which in turn became closer to the army and the government. Thus, the association lost its political autonomy and became an appendage of the armed forces. The new leadership struggled to distance the association from political debates that divided the armed forces in the early 1950s, such as the elections to the *club military*. When elections did result in such schisms, the army signaled the participation boundaries by arresting some of them.<sup>143</sup>

Another split in the association occurred over membership. Although the association was conceived and organized by veterans of the FEB, it was defined from the beginning as the association of the "ex-combatants" that would integrate the veterans of the Italian campaign (FEB and FAB), the Navy and the merchant marine. Soon the war veterans became a minority within their own association and with time, enmities arose

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<sup>142</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 378-80.

<sup>143</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 249.; Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 380.



between “veteranos”—the veterans of the Italian campaign—and “praieiros” (“of the beach”) or “patos d’água” (water ducks), those who served in Brazil during the war.<sup>144</sup>

Finally the *Associação nacional dos veteranos da força expedicionária brasileira* (ANVFEB) was created in 1963 as a private association that admitted only the veterans of the Italian campaign. Naturally the ANVFEB had fewer members and branches than the ex-combatants’ association.<sup>145</sup>

In order to secure more votes, politicians extended to others laws that benefited the veterans of the FEB. The culmination of this process was Lei n. 5.315 of September 12, 1967, which became known as the “lei de praia” (law of the beach) by the febianos. Although it corrected the compensation of civilians who contributed to the war effort, it erased the difference between them and the veterans. This raised a conflict in the associations between “veteranos” and “praieiros” (“patos d’água”).<sup>146</sup>

Several factors contributed to the poor integration of veterans into civilian society. Unlike in other combatant countries, the last Brazilian war was fought during the nineteenth century and no legislation, organizational memory or civilian traditions of the reception of citizen-soldiers existed in Brazil.<sup>147</sup> In fact, a tradition of neglect of returning soldiers can be traced to the abandoning of the veterans of Canudos after the campaign ended in 1897.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, the majority of the veterans accepted the “authorities” paternalism and did not protest. The associations failed to challenge this as the practice of claiming rights was associated with communism and subversive behavior. The veterans, who were dependent on the government and the army, preferred reproducing the military

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<sup>144</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 381.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 381.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 381.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 367-8.

<sup>148</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 241.

hierarchy and elected high officers to direct them. The failure to obtain securities, rights and benefits was not unique when compared to other social movements and when taking into account the hardship of daily living. However, veterans faced additional challenges as they were spread throughout the country and many of their neighbors were not aware of their status as ex-combatants. Being perceived by the civil society, the army and the civil authorities as an inseparable part of the armed forces limited veterans' political options.<sup>149</sup> As in other combatant countries, soldiers had physical and psychological difficulties reintegrating into the civilian non-combatant population. While in countries that mobilized millions this was a national problem, in Brazil, where the febianos composed only 0.06% of the population, they were expected to adapt themselves to society and not vice versa.<sup>150</sup>

### **Those Who Stayed Behind**

While the returning veterans struggled with the hardship of integrating back into the Brazilian society, 451 dead *pracinhas* stayed in Italy.<sup>151</sup> The majority of them were buried in the FEB's cemetery in Pistoia while some corps members remained missing. This cemetery was installed when the FEB operated in the Reno Valley and earlier dead, which were buried in local cemeteries in Tarquinia, Follorica and Vada, were transported there. The official number of 451 dead, however, does not include those who died from

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<sup>149</sup> Ferraz, "Os Veteranos da FEB," 384-5.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 376.

<sup>151</sup> During the Italian campaign the FEB lost 443 officers and soldiers. Three hundred sixty four died in action. Of this number, ten were missing, sixty died in accidents, nine from illness, four drowned, and six died for other reasons. The FAB lost eight officers in Italy, bringing the formal number of Brazilian dead in Italy to 451. All sources rely for these numbers on Moraes, *A F. E. B. pelo seu Comandante*, "Quadro geral dos mortos da F.E.B. por unidades", 305. For the names of the dead see *ibid.*, 265-71.

their wounds after being sent to hospitals in Brazil (there were 600 such wounded) or the many that died of their wounds immediately after the war.<sup>152</sup>

In 1960 the National Monument for the Dead of the Second World War was inaugurated in Rio de Janeiro. The dead from Pistoia were brought back home in an official ceremony and are buried in its basement. The majority of the 486 dead of the Navy and the 972 dead and missing suffered by the merchant marine in 32 attacked boats were never recovered.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Maximiano, "Neve, Fogo e Montanhas," 361.

<sup>153</sup> Of these, 332 died in *Bahia* at the end of the war when an accident caused an anti-submarine mine to explode on board. Two hundred seventy one survived the explosion, but during the following days, 230 died before being rescued. Ninety-nine other dead drowned in the *Vital de Oliveira* and 33 died in the *Camaquã*. See: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 216.

## Chapter 2: Writing the Past, Narrating the Present: Memoirs, Memory and War Stories

Within a few months after troops returned to Brazil from World War II, veterans began publishing their memoirs, and they continue to do so in the present. I was able to locate—in second-hand book stores and veterans associations’ libraries—thirty-six such memoirs.<sup>1</sup> Despite evidence to the contrary, some researchers lament that only a few World War II memoirs and diaries were published in Brazil.<sup>2</sup> “Few” is a vague term, though, and a comparison to other nations suggests otherwise. In *The Western European and Mediterranean Theaters in World War II: An Annotated Bibliography of English-Language Sources*, Donal Sexton lists 360 entries under “individual biographies and memoirs” in “the War on Land” section.<sup>3</sup> According to my count, only eighty-six of the 360 are memoirs (see definition below). While neither Sexton’s list nor mine are complete, the ratio between the memoirs produced in one Brazilian division and those produced by hundreds of thousands of soldiers in two major fronts suggests the number of FEB memoirs is sufficient for my research.

Cesar Campiani Maximiano has recently argued that it is difficult to locate most of the memoirs, and indeed, almost one third of the memoirs were published by the author himself and probably had a very limited readership. In one unusual case, an author

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<sup>1</sup> I have intentionally excluded memoirs written by veterans who held high positions or who had a military career and achieved high ranks after World War II due to the assumption that these memoirs are highly influenced by the armed forces’ “official story,” and include apologetic views. Moreover, such memoirs are documents which are written deliberately in order to establish, maintain, defend, or attack one’s reputation and are merely instruments in generals’ wars.

<sup>2</sup> For the value of memoirs in writing the history of the FEB see: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 15.. For complains on the scarcity of the memoirs see: Neves, “A Força Expedicionária Brasileira: 1944 - 1945,” 302.; Vicente Pedroso da Cruz, *Os Caminhos de um Pracinha* (2008), see “Introdução by Cesar Campiani Maximiano, p. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Donal J. Sexton and Myron J. Smith, *The Western European and Mediterranean Theaters in World War II: An Annotated Bibliography of English-Language Sources*, Routledge Research Guides to American Military Studies (New York: Routledge, 2009), 251-301.

tried to conceal his own memoir. Celso Furtado—one of Brazil’s leading economists and intellectuals—published in 1946 one of the first FEB memoirs.<sup>4</sup> In a 1980 interview in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, the interviewer asked Furtado which of the books he wrote are the most important to him. In his answer, Furtado listed his FEB memoir first and commented that it was: “[a book] that nobody knows – a book of stories that I wrote when I was young. These are stories that happened in Italy, during the war, when I was a *pracinha*. Luckily, the editor went bankrupt. [They] asked me what to do with the copies, and I order them to burn [them].”<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, many memoirs were well publicized. Some memoirs were published by prominent publishing houses—mainly the Army’s press, *Biblioteca do Exército* (Bibliex)—and were reprinted in multiple editions over the years. Local branches of the veterans associations “adopted” other memoirs and promoted them as “theirs.”<sup>6</sup>

FEB members published memoirs throughout Brazil from the end of the war to the present, and their authors differed in their military rank and unit, regional, ethnic and racial origin, civilian career, and social class. Despite such diversity this chapter identifies the keys of memory of the memoirs’ common denominator narrative and will demonstrate how they not only frame the memory of the past, but also how they comment on the present.

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<sup>4</sup> Celso Furtado, *De Nápoles a Paris* (Rio de Janeiro: Distribuidores: Z. Valverde, 1946). The memoir is not a chronological narrative, but includes ten chapters each narrating a story the author experienced.

<sup>5</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, January 20, 1980. The quote is from a piece of paper that was inserted in the copy of the memoir I saw and thus some of the bibliographic data is missing.

<sup>6</sup> In 2006 the young museum worker at the *Legião Paranaense do Expedicionário* in Curitiba courteously gave me Dequech’s book and described it as “the book they [the veterans] like the most”; in Belo Horizonte I was given Viotti’s memoir with a similar description; and in São Paulo I was handed the recent memoir by Pedrosa da Cruz and the veteran who gave it to me underlined his own name where it appeared in the text. José Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 2 ed. (Curitiba: Legião Paranaense do Expedicionário, 1995). Cássio Abranches Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra: a Força Expedicionária Brasileira na Itália* (Belo Horizonte: [s.n.], 1998). Cruz, *Os Caminhos de um Pracinha*.

### ***What Is a War Memoir?***

I define a war memoir as **a textual memorial that claims to be true and that narrates past warlike experiences in the first person.** By breaking down the definition I will explain how I use these personal stories to analyze the collective Brazilian image of the past. This discussion will be the foundation for the analysis of the memoirs themselves.

The memoirs' main function is to commemorate past events, and therefore they are a type of memorial. James Young explains that a differentiation between monuments—as objects to inspire remembrance, commemorate beginnings and honor oneself—and memorials—as objects to not forget, commemorate endings and honor the dead—does not exist. He describes all memory sites—be they physical objects, rituals or activities, dates, or literary manifestations of any sort—as memorials that may also function as a monument at the same time.<sup>7</sup> Building on Young's definition, Samuel Hynes argues that the written recollections of war veterans, including memoirs, are memorials too.<sup>8</sup> Memoirs are not simply personal stories meant to commemorate past events, but they are exactly the opposite: commemorative acts that are told from a personal perspective. The commemorative nature of the memoir is evident in the widespread practice of dedicating the books to fallen brothers in arms.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Hynes, "Personal Narratives and Commemoration," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 205.

<sup>9</sup> For example, José Dequech dedicated his book to the dead comrades from his company, Olívio Gondim de Uzêda dedicated his to the fallen soldiers of his regiment, and Kepler A. Borges dedicated his memoir to all the FEB fallen. Olívio Gondim de Uzêda, *Crônicas de Guerra* (Algoas: Imprensa Oficial, 1947), 9-10.;

Memoirs are written in a form intended for public consumption. One book presentation explicitly states that “[b]y publishing this book, the Military Library certainly will serve the public, in general, and readers interested in this particular topic...”<sup>10</sup> Other types of personal narratives, such as a diary, are usually, although not necessarily, written for private use or for a narrow readership of family and close friends. In contrast, when writing a memoir, the author has to bear his wider readership in mind and thus must explain certain facts and terms and describe places, institutions and persons. Accordingly, he does not need to explain the knowledge, assumptions and conventions he shares, knowingly or unconsciously, with his readers. Identifying unpronounced assumptions lends further insight into the readers’ hearts and minds, at least from the author’s point of view.

An example of authors’ assumptions about their readers can be found in José Dequech’s memoir. Dequech was twenty-two years old when he embarked for Naples. Beginning in the early 1970s he worked on his memoir *Nós Estivemos Lá* for thirteen years until he passed away in 1983 while his manuscript was under revision.<sup>11</sup> Dequech found it necessary to explain to his audience the distinction between the two types of kitbags soldiers used during the war, “saco A” and “saco B,” while on the other hand, he did not think he had to explain or defend his assertion that “there is no racism in Brazil.”<sup>12</sup> This illustrates the author’s assumptions about his readers’ historical and social knowledge. The explanation was necessary because of the multi-layered code these

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Kepler A. Borges, *O Brasil na Guerra* (Rio de Janeiro: A. Coelho Branco F., 1947), 1.; Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*.

<sup>10</sup> Walter de Menezes Paes, *Lenda Azul: A Atuação do 3.º Batalhão do Regimento Sampaio na Campanha da Itália*, vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército, 1991), “Apresentação”.

<sup>11</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, “Do Autor” por Romeu Franzen. Dequech’s friends, co-workers and the Legião Paranaense do Expedicionário—the FEB veterans’ organization in the state of Paraná—collaborated in publishing the book postmortem. The book’s second edition was published in 1994.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 31, 41. For other memoirs on that point see, for example, Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 297-302.

terms represented in the FEB's internal language. "Saco A" was a kitbag containing the soldier's equipment that accompanied him while "saco B" contained the rest of his equipment and was kept in the rear. In the FEB, "saco B" came to signify soldiers who did not get to the front line while "saco A" was a reference to the soldiers who experienced baptism by fire. In colloquial Portuguese "saco" is also a vulgar way of signifying testicles and thus the term can carry a comical, somewhat degrading, meaning. The term was widely used in the FEB and was mentioned in several earlier memoirs, books, newspapers articles and even comics before Dequech wrote his memoir.<sup>13</sup> Yet Dequech assumes that although he is writing more than three decades after the war, his readers will not be familiar with the original slang term.

Authors also assume, knowingly or not, that their readers share with them social conventions and popular knowledge. Thus, the same Dequech does not find it necessary to explain his observation about Brazilian society's attitudes toward race relations. This statement—which represents the ideology of Brazil as a racial democracy and which was under attack for more than two and a half decades—seems natural to him and, so he assumes, to his readers. Such assumptions are what French historians call *mentalités* or what a deconstructive sociologist might describe as a collective *habitus*. While reading the memoirs—and other sources later on—we will be able to highlight such assumptions as contributions to collective understandings and issues that are left unpronounced.

Another function of narration in the memoirs is the telling of a story. Hynes rightfully notes that the recitative nature of the memoir requires authors to use causalities and consequences that document process and change.<sup>14</sup> For Hynes, this quality of telling

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Uzêda, *Crônicas*, 197-99.

<sup>14</sup> Hynes, "Personal Narratives," 206.



a story distinguishes personal narratives—i.e. memoirs, diaries and letters—from all other memorials. However, other memorials, such as movies, comics, formal commemorative texts, murals, museums, and sometimes even monuments, do share this quality since they too tell a story. As we shall see in the fourth chapter, hundreds of illustrated stories were available to comics-readers, some monuments consist of multiple scenes that form a narrative, and even stamp collections can juxtapose individual stamps in a way that creates development and change. Therefore, I qualify his assertion by arguing that in personal narratives, especially in retrospective memoirs, this characteristic is clearer and more direct than in other memorials. Memoirs not only tell us a story but also explain the story to the reader and guide her interpretation.

A memoir is based on the personal experience of a person who has witnessed an event he or she finds worth sharing. As eyewitnesses giving their testimony, authors of memoirs are not necessarily professional writers interested in a particular theme. Often they are people who merely happened to be in the right place at the right time (or wrong time), which is why they are telling their story. While not every witness is capable of writing about his/her experiences, and while some memoir writers are indeed men of letters, most memoir authors are people with no literary training, experience, or aspirations.<sup>15</sup> As such, the memoir's content is more important to authors than their style. The claim for the greater importance of the content over the form is illustrated in Walter de Menezes Paes's case. Paes was thirty-three years old when he served as the Officer of Operations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment (Sampaio) in Italy. After the war, he became a general, and he published his memoirs in two volumes in 1991. At the

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<sup>15</sup> Examples of notable *febianos* who wrote memoirs include Alípio Corrêa Netto, who became the rector of the Universidade de São Paulo (USP); Geraldo Vidigal, a jurist and USP professor who became a member of the Academia de Letras de São Paulo; and the already mentioned Celso Furtado.

end of his memoir's preface, Menezes Paes reminds the reader that "[t]he intention was to register, with detail and precision, everything that might serve to the study of history or is of historical interest. There is no intention in creating literature, because for this, the author is not qualified."<sup>16</sup> Joaquim Xavier da Silveira also asks his readers to "pay more attention to the narrative than the style, be more attentive to the essence than to the form."<sup>17</sup> These explicit requests to pay attention to the content of the narrative over its form function to control/manipulate the reader's interpretation of the memoir. Authors' attention to content over style, however, does not necessarily mean that their memoirs are badly written. At least one of them, Cássio Abranches Viotti's *Crônicas de Guerra*, won first prize for chronicles from the Academia Mineira de Letras for the year 1998/99.

Either as a literary device or as a genuinely humble plea, authors' explicit wishes for their readers to focus on content requires paying heed to their literary choices. If we assume memoir-writers' emphasis was indeed on the content, and that they did not pay much attention to the form, then we may assign their literary choices to their unintentional assumptions. Alternatively, if we judge their choices to be the skillful authors' well calculated literary maneuvers, then we should ask what meanings authors intended to allocate to a phrase or a term, and question how they thought their readers would interpret these choices. In both cases it is important to examine authors' word-choices and phrasing in addition to their narrative as a whole. A striking example of how a memoir-author's poetic commentary can illuminate his perception of race relations is

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<sup>16</sup> Paes, *Lenda Azul*, 2. *Lenda Azul* exhibits only some traits of a memoir since above narrating personal experiences, it is more concerned to tell the story of the battalion and analyze military maneuvers. However, personal experiences, observations and evaluations are an important part of the book, and therefore it is part of the corpus.

<sup>17</sup> Joaquim Xavier da Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas: O Diário de um Pracinha*, 2a edição ed. (Rio de Janeiro: José Álvaro, 1963), 8.

Alípio Corrêa Netto's description of his experience in Africa. Corrêa Netto from São Paulo was about forty years old when he volunteered to serve in the FEB as a surgeon. During the campaign he kept a diary, and he published parts of it after the war. In his diary, he demonstrates sensitivity to the racial tensions within the U.S. Army. Narrating how the Brazilians worked in an American field hospital, Corrêa Netto interprets the fact that Brazilians were assigned to treat American soldiers of color as a testament to Americans' professional abilities, using their own black soldiers as guinea pigs. He then rejects this behavior stating that: "[...] we are not linked to the ethnic prejudices prevailing in Uncle Sam's land."<sup>18</sup> Other scholars have correctly interpreted this statement as an example of the Brazilian claim to their successful "racial democracy," especially in light of the United States' segregated army.<sup>19</sup> But the celebration of egalitarian, amicable racial relations does not translate to an absence of actual prejudice—a phenomenon further explored in the fourth chapter—as Corrêa Netto's memoir demonstrates. Corrêa Netto arrived in Italy by a flight that stopped at Accra, Ghana. In his narrative account, Corrêa Netto reminds his readers that the city of Accra is a former Portuguese port, "from where our ancestors brought the captive blacks to Brazil."<sup>20</sup> How should we interpret this short descriptive phrase? The phrase is not the product of a well-calculated literary maneuver as it appears; it appears in almost exactly the same words in Corrêa Netto's war diary, which he kept almost daily.<sup>21</sup> It reveals Corrêa Netto's identification as a descendent of Portuguese slave traders and not the

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<sup>18</sup> Alípio Corrêa Netto, *Notas de um Expedicionário Médico* (São Paulo-Brasil: ALMED, 1983), 30.

<sup>19</sup> Dennison de Oliveira and Cesar Campiani Maximiano, "Raça e Forças Armadas: O Caso da Campanha da Itália (1944/45)," *Estudos de História* 8, no. 1 (2001): 173-74.

<sup>20</sup> Corrêa Netto, *Notas*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> The phrase can be found in the entry from August 22, 1944, in Corrêa Netto's war diary. The diary is deposited in the small archive of the Museu Histórico da Faculdade de Medicina da USP (FMUSP, also known as Museu Prof. Carlos da Silva Lacaz) in a folder titled "Correa Netto, Alipio."

enslaved Africans. Corrêa Netto's usage of the plural first person in his memoir and diary projects his self-identity to his assumed readers.

A second aspect of the testimonial quality of the memoirs is the significance they place on external events. *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* distinguishes memoir from autobiography by its emphasis on external events over the life of the author.<sup>22</sup> The emphasis on external events results in the limitation of the temporal boundaries of the memoirs to what the author defines as the "event." Hynes argues that the time span of the personal narrative is not historical but personal, i.e. determined mainly by the author's perspective and experiences.<sup>23</sup> While this is very true in immediate kinds of personal narratives (letters and journals), it is less accurate concerning memoirs. At least in the case of the Brazilian World War II memoirs, authors often include explicit statements, varying in length from a few sentences to full chapters, on historical setting and context. Dequech, for example, spends the first eleven pages of his book, virtually ten percent of the actual narrative, on historical background before he gets to his experiences, and Silveira supplemented the second edition of his memoir with a short chapter reflecting on the meaning of the episode and the memory of the FEB.<sup>24</sup>

The authors' choices help the reader to understand the context of the event, the meaning assigned to it as a whole by the author, the way he frames and thinks about it, and the role it played in his life. While exploring all these, the reader also learns about the event's significance to the history of the relevant society. Since Hynes based his assertions on a comprehensive study that covered several twentieth-century wars across

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<sup>22</sup> "Memoir," in *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Inc. Publishers, 1995).

<sup>23</sup> Hynes, "Personal Narratives," 219.

<sup>24</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 21-32.; Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas*, 207-11.

several countries, it is fair to regard his conclusion as generally characteristic of the war memoir. Why is it that so many Brazilian memoirs differ from the universal tendency by providing historical context above personal experience? I suggest the Brazilian authors were often under the impression that their readers were not familiar with the basic facts concerning their country's involvement in the Second World War, in contrast to, for example, British writers who assumed their readers knew why England participated in World War I or North American authors who took it for granted that their readers understood how the United States got involved in World War II.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, the testimonial aspect of the memoir does not limit the scope of the story to personal experience alone. Stories are not told within a void; on the contrary, they are part of a corpus and thus are influenced by it. Charlotte Linde describes a process in which authors adopt "an existing set of stories as *their own* story," a phenomenon she calls "narrative induction."<sup>25</sup> After the acquisition of the story, people are able to tell their own personal story within the frame of, and in reference to, the story they adopted.<sup>26</sup> In their memoirs, the Brazilian World War II veterans did not limit themselves to personal experience alone, but also incorporated events they did not witness. They added such information to complete a collective picture, not exactly to paint a personal one. An extreme example of this is Antônio Batista de Miranda's *Guerra: Memórias...Destino...* where only 100 pages into a 116-page narrative does the reader learn that the author never embarked on the ship to Italy and that he was released

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<sup>25</sup> Charlotte Linde, "The Acquisition of a Speaker by a Story: How History Becomes Memory and Identity," *Ethos* 28, no. 4 (2001): 608, 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 616.

from the army while the war continued in Europe.<sup>27</sup> Despite authors' earlier claims for the importance of content over form, Batista de Miranda's ability to tell a story-not-his supports Linde's argument that the narrative's structure is not less important than its content.<sup>28</sup> These literary borrowings show us how things "should be told," and they function as signposts to the ideal, yet theoretical, reader—the collective.

The identifying effect of the first person strengthens the memoir's memory-work. Hynes argues that the voice of the memoir emphasizes its uniqueness and its author's individuality, and therefore it cannot make the reader remember someone else's memories.<sup>29</sup> In other words, for the reader the memoir is someone else's story, and therefore it is difficult for him to appropriate it. I argue that the author uses the identification-effect as a tool to make the story the reader's as well. The usage of the first person by the narrator provides the reader with a personal story to associate with and relate to, and it enables him to imagine himself in the author's shoes. That is far more effective than an impersonal account, no matter how well written or fascinating it might be. Indeed, the first person distinguishes the memoir from a historical account written by a close observer. While some authors choose the singular voice, others prefer the plural one, which makes a stronger claim for the representation of a collective experience, and not just a personal one. Authors' choosing to use the plural first person also strengthens my claim for a literary device that enhances identification rather than Hynes' interpretation of the use of the first person as a device to claim uniqueness and prevent appropriation.

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<sup>27</sup> Antônio Batista de Miranda, *Guerra: Memórias...Destino...* (1995 [?]). Batista de Miranda was not a *febiano*, i.e., a veteran of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, but an *ex-combatente*, a term that refers to all military and civilian Navy personnel who served during the war, no matter where they served.

<sup>28</sup> Linde, "The Acquisition of a Speaker by a Story," 618.

<sup>29</sup> Hynes, "Personal Narratives," 206.

The usage of the first person emphasizes the subjectivity of the perspective, and makes any claim to objectivity difficult. It also leaves room for the author to pass judgment on the things he or she narrates. Judgment, however, is a moral act, grounded in society's morals, expectations and conventions, and not just a personal perspective. Thus, ironically, the most basic form of subjectivity—expressing one's opinion—reflects collective attitudes manifested in the individual's choices.

The memoir claims to tell the truth of “what really happened” and asks the reader to trust the author as an eye-witness. The claim of veracity seeks to fortify the memoir's authority and transform the author's subjectivity and lack of broader perspective into a symbolic asset. One editorial introduction explicitly communicates this quality when it states “*Êles não Voltaram* is not fiction. These are authentic episodes of the Second World War, which the author and his comrades experienced.”<sup>30</sup> For example, in his introduction to one of the first memoirs, *O Brasil na Guerra*, Kepler Borges tells the reader that in spite of being neither a historian nor an experienced military man, he saw “with his own eyes” the reality in Italy.<sup>31</sup> By asserting his advantage he thus attempts to overcome his shortcoming as a memory agent by trying to convince the reader that his personal experience is more important than the professional tools he lacks.

An important quality of the memoir is that it does not record the past, but one's recollection of it.<sup>32</sup> This self-evident fact opens the window to an array of theoretical discussions on the nature of individual memory, asking, for example, what people remember, how do they remember, is memory fixed or changing, and whose memory is it

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<sup>30</sup> Jamil Amiden, *Eles Não Voltaram* (Rio de Janeiro, : Gráfica Riachuelo Editôra, 1960), 10.

<sup>31</sup> Borges, *O Brasil na Guerra*, 17.

<sup>32</sup> Hynes, "Personal Narratives," 211.

in the first place. When analyzing memoirs, then, it is beneficial to linger on how collective memory works.

A second reason for the need to investigate the connections between individual and collective memory is the memoir's low level of immediacy, which allows authors to reflect on the past when describing their memories.<sup>33</sup> Thus, intentionally or not, memoirs record the person's reflections, and at the same time, society's perspectives.

### ***Individual Memory and Society***

While in his summer cottage under the pro-Axis French Vichy regime, one of the *Annales* founders, Marc Bloch, wrote his reflections about his profession. Away from his research library, and thus relying on his memory alone, he pondered the nature of historical evidence and its problems. He noticed that although careful criticism and comparison might expose intended forgery and deception, witnesses might also speak the truth, their truth, while deceiving themselves and those who rely on them in all good faith. Bloch argues that the circumstances in which the event is experienced and the attention given to it by witnesses will influence the testimony. Moreover, errors of memory might occur since no more evidence exists than what resides within one's own faulty brain. Bloch recognized that social conditions might also influence one's understanding of the past since they might transform an inaccurate observation into a truth. In order to confront these distortions Bloch suggests using different methods such as statistics based on diverse sources, an evaluation of probabilities, and recognition of the role of coincidence in history. Bloch's training, experience and intuition led him to some valuable insights about evidence and the nature of human memory. These insights

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 208-9.



also reflect the state of memory research on memory of his time, which was governed by two competing paradigms: Ebbinghaus' and Bartlett's.

The first of these two important paradigms concerning memory appeared in 1885 in Hermann Ebbinghaus' groundbreaking monograph, *Memory*.<sup>34</sup> Ebbinghaus was the first psychologist to study short-term memory. According to Ebbinghaus, short-term memory refers to one's memory of the several seconds that pass after an event happens, such as the immediate memorization of a phone number. Long term memory, on the other hand, refers to all other time spans of memory.<sup>35</sup> Ebbinghaus studied memory in laboratories and controlled experiments by asking subjects to memorize meaningless three-letter sequences, like TAZ and ZIN.<sup>36</sup> In 1932 Fredrick Bartlett criticized Ebbinghaus for this approach, which he thought was too narrow and artificial.<sup>37</sup> Instead, he asked people to memorize folk tales, and he studied the changes in structure and content in their attempts to recall the stories accurately. As a result of this research, Bartlett developed a long-term memory theory and concluded that people remember in an active way, or more accurately, that they reconstruct their memories each time they recall them.<sup>38</sup> The difference between the two schools of thought that emerged from these scholars' research, as Ulric Neisser put it, is not a difference in method (between laboratory and field) or in discipline (neuroscience and psychology); rather the

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<sup>34</sup> See Hermann Ebbinghaus, *Memory: a Contribution to Experimental Psychology* (New York,: Dover Publications, 1964 [1885]). The original book was published in German in 1885 and was first translated into English in 1913.

<sup>35</sup> Alice M. Hoffman and Howard S. Hoffman, *Archives of Memory: A Soldier Recalls World War II* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 13..

<sup>36</sup> Johan A. Neuenschwander, "Remembrance of Things Past: Oral Historians and Long-Term Memory," *The Oral History Review* (1978): 47. Ebbinghaus's methods continue to dominate the study of memory in psychology.

<sup>37</sup> See Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering: a Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge [Eng.]: The University press, 1932).

<sup>38</sup> Neuenschwander, "Remembrance of Things Past," 47-48.

dissimilarity is centered in the “distinction between the study of structure and of the function of memory. One research tradition focuses on the storage of information from the past... [t]he other, in contrast, focuses on how stored information is used in the present.”<sup>39</sup>

Both ends of the process of remembering—the storage of information and its recall—are of great importance when reading personal narratives. A connection between these two activities can be found in Alice and Howard Hoffman’s research on oral history and memory where they coined the term "archival memory" as "a subset of autobiographical long-term memory which is so permanent and largely immutable that it is best described as archival. From this perspective archival memory consists of recollections that are rehearsed, readily available for recall, and selected for preservation over the lifetime of the individual.”<sup>40</sup> The Hoffmans argue that such memories are composed of impressions assessed when they occurred or shortly thereafter because they were important for the individual at the time they were formed? However, subsequent events might be incorporated into the original memory, especially if it is preserved, as often happens, as a turning point in one’s life.<sup>41</sup>

The Hoffmans’ claims about archival memory help to explain a theory of memory called "flashbulb" memory. In this kind of memory, one "recall[s] a powerful event with great significance and important consequences in terms of [one's] precise location at the time [one] experienced or learned of the event, and [one] remembers [one's]

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<sup>39</sup> Ulric Neisser, "The Ecological Study of Memory," *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 352, no. 1362 (1997): 1697. Bartlett's research also contested a third paradigm about memory. Although not interested specifically with memory, Sigmund Freud argued that "painful memories were stored holistically. Retrieval through psychotherapy was thus a matter of convincing an individual to lower his or her defenses and let the memories surface." Neuwenschwander, "Remembrance of Things Past," 48.

<sup>40</sup> Hoffman and Hoffman, *Archives of Memory*, 145.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 145-46.

surroundings in considerable visual detail."<sup>42</sup> Memories are stored, then, according to their subjective importance.

Subjectivity plays an important part in the recollection of memories as well. Elizabeth Loftus found that "it is relatively easy to interfere with memory by supplying subsequent information; the implication is that memory is a reconstructive and active process. According to this view, the mind is constantly endeavoring to utilize information from a variety of sources in reconstructing memory and to bring it into congruence with 'what must have been.'"<sup>43</sup> What is that "must have been"? Bartlett's early research suggests that people tend to remember a version of the experience after it has been "rationalized to fit constructions satisfying or understandable to the subject."<sup>44</sup> Thus, the memory is not reflective of reality, but of one's perception of reality. The memory is then articulated in ideological, social, cultural and any other type of terms understandable to one's self.

Another way people remember the past is captured in the term "nostalgia." Coined in 1688, "nostalgia" signified a medical illness characterized by "the desire to return to one's native land."<sup>45</sup> During the nineteenth century the term changed "from a geographical disease into a sociological complaint," the object of yearning was defined broadly beyond place of origin, and "nostalgia" evolved from a disease into a state of mind, symbolizing a loss that could never be retrieved but through one's imagination.<sup>46</sup> While many social critics elevated history over nostalgia, which they viewed as a

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>43</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>44</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>45</sup> Leo Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism*, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 143.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 144.

reactionary and an immoral refuge from the present, others saw it more positively, believing it created a dialogue between the past and the present. Leo Spitzer argues that the adoption of the better aspects of the past enables the creation of anticipations in the present. The comparison of the present to the idealized selective past thus functions as a kind of social criticism.<sup>47</sup>

The selective nostalgic remembrance of the past highlights the memory's subjectivity when it is created and recalled. The intensity of the experience, its mediation through personal concepts, the meaning it has for the individual and future events come together to influence what will be remembered and how. When it is time to recall the memory, the recalled memory is used to negotiate the present.

In her study of how World War II and the Holocaust are portrayed in children's literature in Germany, Zohar Shavit uses the metaphor of "a key of memory" to describe a series of principles. Each story uses some of these keys to describe places, events or figures.<sup>48</sup> The concept of "keys of memory" provides a helpful way to analyze the past-present negotiation process in a textual corpus. Let us turn now to analyze several "keys of memory" in the FEB veterans' memoirs.

### ***The Claim for Legitimacy, or Who Can Write a Personal Memoir of the FEB***

Many memoir authors find it necessary to establish their legitimacy and authority to write a memoir on the FEB. The ideally legitimate author is a veteran, a *febiano*, and moreover one who actually fought in Italy as part of the FEB. However, some transgress these seemingly obvious criteria. An extreme example is Batista de Miranda's case.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 145-46.

<sup>48</sup> Zohar Shavit, *A Past without Shadow: Constructing the Past in German Books for Children*, 1st English ed., *Children's Literature and Culture* ; 32 (New York: Routledge, 2005), Especially chapter 2.

Miranda enlisted in the army when the war began and was stationed in a northern unit which belonged to the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from São João del Rei in the state of Minas Gerais. After the war he accepted several posts in the *Associação dos Ex-Combatentes* and became active in promoting awareness of the Brazilian role during World War II and particularly the role of his fellow countryman in the north of Brazil. In 1993, when he was seventy-years old, he published his memoir about his army experiences from 1943-4. While waiting for his turn to embark on the ship that carried the FEB from Rio de Janeiro to Naples, a shortage of space on board left him on the dock and thus, he did not participate in the European campaign. However, the reader, deceived by the narrative and the famous map of the FEB's achievements in Italy on the cover, only discovers this at the end of his memoir.<sup>49</sup> The veterans of the FEB, then, needed to differentiate themselves from the ex-combatants (*ex-combatentes*), who served in the army and the Navy during World War II but never soldiered on Italian soil. Indeed, few memoirs explicitly refer to the difference between veterans and ex-combatants although visually some color photos of the veterans in their berets distinguish between the *febianos*' light blue berets and the *ex-combatentes*' green ones.

Competition also comes from war correspondents that covered the FEB's action in Italy but were not soldiers. Although their narratives do not fit the definition of a memoir, to the lay reader, their stories might resemble a memoir because, after all, they were there. In contrast to most of the memoir-writers who are veterans, journalists like Joel Silveira and Rubem Braga are professional, prolific, eloquent and nationally known

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<sup>49</sup> Batista de Miranda, *Guerra*. Roberto R Graciani, the author of the site of the *Associação Nacional dos Veteranos da FEB* (<http://www.anvfeb.com.br/>) considers the book as one on the FEB on his site.

storytellers who had access to the publishing industry.<sup>50</sup> The Brazilian war correspondents, however, arrived in Italy with the second echelon only, their reports were subjected to censorship, and they covered mostly the rear, a fact reflected in the absolute absence of any image of the FEB in combat action.<sup>51</sup> Competition, then, comes from both soldiers who were not in Italy and non-soldiers who were.

In order to claim legitimacy and gain the upper hand over their competition, the veterans adopted two main tactics: book titles and visual devices. Titles claim legitimacy four different ways. Some settle for appealing to the individual's experience and his actual participation, such as José Dequech's memoir's title "Nós Estivemos Lá" (We Were There).<sup>52</sup> The second type derives its legitimacy from claims to accuracy by saying the story was based on a diary. Thus, although Joaquim Xavier da Silveira published a memoir, and not his diary, he chose as a title: "Cruzes Brancas: O diário de um pracinha" (White Crosses: The diary of a *pracinha*).<sup>53</sup> Xavier da Silveira's title also represents the third type of legitimization: one based on sacrifice, usually of others, by referring to dead soldiers by the crosses on their tombs. Jamil Amiden, for example, chose the title "Eles não voltaram" (They Did Not Return) for his memoir.<sup>54</sup> By referring to their dead friends they claim the right to tell the past in the name of their fallen comrades. The fourth kind seeks to draw its legitimacy from associating the narrative with a specific unit or battle.

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<sup>50</sup> Braga published the second edition of his *Com a FEB na Italia* already in 1945 and Silveira published multiple books which saw multiple editions on the FEB during the years. Rubem Braga, *Com a F. E. B. na Itália, Crônicas*, 2. ed. (Rio [de Janeiro]: Z. Valverde, 1945).; Joel Silveira, *Histórias de Pracinha; Oito Mês Com a Força Expedicionária Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro): Cia. Editora Leitura, 1945).; Silveira, *As Duas Guerras da FEB.*; Joel Silveira and Thassilo Mitke, *A Luta Dos Pracinhas: a Força Expedicionária Brasileira-FEB na II Guerra Mundial* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Editora Record, 1983).; Joel Silveira, *Segunda Guerra Mundial: Todos Erraram, Inclusive a FEB* (Rio de Janeiro: Espaço e Tempo, 1989).

<sup>51</sup> Luis Felipe da Silva Neves, "A Força Expedicionária Brasileira; Uma Perspectiva Histórica" (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1992), 33-37. Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 25-26.

<sup>52</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*.

<sup>53</sup> Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas*.

<sup>54</sup> Amiden, *Eles Não Voltaram*.

This fourth type is illustrated in Jarbas Albricker's choice to call his memoir "Memórias de um pracinha" (Memories of a *pracinha*), where *pracinha* testifies to his belonging to the FEB.<sup>55</sup> Adhemar Rivermar de Almeida named his memoir after the battle of Montese, which is another way of associating the memoir with an event.<sup>56</sup> Hynes suggests that one of the motivations for writing a war memoir is so that the author may feel as if he/she is helping to make history. Such participation allows the veteran simply to state that he "marched with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army" or "was on Omaha beach," and his audience immediately imagines him there and is able to evaluate his contribution.<sup>57</sup> The choice to name memoirs after battles and units acts in the same way by legitimizing the narrator who served in these units and took part in these events.

Memoirs also claim legitimacy through their use of visual sources. Some include personal photos of the authors either as young soldiers or in the present wearing their decorations, beret or old uniforms. Many memoirs—gradually more and more as the printing costs of photos, especially colored ones, dropped—include supplements with photographs of medals and diplomas testifying to the authors' combat experience. These sources establish the author's combatant background. Walter Bello Faria, for example, lists in his memoir six diplomas and medals he received.<sup>58</sup> Nilson Vasco Gondin included several photos in his memoir, in some of which he can be seen decorated with medals. Some might simply be impressed by the medal-decorated chest. Others might recognize some of the medals, like the first-class Cruz de Combate, indicating a bravery

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<sup>55</sup> Jarbas Albricker, *Memórias de um Pracinha* (Belo Horizonte,: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de Minas Gerais, 1965).

<sup>56</sup> Adhemar Rivermar de Almeida, *Montese: Marco Glorioso de uma Trajetória*, 1a. ed. (Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Biblioteca do Exército Editora, 1985).

<sup>57</sup> Samuel Hynes, *The Soldier's Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (Penguin Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>58</sup> Walter Bello Faria, *E a Cobra Fumou: Sonetos e Crônicas Sobre a Campanha da Itália, Inéditos* (Saquarema1991), 20.

act; the Medalha do sangue do Brasil that indicates its bearer was injured; the Medalha da Campanha given to all soldiers who participated in the war, not exclusively in Italy.<sup>59</sup> Some of the medals and certificates—such as the “Medalha do sangue do Brasil” (a military decoration similar to the U.S. Purple Heart awarded to wounded and fallen soldiers)—even claim legitimacy through the tribute of blood. Finally, Manoel Antônio Linhares included in his memoir a section titled “Without Being Arrogant ...” where he listed the decorations he received and printed them.<sup>60</sup>

Authors also use visual devices to enhance their claims for legitimacy and authority. Photos of monuments and graveyards in Italy serve these purposes. Group photos of veterans demonstrate acceptance by the veterans’ community and affirm the verity of the memoir. Photos of the aged veterans visiting Italian battlefields operate in a similar way by assuring the reader that the narrated memories are still fresh in their authors’ minds.

On the one hand, these literary devices seek to position the veterans and them alone as the legitimate agents of memory solely on their merit of being veterans. On the other hand, while these tactics allow all veterans—including medical physicians and priests, for example—to voice their ideas about the past, some of them also serve to create an internal hierarchy of legitimacy among veterans’ memoirs where those who saw battle supersede those who did not. Titles from the third and fourth types of claims to legitimacy differentiate between those *febianos* who were integrated in fighting units and participated in battles (often referred to as “saco A”) and those who did not (“saco B”)

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<sup>59</sup> Nilson Vasco Gondin, *Liberdade Escrita Com Sangue: um Manezinho na Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Santa Catarina, Brasil: Editora Insular, 2000), 169 – 76. esp. p. 76.

<sup>60</sup> Manoel Antônio Linhares, *A Cobra Vai Fumar: Memórias de um Soldado da Força Expedicionária Brasileira* (Florianópolis 2004), 129-32.



and references to dead soldiers suggest proximity to the line of fire. A good example of the division between the soldiers along these lines can be seen in a soldiers' song from the time of the war. The song mocked the veterans who publically presented themselves as heroes when they actually spent their war in the rear.

Andar bonito com ropa recortada  
É lá os heróis da retraguarda

A nice walk... with jaggy cloths  
Here they are, the heroes of the rear

Você que é combatente  
mas não coniece a linha de frente  
Só anda bonito usando  
o distintivo da cobra fumando

You are a combatant  
But you are not familiar with the  
frontline  
You are just nicely walking wearing  
The Smoking Cobra emblem

Andar bonito...

A nice walk...

Arranja um p.o. [punto de observação]  
avançado

Preparing an advanced observation point  
Come and see the Germans being  
bombardeado

Vem ver o tedesco ser bombardeado  
E vê se você se apruma  
pois na retraguarda a cobra não fuma

And see if you will stand tall  
Because in the rear the cobra don't  
smoke

Andar bonito...

A nice walk...

Arranja um p.o. avançado  
Vem ver o tedesco ser combateado  
E vê se você se apruma  
pois na retraguarda a cobra não fuma<sup>61</sup>

Preparing an advanced observation point  
Come and see the Germans being fought  
And see if you will stand tall  
Because in the rear the cobra doesn't  
smoke

While authors claim legitimacy based on their own virtues, they also seek authority from others. One realm where others comment on the memoirs and praise them is in the forward to the books. The flattering forwards have their own internal hierarchy where the most desired ones are by other veterans—first direct commanders, then high-

<sup>61</sup> The musical group reunited in 1960 and recorded an album of wartime songs: Grupo musical do Regimnto Sampaio, *Heróis da Retaguardia[?]*, in *20 Anos Depois: Expedicionários em Ritmo* (São Paulo: Chuntecler Records, 1960[?]), LP. The lyrics appeared, with minor changes, in Uzêda, *Crônicas*, 199.

ranking officers who were *febianos*, then those by other veterans. Next in line are civilian specialists or prominent figures, like a regional literary person or a historian. Finally, in the absence of a person willing to eulogize the author and his creation, the publishing house, particularly the military press BIBLIEX, provided such an exposition. Most memoirs include a short introduction, sometimes several, from an authoritative figure, such as a high ranking officer in the FEB or the president of a branch of the local association. These introductions testify to the accuracy of the text, its quality and the reliability of the writer.

Building on the metaphor of keys of memory, the striving for legitimacy and authority may be defined as “who is entitled to hold the keychain?” In other words the key of memory defines the legitimate and approved agents of FEB story telling. Authors often claim legitimacy is a result of participation. This claim is slightly stronger than an eye-witness, since participation is active while witnessing is passive. By claiming to be a participant, the author, first, distinguishes the *febianos* from the *ex-combatentes* and other civilian eye-witnesses—like the war correspondents—and secondly, distinguishes between veterans who participated in battle and those who did not.

### ***The Meaning of the First Person Plural, or Who Are “We”?***

Since memoirs are memorials aimed at commemorating, and are written for and consumed by a society, the portrayal of the collective in memoirs reflects their existing, changing and desired self-perceptions. Therefore, the way the *febianos* are described is an important key of memory that is used to shape the FEB’s memory.

Most memoirs describe the majority of the *febianos* as patriotic conscripts and to a lesser extent as volunteers. Veterans’ emphasis on the voluntary nature of the *febianos*

corresponds with their repeated assertions that volunteers were real patriots who fought to serve in the FEB.<sup>62</sup> This image is so strong that even when authors acknowledge the coercive manner in which some conscripts were forced to “volunteer,” they usually underestimate the phenomena. For example, when Dequech refers to attempts to send criminals to the FEB he concludes that this attempt did not succeed.<sup>63</sup> While I can neither confirm nor refute Dequech’s claim—no other source mentions the conscription of criminals to the FEB—the assertion’s importance lies not in its historical truth, but rather in the statement’s mere existence. Some *febianos* were dragooned into the FEB due to political or other reasons.<sup>64</sup> Geraldo Vidigal was a young student leader in the *Centro XI de Agosto* in São Paulo who acted against the New State and Vargas. His memoir begins with an account of resistance to the regime and an implicit argument that he and some of his friends from the students’ movement leadership were conscripted to the FEB for political reasons. However, even he, who was dragooned into the FEB for being a political rival of the regime, sees himself as a volunteer, not a conscript, when he comments: “my and my comrade’s convocation was supposed to be a punishment, in 1944—as if it was possible that serving Brazil could be a punishment.”<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, authors do recognize that not all members of the FEB joined the expedition out of love to their country. Dequech, for example, notes that some motivations were less than heroic, such as sergeants who found it difficult to achieve higher ranks and wanted to advance their careers.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 53.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>64</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 129.

<sup>65</sup> Geraldo Vidigal, *O Aprendiz de Liberdade: Do Centro Xi de Agosto À 2.a Guerra Mundial* (São Paulo: Saraiva, 1988), 8.

<sup>66</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 42.

Who were these volunteers? The image that emerges from the corpus is that the FEB was an all-Brazilian unit in four different aspects: social class, regional origin, racial and ethnic ancestry and gender. The memoirs often claim that the *febianos* came from all levels of Brazilian society. However, authors often remark on the elite's relative lack of participation and state that the majority of the soldiers came from the "humble" parts of the population.<sup>67</sup> Batista de Miranda condemns the youth who demonstrated in the streets in favor of the war but later failed to volunteer out of fear.<sup>68</sup> These claims are not only retrospective as similar ones circulated during the war itself. In Belo Horizonte the DOPS conducted an investigation on the authorship of a parody on Guilherme de Almeida "The Expeditionary's Song" named "The Real Expeditionary's Song." The people interrogated remembered the verse: "[t]he industrialists' sons, who have millions of *cruzeiros*, will not go there."<sup>69</sup> While this lyric criticized the upper echelons of society for a lack of patriotism, at the same time it also reveals attitudes toward the lower classes. Cássio Abranches Viotti was a young reserves lieutenant from Belo Horizonte. During the 1930s he was a member of the Brazilian Fascist-inspired Integralist Movement, which was eliminated by Vargas after their failed coup attempt in 1938, and after the war he supported the dictatorship.<sup>70</sup> In 1998 he published his memoirs, which were awarded the prize for best story (*crônica*) of 1998-9 by the Academia Mineira de Letras. As early as

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<sup>67</sup> For example: *ibid.*, 30.

<sup>68</sup> Batista de Miranda, *Guerra*, 52-3.

<sup>69</sup> Arquivo Público Mineiro (APM), DOPS, "Investigações sobre autoria de versos distribuídos clandestinamente nesta Capital com injúrias a autoridades federais e estaduais e contrários ao regime", Belo Horizonte, 5 de Agosto de 1944. On Almeida's song see: Maria Elisa Pereira, "Você Sabe de Onde Eu Venho? O Brasil Dos Cantos de Guerra (1942-1945)" (Dissertation, Universidade de Sao Paulo, 2009), ch. 1.

<sup>70</sup> On Viotti's past as an integralist see Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 30.. Viotti expresses his sentiments to the dictatorship when he describes one of his comrades who made a military career as one who belonged to: "[a] linha dura no combate ao comunismo e à subversão." *Ibid.*, 70.

his first chapter Viotti describes the conscripted soldiers, who were “third tier reservists,”:

“Many arrived almost barefoot. Badly dressed, with pants that were too short, cut at the calves, and a poor shirt, both made of cotton and ragged already. Many of them were toothless, or with many teeth missing. There were the boastful, the irritating, the tiny, all the childish beardless, stutterers, a great number of alphabets. In general, ugly.”<sup>71</sup>

However, he qualifies himself and admits that unlike the time of the Paraguayan war, these soldiers knew their right from their left.<sup>72</sup> Thus, it seems that despite the socially heterogeneous origin of the *febianos*, hostility among social classes did not vanish.

In addition to being composed of all social classes, the texts often include explicit claims to the multi-regional character of the FEB. For example, Dequech states that the 1 DIE was formed by people from all over Brazil “in order not to have regionalism.”<sup>73</sup> The stated intention to prevent regionalism in the FEB should be understood in the context of the Vargas regime’s continuous efforts to develop nationalism over regional loyalties, to strengthen federal power over regional institutions, and to forge a national culture and identity. But the attempt to eradicate regionalism in the FEB was also grounded in the regional structure of the Brazilian Army. The army was divided into regional commands, and the units—usually a regiment or a battalion—were spread throughout the territory with little mobility and with strong ties to their hosting communities. This meant that if units were recruited in full, certain regions would be weakened militarily and socially. It also meant that when the troops returned, certain regions would have significantly stronger military and political power.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>73</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 30.

All twenty-one states were represented in the FEB.<sup>74</sup> However, the composition of the FEB did not parallel the relative distribution of the national population. Sixty-two and a half per cent were from the Federal District and the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais where forty-two and a half per cent of Brazil's population resided in 1940. Together with Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná these five regions composed almost seventy-seven per cent of soldiers but only fifty-three and a half per cent of the general population.<sup>75</sup> The unbalanced distribution of soldiers resulted from the fact that the majority of FEB soldiers served in the three infantry regiments from the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais. This occurred for three main reasons: first, in the joint committee with the United States, Brazil agreed to send three divisions, but ended up sending only one, so plans for a more representative recruitment did not materialize; second, the military was reluctant to deploy the already trained and organized troops from the northeast. By doing so the command hoped to gain more trained troops out of their agreement with the US and to maintain a military force near the American bases, which were perceived by some officers as presenting a threat to national sovereignty; third, mobilization and deployment of troops was not easy, and during the war at sea it was no longer a safe method of transportation. Thus, it was more difficult to mobilize troops from the interior and the geographical margins of the country and bring them to Rio de Janeiro in a timely fashion.

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<sup>74</sup> During the war Brazil was composed of twenty-one states, including the Federal District. Later changes fragmented some of the states and today Brazil is composed of twenty-seven states, including the Federal District (which was changed with the creation of Brasília in 1960 from Rio de Janeiro to Goiás).

<sup>75</sup> For the regional origin of the soldiers see Moraes, *A F. E. B. pelo seu Comandante*, "Quadro da contribuição dos estados, em praças, para a organização da F.E.B.," 304.; for census data see Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil: Ano VII - 1946*, Table "Estado da população: I – População do Brasil, na data dos recenseamentos gerais: 2. Distribuição, Segundo as unidades da federação – 1872/940." p. 36.

Claims for the multi-regional nature of the FEB did not mean that regionalism did not play any part in the memoirs. Authors do, in fact, mention the regional origin of soldiers (more than that of officers).<sup>76</sup> Thus, talking about living conditions in Rio, Viotti says the *mineiros* suffered the most.<sup>77</sup> He also laments that his platoon had to clean an area that other soldiers dirtied. His narration of the unpleasant chore exhibits regionalism because he mentions with shame that the majority of the “other soldiers” were *paulistas* while the majority of his soldiers were *mineiros*.<sup>78</sup> Many memoirs are dedicated to all soldiers from the author’s state. Some authors emphasize the heroic deeds of their compatriots, and it is common to see appendices with names of fallen comrades from the author’s state. Soldiers also document their amazement and pre-conceptions upon meeting Brazilians from other regions. For example, when Batista de Miranda meets troops from the southern states, which historically received German immigrants, he mistakes them for German mercenaries in the service of the FEB.<sup>79</sup> From the southern perspective of Dequech, the soldiers from Bahia look “humble people, very simple, some barefoot hobbledehoy and others in civil suits.”<sup>80</sup>

This phenomenon is not evenly geographically distributed as regionalism is more characteristic of authors from Paraná and from the north-eastern states while it is less characteristic of authors from the central-eastern states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais to assert a regional identity. This might be explained by the fact that the majority of soldiers came from these three states. Another explanation points to the self-image of the center-eastern region as embodying Brazil, and not as distinct from the

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<sup>76</sup> See for example: Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 26, 35, 40., Batista de Miranda, *Guerra*, 19.

<sup>77</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 29.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>79</sup> Batista de Miranda, *Guerra*, 98.

<sup>80</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 32.

country. In theory the FEB became a place where Brazilians of all regions encountered each other, and in spite of any initial misunderstandings or misconceptions, became one united organ. In the memoirs, however, regional collective identities subvert this asserted wholeness of the FEB.

In addition to class and regional origin, the third type of social stratification that soldiers denied existed in the FEB was racial. There are explicit claims about the lack of racism in Brazil. When confronted with a requirement to bar “black” soldiers from enlisting in the FEB, Dequech expressed his amazement and asked: “Why only whites and no blacks would serve, if racism does not exist in Brazil?”<sup>81</sup> Maximiano and Oliveira argue that the ongoing encounter with the segregated U.S. Army reinforced Brazilians’ belief that in Brazil there was no racism.<sup>82</sup>

One way in which Brazilians claimed that they had more egalitarian racial relations than the U.S. was by comparing their army to the American Army. Dequech’s reaction to discriminatory enlistment practices insinuates that such a practice made sense for a segregated North American society but not for a racially democratic Brazil. Accordingly, in his memoir he explains the failure of the first Brazilian attacks on Monte Castelo as a result of an aggravation of racial tensions within the U.S. Army: “[c]laiming that the war was made by whites, and not by blacks, they abandoned the positions during the attack, leaving the III/6RI’s left flank completely unprotected”<sup>83</sup> Dequech also narrates that U.S. troops from the Black 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade (the famous “Buffalo Soldiers”) withdrew and exposed the Brazilian flank in the attack. He explains this retreat as black soldiers’ reluctance to fight for the “whites’ war.” This part in Dequech’s

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>82</sup> Oliveira and Maximiano, “Raça e Forças Armadas,” 160.

<sup>83</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 31.



memoir is not based on his personal experience, since he himself arrived in Italy later with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> echelons, which shows that his explanation must have been grounded in his preconceptions of race relations in the U.S. It is also possible that Dequech—like many other FEB veterans—internalized the explanation that U.S. officials gave for the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s poor performance. Maximiano and Oliveira note that North Americans tended to ignore social explanations for the performance of the 92<sup>nd</sup>, such as the low education rate among the soldiers—eighty-three per cent among black soldiers in contrast to almost thirty per cent among white soldiers in the U.S. Army in 1944—in their attribution of the incident to racial characterization.<sup>84</sup>

Comparisons between Brazil and the U.S. also serve as a platform for praising race relations in Brazil. For example, Jarbas Albricker, from Minas Gerais, wrote in 1965 that in Miami he became “astounded by the problem of the black. What sub-humanity.” He was further amazed by the segregated buses.<sup>85</sup> Miranda repeats conversations he had with several American soldiers who he says admired the lack of racial discrimination among Brazilians and the fact that a black man could command whites.<sup>86</sup> Alípio Corrêa Netto—mentioned above—also commented on the North American attitude towards blacks. In his memoir he narrates how the American base commander in Accra, Ghana, invited his guests to dinner during which an African served the food. What caught Corrêa Netto’s attention was the fact that the Africans wore no shoes, which he believed meant they were slaves.<sup>87</sup> Both racial segregation and the association of skin color with servitude were outside of the Brazilian experience.

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<sup>84</sup> Oliveira and Maximiano, "Raça e Forças Armadas," 165, 72.

<sup>85</sup> Albricker, *Memórias de um Pracinha*, 18.

<sup>86</sup> Batista de Miranda, *Guerra*, 43.

<sup>87</sup> Corrêa Netto, *Notas*, 12.

When racism among Brazilians is mentioned in the memoirs, it is portrayed as stemming from forces external to the soldiers. Viotti narrates occasions when the high officers gave racist orders. The first was before the FEB set sail for Italy when General Zenóbio da Costa, the commander of the FEB's infantry, ordered that blacks could not ride a vehicle in a parade but rather had to walk on foot. The second occurred in Italy when each platoon was to send one soldier to a parade in Naples. The elected soldiers were told to have good manners and not to act like a black man.<sup>88</sup> There is evidence of similar cases outside the corpus of the memoirs as well.<sup>89</sup>

Maximiano and Oliveira conclude their article on racism among armed forces during World War II with the following question: how can we reconcile Brazilian claims for the lack of racism in the Brazilian army and society in light of the reports of racial prejudice in the FEB? They answer it by arguing that Brazilians viewed their relative lack of institutionalized discrimination (in comparison to the U.S.) as evidence of a less malignant form of racial discrimination in Brazil.<sup>90</sup> Reading through the memoirs, however, I believe that Brazilian authors clutched at the idea that Brazil lacked racial discrimination entirely, and in order to resolve any perceived dissonance between their ideas and actual practice, they attributed racist acts to either racist individuals among the high military or to North Americans. In both cases they distinguish between “the soldiers” or “the FEB” or by extension “the Brazilians” or “the Brazilian society” and “them the external elements to the masses,” either domestic or foreign. Accordingly,

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<sup>88</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 76.

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, Demócio Cavalcanti de Arruda, "Impressões de um Infante Sobre o Comando," in *Depoimento de Oficiais da Reserva Sobre a F.E.B.*, ed. Demócio Cavalcanti de Arruda and et. el. (São Paulo: Instituto Progresso editorial 1949), 63-4. Arruda, too, adds that the orders were not fulfilled by the troops.

<sup>90</sup> Oliveira and Maximiano, "Raça e Forças Armadas," 175.

Viotti describes the order prohibiting blacks from riding in the first occasion as “esdrúxula” (weird) and José Bento Teixeira de Salles, who wrote the introduction to the memoir, also expressed his surprise at the order.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, on both occasions Viotti elaborates how he and other lower ranking officers did not comply with the higher ranking officials’ orders. In the first case a captain put his black soldiers on vehicles and as a result was banned from the FEB and was sent to Fernando de Norônia (but later, due to his patriotism, found his way back to the FEB and fought in Italy). In the second case Viotti sent a black soldier to represent his platoon in the parade against explicit orders not to send blacks, and although the soldier was rejected—Viotti does not mention by whom—no actions were taken against him.<sup>92</sup> Dequech, who witnessed discriminatory practices during FEB enlistment, distanced himself from racist orders by arguing that the enlistment requirement was imposed by the United States.

At the same time authors’ terminology in the memoirs reveal that Brazilians were not blind to skin color. References to skin color can be objective and necessary for making a point in the narrative. For example, when the first echelon embarked for Naples, the Italians mistake the marching Brazilians for German prisoners of war due to their green uniforms (that resembled the German ones) and the fact they had no arms. The Italians realized they were wrong only upon noticing the black Brazilian soldiers who could not be Germans because the German Army did not enlist black men.<sup>93</sup> In another instance, in order to emphasize his joy at his first encounter with snow and its

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<sup>91</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 20. José Bento Teixeira de Salles, "Aresentação," in *Crônicas de Guerra: A Força Expedicionária Brasileira na Itália* (Belo Horizonte: O Lutador, 1998), 8.

<sup>92</sup> Both cases are narrated in Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 76-77.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

strange appearance, another veteran tells about the comical affect created by black soldiers in the white snow.<sup>94</sup>

Yet there are occasions where authors make less neutral remarks regarding racial descent. Dequech, for example, calls a ship captain a “mulatto” and he describes a sergeant from Mato Grosso as “looking like an Indian.”<sup>95</sup> What is this description supposed to say to the reader? What kind of cultural baggage do these attributes carry? It is obvious that racial characteristics are not redundant adjectives, but signify that racial attributes do matter. Corrêa Netto comments on an African with a dirty robe and perfect teeth saying that “his appearance was not strange, perfectly superposed that of our negros.”<sup>96</sup> Both Dequech and Corrêa Netto assume that “normal Brazilians”—themselves and their readers—are white, as Dequech attributes racial markers to non-whites only and Corrêa Netto assumes that he himself is not included among “our blacks” and that his ancestry, as described earlier, is Portuguese and not African. Moreover, while it may not be clear what kind of cultural baggage terms such as “mulato” or “indio” carry for readers, Netto’s usage of *nossos pretos* is patronizing and clearly racist.

Authors refer derogatorily to other ethnic groups as well, especially when Brazilians meet North American soldiers of ethnic minorities that also exist in Brazil, such as those of Japanese and Jewish origins. When Corrêa Netto finally arrived in Italy he was posted to an American field hospital. He served with another Brazilian surgeon, Lieutenant Breno Cunha from Recife, who also wrote a memoir. Both Corrêa Netto and

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<sup>94</sup> Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 66.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 55.

<sup>96</sup> Corrêa Netto, *Notas*, 11.

Cunha found it important to mention that the North American staff was Jewish.<sup>97</sup>

However, while Cunha merely mentioned this fact, Netto elaborated on it and wrote that the majority of the North American physicians looked as if they were from an *origem Semítica*, a first impression which he says was later confirmed when he learned they were all Jews. A more fully articulated Brazilian view of an ethnic group is found regarding the Japanese. Viotti describes both a Brazilian corporal of Japanese descent and a battalion of Japanese-Americans he meets with similar attributes: serious (*sério*), reticent (*de pouca conversa*), rough (*duro*) and most of all, *disciplinadíssimos*.<sup>98</sup>

As the memoirs recount episodes of racial discrimination within the FEB, their authors occasionally use language that reveals the negative cultural baggage dark skin color carries for their authors and the implied reader. Ethnic minorities are also characterized by the authors, although not necessarily negatively. While the categories of skin color and ethnicity are used to exclude or marginalize parts of the Brazilian population from mainstream society, these categories also differ in societal practice. Authors differentiate between blacks in the U.S. Army, who suffer “inhuman” segregation and in return let racial conflicts affect their military duty, and Afro-Brazilians who might be noticed for their “race,” but are part of a more progressive racial democracy. These claims of egalitarian racial relations unite all Brazilians and are a fundamental component of their national identity. When it comes to ethnic minorities, though, no such “political correctness” exists in the discourse. Instead, authors draw similarities between Brazilian ethnic minorities and their U.S. Army counterparts. As a

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<sup>97</sup> Breno Cunha, *Do Tâmissa ao Vale do Pó: Memórias de Guerra e Outras ...: Inglaterra-África-Itália, 1942-1945* (Recife: Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Editora Universitária, 1977), 87.; Corrêa Netto, *Notas*, 42-3.

<sup>98</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 157, 392.

result, the ethnic group appears more “international” and less “Brazilian.” Thus, “race”—the constructed difference based on phenotypes and claims of ancestry, mainly along the line between “white” and “black”—does not serve as a legitimate tool for categorization and for the creation of the “other.” But “Ethnicity,” i.e. these groups characterized by their origin and cultural heritage that usually fall outside the Black-white continuum—does serve as this tool of otherness. The difference between “our blacks” and “their blacks” makes the “we,” meaning Brazilians of all colors, one; the similarities between “our ethnic minority” and “their ethnic minority,” however, creates a distance between “us Brazilians” and “our ethnic group” which is similar to “their ethnic group.” While the belief in racial democracy, or at least the commitment to it in the discourse, softens racial tensions and functions to integrate groups who may have been excluded for racist reasons, no such model exists to bridge ethnic divisions.

### ***Whose Civilization Is It? Tourism and the Boundaries of Brazilian Culture***

The construction of the collective “we” is not restricted to the social but extends to the cultural. Two often recurring episodes in the memoirs, the passage to Europe and Italian tour, situate “Brazilian culture” within the matrix of world cultures.

One might expect to find in the memoirs an epic and dramatic depiction of the crossing of the Atlantic. After all, the FEB was the first expeditionary force to leave Brazil heading east since a Luso-Brazilian force of about 1,500 men on fifteen ships from the Portuguese colony crossed the south Atlantic to recapture Luanda and Benguela from the Dutch in 1648.<sup>99</sup> In the modern era it was the only significant Latin American military force to participate in World War II and the Brazilian *febianos* are still the only

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<sup>99</sup> On the 17<sup>th</sup> century expedition see: C. R. Boxer, “Salvador Correia de Sá e Benevides and the Reconquest of Angola in 1648,” *The Hispanic American Review* 28, no. 4 (1948).

Latin American soldiers ever to fight on European soil.<sup>100</sup> The symbolic potential of the trip east did not escape Paul Maguire, the Captain of the U.S. Gen. Mann that carried the first echelon over the Atlantic. Upon entering the Mediterranean he addressed the 5,000 *febianos* on board through the ship's speakers, compared it to the symbolic passage through Hercules' Pillars, and congratulated them for being the first South American force to ever leave the continent for combat overseas. In his response to the speech Mascarenhas de Moraes, the commander of the FEB, concurred with Maguire, but also emphasized their destination as the "cradle of Christian civilization," of which both nations, Brazil and the U.S., are a part. He then added that they are united in the Americas, on the Atlantic, and will be brothers in arms in Europe.<sup>101</sup> However, in the corpus under examination here no similar conceptions of the voyage on the west-east axis were found.



**Figure 1:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sargent Gastão Schefer's shellback certificate from September 29, 1945 on board of the U.S.A.T. James Parker. Source: Arquivo da casa dos Expedicionarios, Curitiba, Paraná, Documentos Originais II.

<sup>100</sup> The 201<sup>st</sup> Mexican squadron fought between May and August 1945 in the Southwest Pacific. See Tudor, "Flight of Eagles"; Schwab, "The Role of the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force."

<sup>101</sup> Aguinaldo José Senna Campos, *Com a FEB na Itália: Páginas do Meu Diário* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa do Exército, 1970), 65-7. Both speeches are also brought, with slight differences, in Moraes, *A F. E. B. pelo seu Comandante*, comment no. 11, 38-9.

While the west-east axis of the voyage was not significant to the Brazilians, the south-north axis was. On their way to and from Italy on board North American ships, Brazilians engaged in the old naval tradition of crossing the [equatorial] line, which was a ceremony known as “equatorial baptism.”<sup>102</sup> While the ceremony fascinated Brazilians, who seemed to be surprised by it, it was a well-known practice in the United States. This is evidenced by the Coca-Cola advertisement on the 1941 back-cover of *Life* magazine.<sup>103</sup> The ad describes an equatorial baptism ceremony by soldiers on board a Navy ship. In the ad, one can identify Neptune Rex, a barber, humiliated first-crossers and a crowd of soldiers, most of whom are holding Coca-Cola bottles in their hands. Coca-Cola’s choice to integrate its own product into a representation of this event means not only that it was familiar to readers, but also that it was perceived as a positive American experience. The ceremony divides the oceans between the northern and southern hemispheres and no significant importance is given to the east-west division of the Atlantic (or any other ocean). The nature of the ceremony as an initiation rite, during which new sailors and travelers who have not yet crossed the equator (*Pollywogs*) are accepted by seasoned sailors (*Shellbacks*) and become seasoned themselves, took on a special meaning in the case of Brazilians due to the different nationalities of the participants. When the *febianos* participated in the ceremony, regardless of rank or experience, they were most often “baptized” and “accepted” by North Americans.<sup>104</sup> In contrast to the U.S. Navy tradition,

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<sup>102</sup> For example see: Almeida, *Montese: Marco Glorioso de uma Trajetória*, 43.; Raul da Cruz Lima Júnior, *Quebra-Canela: A Engenharia Brasileira na Campanha da Itália*, 2a. Edição ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército Editora, 1982), 40.; Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 49.; Campos, *Com a FEB na Itália*, 65.; Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas*, 14. For another, almost identical certificate, see: [http://www.history.navy.mil/library/manuscript/burke\\_shellback.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/library/manuscript/burke_shellback.htm)

<sup>103</sup> *Life*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

<sup>104</sup> Only in one case, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> echelons on the board of Gen. Meiggs, Almeida reported that *Rex Neptun* and his court were enacted by Brazilians. At that occasion too, the Brazilians sang “God Save



which involved brutal humiliation of the *pollywogs* by the *shellbacks*, the Brazilian memoirs portray the initiation as a cordial, entertaining reception.

No similar ceremony was held when the convoys left the Atlantic and entered the Mediterranean through Gibraltar, yet a change was felt on board as the ships entered submarine-free waters.<sup>105</sup> The relief also came from an imagined sense of homecoming, as some authors commented on their joy of sailing in *mare nostrum*.<sup>106</sup> This Latin phrase expresses not only belonging and affection, but also a strong connection to Ancient Rome, for many the cradle of Western civilization.

The memoirs' crossing-of-the-Atlantic narratives suggest that their authors' conception of the Atlantic was not as a body of water dividing the old world from the new, the East from the West, their civilization from Europe's, or even home from the distant lands on the other side of the ocean. On the contrary, the ocean connects their culture with European culture, and at the end of their journey they did not really arrive "there," but rather, in a sense, came back to "their sea" – their home. As the meaning of the equatorial baptism ceremony suggests, in authors' imagined matrix of world cultures, Brazil was inseparable from Europe while the U.S. was set apart from the Brazilian-European civilization by the great waters. In that sense the geographical voyage eastward was a cultural and symbolic journey northward and when it ended the *febianos* expanded their cultural horizon to include North America as well.

As the plots in the memoirs progress to Italian soil, implicit assertions about Brazil's belonging to European civilization continue. Throughout the memoirs there are

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America." All the other accounts tell of American *shellbacks* as the leaders of the ceremony. For the exception see: Almeida, *Montese: Marco Glorioso de uma Trajetória*, 43.

<sup>105</sup> Only in one memoir there was a laconic reference to a ceremony when crossing Gibraltar, but it was a farewell to the escorting ships without geographical reference. Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas*, 20.

<sup>106</sup> See, for example: Lima Júnior, *Quebra-Canela*, 41.; Uzêda, *Crônicas*, 25.

many references to geographical locations the *pracinhas* passed by, and often the description includes a historical reference that demonstrates close familiarity with European geography and Classic history and culture (see discussion above in this chapter). When approaching the Italian coast, authors display their knowledge of Old World geography by recognizing islands, such as Alba and Capri, and commentating on Napoleon's confinement there.<sup>107</sup> When they see Naples, they describe recognizing the city and nearby Vesuvius from prior cultural knowledge of these places, and they repeatedly emphasize the fame of the celebrated landscape.<sup>108</sup>

During the campaign *febianos* had many opportunities to see and visit Italian cities. In the memoirs they often exhibit their knowledge of local history and express their emotional connection to these places. Pisa is mentioned for its inclined tower—an obvious tourist attraction—but also for being “Galileo’s city”—an observation that requires some knowledge.<sup>109</sup> Upon entering Rome Viotti tells how they remembered “its history, its glories, its decline” and how emotionality of the visit.<sup>110</sup> Toward the end of the war Vidigal tells his audience how difficult it was for him to say farewell to Florence, and its museums and rivers.<sup>111</sup> Many Brazilians visited the Vatican, and in their memoirs they describe art pieces and refer to their artists by name.<sup>112</sup> In one of his visits to the Vatican, Viotti expresses his pride in his soldiers’ respectful manner and interest when

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<sup>107</sup> “[O]nde Napoleão Bonaparte estivera confinado.” Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 44.; Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas*, 22.

<sup>108</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*. Silveira too is excited to see “[a] famosa baía de Nápoles,” the “<<bella Napoli>> que só conhecemos de longe,” and its “famoso espetáculo” with the “famoso Vesúvio” to its right. Vidigal, *O Aprendiz de Liberdade*, 22, 27.

<sup>109</sup> “...a cidade de Galileu.” Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 46.; Vidigal, *O Aprendiz de Liberdade*, 36.

<sup>110</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 82-3.

<sup>111</sup> Vidigal, *O Aprendiz de Liberdade*, 100.

<sup>112</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 87.; Vidigal, *O Aprendiz de Liberdade*, 121.

visiting churches and museums.<sup>113</sup> All these examples demonstrate the emotional connection many Brazilians had with Italy.

Authors also refer to the Classics. When narrating his first moments on board the ship that took him to Italy Viotti says he imagined seeing Dante's famous inscription on Hell's gates in Italian: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here."<sup>114</sup> In another episode, he uses an analogue to Greek mythology when he compares the unpleasant chore of cleaning waste to Hercules' fifth labor of cleaning Augeas' stables.<sup>115</sup> When visiting Florence Silveira recalls Michelangelo's comments on the cathedral doors and recognizes Pico de la Mirandola's stake.<sup>116</sup> These references do not necessarily originate in prior knowledge as Silveira admitted that some of his historical knowledge came from a tourist guide.<sup>117</sup>

Oftentimes *febianos* sought opportunities to evade military authority and tour the Italian—and sometimes even beyond Italian—attractions by disobeying orders and becoming AWOL (Absence Without Leave). Every memoir references this practice, which even got its own nickname: "a tocha," literally "a torch," a neologism in the FEB for absenteeism for the purpose of tourism.<sup>118</sup> *Tochas* and even *super-tochas* gave *pracinhas* the opportunity to see places of historical, cultural and religious importance. While some of the *tochas* were simply made to visit a nearby village or city for the

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<sup>113</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 141.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>116</sup> Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas*, 85.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>118</sup> José Álfio Piason explains the term as "[u]nofficial or unauthorized trips and leaves." José Álfio Piason, "Alguns Erros Fundamentais Observados na F.E.B.," in *Depoimento de Oficiais da Reserva Sobre a FEB* (Rio de Janeiro: Cobraci Publicações, 1949).; Cunha explains it as "a *tocha* became to signify all wanderings or excursion, authorized or not." Cunha, *Do Tâmbisa ao Vale do Pó*, 95.. According to Vidigal the term originated among the *paulista* soldiers who, while in Rio de Janeiro, left the camp and took the train to São Paulo to see their sweethearts. Thus, the torch was a reference to the North American Statue of Liberty and a symbol of the freedom they had just gained. In the other memoirs there is no alternative suggestion for the origin of the term. Vidigal, *O Aprendiz de Liberdade*, 119.

purpose of entertainment, in the memoirs most of the *tochas* are for cultural and religious reasons.

Soldiers got to know Europe and the Mediterranean in more legal ways as well, especially toward the end of the war. Silveira, for example, tells of his experiences in Cairo, Benghazi in Libya, Palestine, and Athens.<sup>119</sup> A week after the war in the Italian peninsula ended, an Italian touring agency contacted the FEB headquarters, in Portuguese, and offered its soldiers tourist packages to Rome and its surroundings.<sup>120</sup>

### ***Tourism, the “Other,” and the Affirmation of Brazilian Identity***

The soldiers’ experience, which only began with the crossing of the Atlantic, can be described as a travel or a tour, and their memoirs as travelogues. Indeed, the authors themselves often refer to their experiences in terms of “tourism.” For example, quite early in his memoir Netto addresses his readers and in an apologetic tone explains why there are so many comments on food in his text: “[w]hat else could we do? It was only traveling and feeding us ...”<sup>121</sup> After all, they were heading to Italy, as he puts it, the cradle of civilization, and the highest expression of human culture—a description of a tourist attraction more than a theatre of war.<sup>122</sup> Vidigal also comments on his company and says that: “[d]uring almost all the Serchio campaign, the CCAC soldiers were little

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<sup>119</sup> Silveira, *Cruzes Brancas*, 175-98.

<sup>120</sup> Arquivo Historico do exército, [Sessão da F.E.B.], Caixa 9, A letter from “ITI” S/A Ufficio Viaggi E turismo to “Ao comando da Força Expedicionaria Brasileira.” Rome, May 9, 1945

<sup>121</sup> Corrêa Netto, *Notas*, 16. The multiple references to food are a repeating motif in almost all the memoirs.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

more than tourists.”<sup>123</sup> The conceptualization of soldiers’ experiences in war as a form of tourism is not unique to Brazilians.<sup>124</sup>

Tourism is an encounter with the different, and in Italy the Brazilian came across more than one dissimilar culture. In this process the tourist compares two cultures—his/her native culture and the one he/she is touring—and evaluates them comparatively.<sup>125</sup> In her study of travel narratives, Mary Louise Pratt describes such encounters—although in a colonial context—as “contact zones,” which she defines as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”<sup>126</sup> Pratt’s concept of contact zones does not neatly describe the encounter between Brazilians and Italians as these were not viewed by Brazilians as “disparate” cultures. On the one hand, *febianos* were part of a victorious army, and they proved their military merit by successfully facing “the best soldiers in the world.” On the other hand, unlike other colonial and commonwealth expeditionary forces in World War II, they were an integral part of the American 5<sup>th</sup> Army.<sup>127</sup> As described above, attempts to visually hide the black soldiers suggests that some of the higher ranking commanders were interested in “whitening” the lower ranks of the FEB. Many lower rank officers, especially reservists, constantly compared their commanders and the Brazilian Army to the Americans, and as a result needed to disassociate themselves with “The Army of Caxias.” In spite of these

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<sup>123</sup> Vidigal, *O Aprendiz de Liberdade*, 66. CCAC is an acronym for Companhia de Canhões Anti-Carro – Company of Anti-Car Canons.

<sup>124</sup> Alon Confino offers a similar perspective by German soldiers, especially on the Western front and particularly in Paris. See: Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006), 248-9.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>126</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.

<sup>127</sup> McCann, "Brazil and World War II."

differences, in Italy Brazilians encountered other cultures, many for the first time in their young lives. These encounters happened while touring Italy but also when engaging with British and American soldiers in military surroundings, with Italian civilian populations and partisans in the liberated areas, and with Italian and German foes in battle and as prisoners of war.

Written as journey accounts, many of the personal narratives are bursting with anecdotes.<sup>128</sup> Stephen Greenblatt asserts that anecdotes made by travelers are *representative* anecdotes and are "among the principle products of a culture's representational technology."<sup>129</sup> Thus, Greenblatt asserts that these anecdotes are literary units which are more than a specific story of a personal experience, but are also highly telling as an emblematic event, representative of a wider, cultural experience.

The encounter with the Italian civilian population was traumatic in multiple ways. The Brazilians met an impoverished and hungry population tired from years of living in a war zone and split among the combatant sides. The similarities between the two Roman languages and the Italian background of some of them enabled many Brazilians to communicate to some degree with the Italians in a language known as *Italiano macarrônico*.<sup>130</sup> Some of these encounters provoked memories of hospitality, warmth and familiarity. In spite of orders forbidding contact with the local population, soldiers engaged in commerce and socialized with the Italian daughters.<sup>131</sup> The strongest

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<sup>128</sup> For example see Elza Cansanção, *E Foi Assim Que a Cobra Fumou* (Rio de Janeiro: Imago Editora, 1987).

<sup>129</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3.

<sup>130</sup> Viotti expresses this argument explicitly. Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 93-4. He also dedicated a chapter to Italian songs he remembered from the war and tells about the sentiments they provoked. *Ibid.*, 147-52. Dequech too discusses Italian songs in details. Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 60-1.

<sup>131</sup> See, for example Dequech's story on their relations with the Lenzi family. Dequech, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, 58-9. Some relations went further and resulted in marriage and later research pointed to 54 such unions.

impression, though, was of an impoverished and morally degenerate population. Both experiences gave the Brazilians an opportunity to see themselves as generous and kind people and thus morally superior.

Camped in the outskirts of Naples after arriving in Italy, the Brazilian soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> echelon encountered the hungry civilian population begging for food. Unlike soldiers from other nations, as many of the memoirs claim, the Brazilians shared their food willingly. The moral superiority of the Brazilian soldiers also manifested itself in the memoir authors' shock when describing prostitution and the solicitation, even by children, of panderers.<sup>132</sup> Memoir authors portrayed Brazilians' compassion and generosity toward the civilian population as national qualities. Based on oral interviews with veterans, Salun also remarked on the prominence of these characteristics in the veterans' testimonies.<sup>133</sup>

The Brazilians nurtured a sense of superiority based on national generosity derived from their compassionate relations not only toward the war-stricken civilian society, but also toward soldiers of other nationalities. For example, when a Brazilian captain heard that his soldiers traded their less than desirable tea with the nearby British artillery battery he ordered them to stop it and give the British the tea since "Brazil does not 'exchange' with the English. [It] donates!"<sup>134</sup>

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Remigio Barbieri, "Spose de Guerra," in *La Montagna e La Guerra: L'appennino Bolognese, Fra Savena e Reno (1940-1945)* (Bologna: Editora Aspásia, 1999), 343. cited in Carmen Lúcia Rigoni, *Nas Trilhas da Segunda Guerra Mundial: as Experiências, as Vivências e os Sentimentos do Soldado Brasileiro*, 1a ed. (Curitiba, Paraná: Editora Torre de Papel, 2002), 161.. About marriage and friendship between Brazilian soldiers and the Italian civilian population see: *ibid.*, 159-92.

<sup>132</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 78.

<sup>133</sup> Alfredo Oscar Salun, *"Zé Carioca Vai À Guerra": Histórias e Memórias Sobre a FEB* (São Paulo: Edições Pulsar, 2004), 100-01.

<sup>134</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 139.

Another source of pride was the self-image of the Brazilians as improvisers who knew how to get by because they were street-wise. An example of such Brazilian resourcefulness can be seen in the description of the Brazilians' alimentation arrangements. In contrast to the Americans, who formed a long single line of soldiers waiting for their turn to reach the serving table and receive their ration, the Brazilians quickly formed two lines, one from each side of the table, and thus shortened their waiting time by half.

### ***Explicit and Implicit Criticism, or What Veterans Are Allowed to Say***

Writing freely on military affairs in Brazil during the most of the second half of the twentieth century was not an easy task. This difficulty was not confined to the period Brazil was under military rule (1964 – 1985) but also to the democratic phase in Brazilian political history, after the fall of the New State (October 30, 1945) and the military coup (March 31, 1964). According to Shawn Smallman, the *febianos'* stories, and especially the politically charged ones, were silenced, sometimes even violently. Additionally, he argues, the military used the veterans' prestige by attributing to them the opposite view.<sup>135</sup> However, the personal narratives reveal another aspect of this story. First, while Smallman grounds his argument in his study of career officers, many of the *febianos* who wrote were reservists from the rank and file, or low ranking officers, and thus were not engaged within the army politics. Ralph Mavis argues that veterans who maintained identification with their units may be less critical of their military experience.<sup>136</sup> Thus, one can deduce that veterans are more likely to be critical than

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<sup>135</sup> Smallman, "The Official Story."

<sup>136</sup> Ralph Mavis, "'Go Tell Americans...': Soldiers' Narratives and Recent Histories of the Vietnam War (Review Essay)," *The Oral History Review* 22, no. 1 (1995): 109.



active military personal, and that the fewer links one has to the army, the more critical and less biased by army politics his personal narrative is likely to be. Second, many issues, such as relations between the soldiers, were less likely to be targeted by the censors. Finally, even under censorship one can express subversive ideas through counter-propaganda methods.

In spite of the censorship, political, and especially military criticism, found its way into memoirs. In 1983 Corrêa Netto wrote that Brazilians talked among themselves about their concerns and discontentment with Brazil's political situation. They were unhappy with the absence of elections, the lack of freedom to demonstrate, and the censoring of the press. "Brazil," diagnosed the keen physician, "is like a ship without a captain."<sup>137</sup> The anti-Vargas army did not censor these kinds of statements, but it failed to read them as comments on their contemporary political powers. At the same time this comment also affirms that the orders, which prohibited any kind of political discourse among men, were not enforced, at least not well. Thus, the existence of political comments undermines Smallman's assertion about the apolitical nature of the *febianos*.<sup>138</sup>

Military criticism varied from plain logistical problems to questioning the necessity of the high commanders. It was only natural for Cunha to criticize the army for being inadequately equipped for the winter.<sup>139</sup> For the rank and file a wet coat and a cold foxhole have a great impact on his personal experience. As a physician, Cunha was well aware of this logistical problem. Corrêa Netto seems to focus his criticism on the high command. During a visit to the hospital by the Brazilian Minister of War, Eurico Gaspar

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<sup>137</sup> Corrêa Netto, *Notas*, 43.

<sup>138</sup> Smallman, "The Official Story," 236-37.

<sup>139</sup> Cunha, *Do Tâmbisa ao Vale do Pó*, 85-86.

Dutra, Netto notices Dutra's lack of interest and understanding of the simple soldier.<sup>140</sup> In a way, this was an extreme case that of the day in day out relationship between *militares* and their soldiers. Although he was not the first to do so, Corrêa Netto drew a clear line between the reserve officers and the "regular army," claiming the former were young and cheerful academics while the latter, the *militares*, tended to be strict and distant from their subordinates to protect the hierarchy.<sup>141</sup> Finally, Corrêa Netto observes that while the Americans had only one general for every two million soldiers, the Brazilians had four generals for the 6,000 soldiers that entered the first stage of the campaign.<sup>142</sup>

It is not surprising to find more explicit criticism of the army in memoirs written after the transition to democracy (1985), yet the difference is less in substance and more in quantity. Earlier accounts that were circulated clandestinely and were omitted from the first body of memoirs later appeared in public. An example of such a case is the account of racism in the army. These events became public knowledge as early as 1949 when one of the accounts in the critical collected volume *Depoimentos de oficiais da reserva sobre a F.E.B.* narrated in three short paragraphs two incidents when black soldiers were ordered to be moved to the end of a march or completely excluded from marching. Both orders were reported as occurring prior to the war, in 1943 and 1944, and as given by an unnamed "General."<sup>143</sup> However, one way to transmit subversive content is through explicit language that makes the unsaid evident.<sup>144</sup> Reception theory recognizes that

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<sup>140</sup> The visit took place on September 30, 1944. Netto noticed that Dutra "ran" to the nurses, and ignored the wounded. Corrêa Netto, *Notas*, 23.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>143</sup> Arruda, "Impressões," 63-4.

<sup>144</sup> Such theories are Austin and Searle's speech act theory and Grice's notion of conversational implicature, both pragmatic linguistic theories. See Christine Anthonissen, "Challenging Media Censoring: Writing

readers may control the meaning of a text by being able to read its unwritten component. The meaning of the text is thus shifted from the text itself to the reader, and a new, uncensored, space is created.<sup>145</sup> Considering that out of the four generals in the FEB one was the general inspector who had no executive power, that the infantry troops were those who marched in Rio de Janeiro in the notorious parade where blacks were ordered to be hidden, and that Arruda himself was an infantry officer, the reader might have deduced the identity of the accused. Within soldiers' circles, however, it was common knowledge that it was the commander of the infantry division, Euclides Zenóbio da Costa.<sup>146</sup>

In the communist newspaper that was written for the armed forces and was circulated within the army, a harsh criticism of de Costa appeared under the parodical column titled "Biography: Our 'Illustrious Commanders.'" Between mocking the general's bravery and military wisdom the article also reminded the audience that:

"All of us knew how he ordered to withdraw the blacks from the FEB's parades, and we all knew his recent recommendations to the colonels to pass the extra number of blacks to the contingents. In this regard, like in other matters, the commander of the R.M. complied, servilely, to the orders of the racist Yankees bosses."<sup>147</sup>

The article ends with the definition of the general as "our enemy, enemy of the armed forces and enemy of the people!" These allegations were exposed in full to the

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between the Lines in the Face of Stringent Restrictions," in *Re/Reading the Past: Critical and Functional Perspectives on Time and Value*, ed. J. R. Martin and Ruth Wodak (Amsterdam ; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub., 2003), especially p. 100.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 101-02.

<sup>146</sup> Costa (1893 – 1962) was later the Ministry of War under the Vargas administration in 1954.

<sup>147</sup> "Biografia: Nossos 'ilustres chefes,'" *O Patriota*, Abril de 1950, p. 5. in APERJ, DPS, Dossies, 30.418 "Jornais Comunistas nas forças armadas." Like the sentiment expressed in the personal narratives, here too racism is attributed to the North Americans. Being a Communist publication, however, the perception of Brazilian society as a "racial democracy" takes a Marxist-Leninist twist with international relations being understood in terms of the imperialistic North Americans and the struggle for national independence.

public years after the end of the dictatorship, in Viotti's memoir (1998). José Bento Teixeira de Salles, a member of the *Academia Mineira de Letras* who briefly introduced the 432-page book, presented the case as a sign of the author's independence.<sup>148</sup>

The majority of the memoirs were published either before, or more frequently, after the military dictatorship. Perhaps the desire to write a genuine account contrasted with the complicity of publishing such an account under the dictatorship, in spite of the counter-censorship tactics. Another reason might be economic, as young people after the war did not have the time and the resources to become writers and to publish.

The three most frequent types of criticism are of the inefficiency of the Brazilian army; the contrast between the *militares*, the regular officers, and the *febianos*; and the public's neglect of the returning soldiers. Sometimes the criticism is stated directly, sometimes through anecdotes, and sometimes through a comparison, usually with the US Army.

In the memoirs, the army is often criticized for poor logistical planning, such as the lack of appropriate gear for the tough Italian winter. Brazilian military efficiency is also criticized, especially in comparison to Americans. For example, Viotti comments on the efficient embarkation of the trains from Naples to Rome, which was directed by two American sergeants, and says that in Brazil, officers were needed to perform the same job which they could only do after extensive training.<sup>149</sup> Viotti tells of a shortage of uniforms for the conscripts, inadequate barracks, the need to pay their own train tickets

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<sup>148</sup> Salles, "Aresentação," 8.

<sup>149</sup> Viotti, *Crônicas de Guerra*, 54.

while waiting for embarkation in Rio de Janeiro, and of improvising plaques that the army did not supply.<sup>150</sup>

A harsher criticism is evident in the description of the regular army officers as distinguished from the reserves' lower ranking officers. The common claim is that while the old Brazilian army and its officers had outdated perceptions on the relations between GIs and officers, on the ethics and morals of the officers corps, and of what professionalism in real combat was, in the FEB, things were different, officers and soldiers mostly shaped under fire, and by learning from the more experienced Americans. Thus, some mention how during the crossing of the Atlantic soldiers were obliged to wear their life belts constantly, while the high commanders of the FEB exempt themselves from this nuisance only to be forced to do so by the American ship captain. Viotti tells that he was directly ordered not to socialize with his soldiers, how his own commander stole some of his possessions and how professional decisions were subject to the arbitrary will and patronage networks of commanders who expected their subordinates to award them with gifts.<sup>151</sup> Racist orders, as we have seen, were ignored by the lower ranking officers too.

Finally, a smaller group of memoirs comment on the poor treatment veterans received from the army and the government upon returning to Brazil. They complain about the lack of financial support, medical aid, and even transportation to get back home from Rio de Janeiro. They also lament that post-war legislation did not differentiate sufficiently, in their opinion, between the veterans of the battlefields in Italy

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 2-3, 16-17, 25, 27.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 144, 58.

from those who served in the safety of the rear or in Brazil (see chapter 1 on the *pracinhas*' reception and homecoming).

Criticism, however, does not need to be explicit in order to be effective. In fact, implicit criticism is sometimes more effective since it may not register consciously with the reader. The mere articulation of such criticism toward the army by the veterans testifies to the role the memoirs had in the post-war Brazilian society. First, the fact that veterans of the Brazilian Army's most significant combat experience since the Paraguayan war criticize the army works in two ways. It affirms the veterans' claim for exceptional treatment over non-combatants and civilians. At the same time their unique military background allows them to criticize the army in times of direct and indirect repression by the military. The key of memory that strives to portray the FEB as whole-Brazilian serves here to claim that the criticism is more than an internal army business. Instead, it suggests that the veterans represent the Brazilian society in almost every aspect. As a result, the soldiers' criticism is representative of Brazilian society

Second, the focus of the criticism being the army—and not the political government, civilian society or their own brothers in arms, to name a few possible targets—also requires an explanation. One possible explication is that under a dictatorship, during the delicate immediate post-dictatorial phase, and under democratic rule, criticism about the army's performance in Italy during World War II can be easily interpreted by readers as criticism of the contemporary military, its politics, competency and role in society. Moreover, the fact that a significant number of prominent members of the dictatorship participated in the Italian campaign as either high or middle ranking officers, numerous enough for Joel Silveira to argue that the coup of 1964 began in Italy

and was done by the FEB, strengthens the association between the commanders of the FEB in 1945 and the leaders of the military dictatorship two decades later.

At the same time that the memoirs explicitly criticize the army, their nostalgic nature serves to implicitly criticize Brazilian society. The positive image of the *febianos* as patriotic, courageous, tough, morally superior and religiously devoted is a benchmark for contemporary society that it cannot match.<sup>152</sup> The unachieved benchmark can be seen, for example, in the repeated anecdotes about the *tochas*. These stories of strolling, with or often without permission, affirm an image Brazilians had about themselves as improvisers and strong individuals who oppose authority. Reading the memoirs as nostalgic in memory shows their intent in a criticism of the present, a call for independence and resistance. The fact that the term was coined in opposition to the military hierarchy makes this criticism even stronger.

Regardless of the author's intention in the memoir to portray or criticize or explain Brazil, these motives were affected by the subjectivity of their individual memory. As discussed above, this subjectivity is affected by social conventions about what should be remembered and how. Because authors were not professional soldiers but civilians who spent some time in the military, it is likely that these conventions were shared by a wider part of the Brazilian society than by the veterans alone.

The memoirs tell nostalgic war stories. The past they discuss is glorious, Brazilian, patriotic, and it belongs to a morally superior people who are compassionate, civilized (in its Western meaning), and ahead of its time's moral wrongs, especially institutionalized racism. All this is framed through a military enterprise that sheds

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<sup>152</sup> For assertions on Catholic devotion as the source of Brazilians being "the best soldiers in the world" see: *ibid.*, 145-6. Viotti also criticize the Brazilian youth of 1998 for lacking faith and a civil spirit. *Ibid.*, 60.

positive light on the army. However, the keys of memory of which they are made composed, the way they are articulated, and the context in which they were published and consumed, opens these memoirs to an anti-militaristic reading. At the same time, they are not pacifist or anti-war. On the contrary, at a time when the military was preoccupied with internal wars against “subversives” and interfering with politics, it is exactly the past war that the memoirs play against the contemporary military and the submissive/oppressed society. In the memoirs, the past is summoned to rescue the present, and the FEB is called, once again, to save Brazil, its honor, and its people.

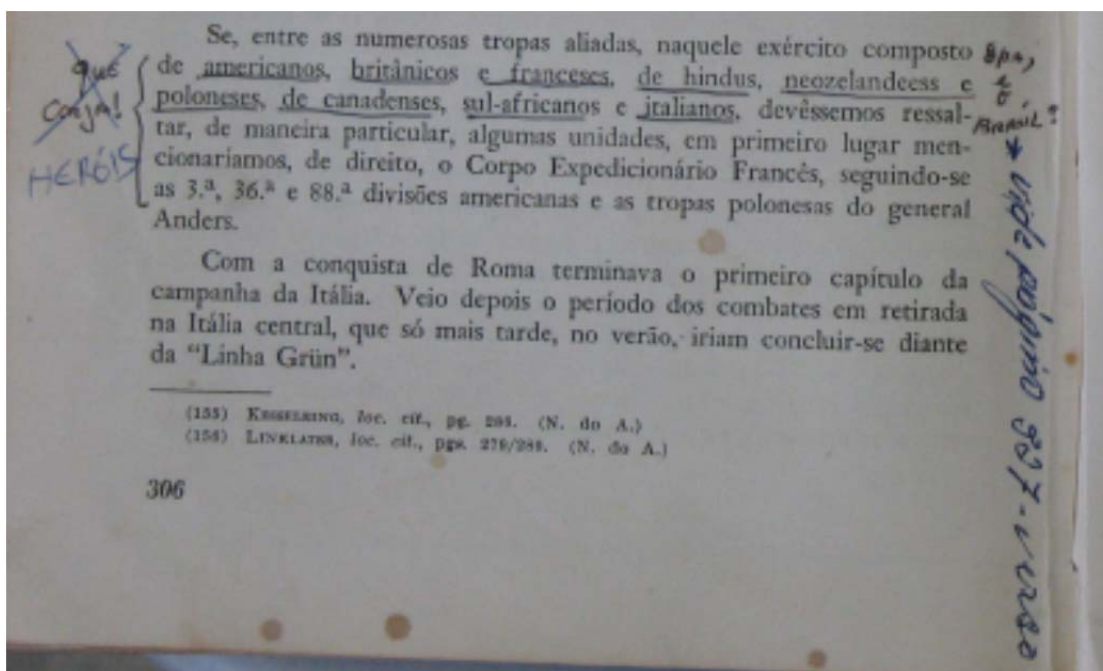
### ***The Memoir in the Eye of the Beholder***

A published text is no longer owned by the author. Readers appropriate the narrative, assign their own meanings to it, and interpret its arguments according to their own experiences and ideologies. Did readers share the assumptions found in the memoirs? One possible answer—in part evasive and in part true—is that readers reacted in all these ways, and others, to the same texts. Each booklover would unavoidably read the book differently. Unfortunately, I was not able to produce a source that would allow me to talk about how people read these memoirs, especially over time. One piece of unique evidence, however, provides a clue to some interpretative possibilities of the FEB stories.

In 1955 Rudolf Böhmler published his book *Monte Cassino*. The book was not a memoir, but it was based on Böhmler’s experience as a highly decorated Nazi paratroop battalion commander who fought in a crucial battle. The book was printed in several German editions and was translated into French, Italian, English, and Portuguese. A copy of the second edition in Portuguese resides in the São Paulo public library in Praça



Franklin Roosevelt where an interesting “conversation” between three readers took place.<sup>153</sup>

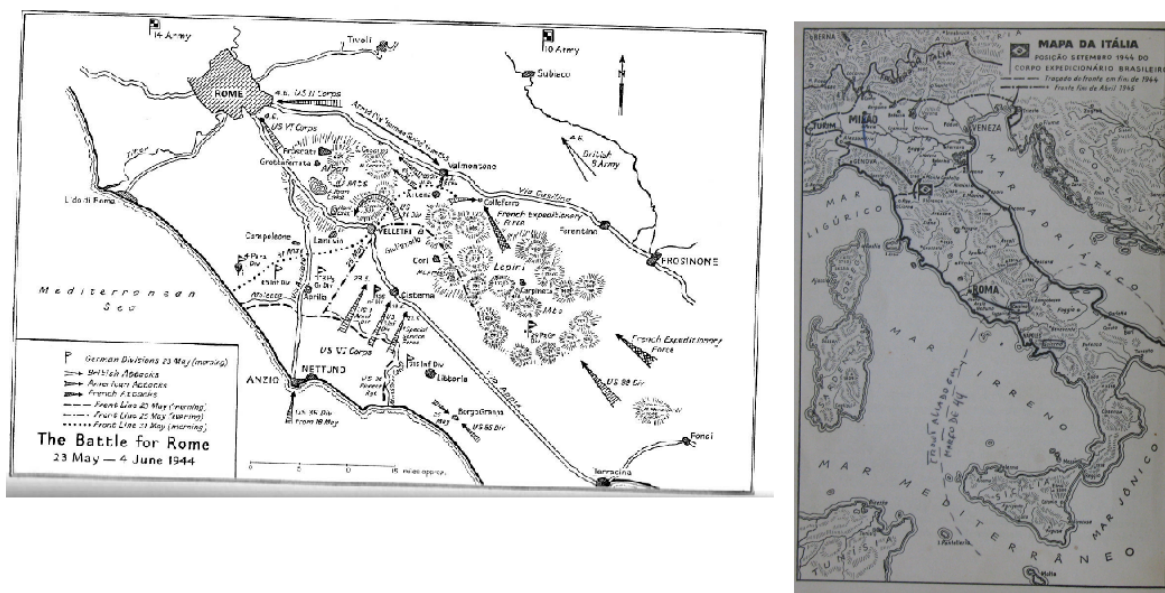


**Figure 2:** Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino* (São Paulo: Livraria Editôra Flamboyant, 1966), p. 306. Notice the three different handwritings and pens.

Toward the end of the thick book, on page 306, three different readers left comments to each other. On the margin of a paragraph listing the nine Allied nations whose troops participated in the battle of Monte Cassino, a reader underlined them and grouped them together with brackets and the short comment: “que corja!” which can be translated as “what a riffraff!” or “what a worthless people!” On the opposite margin, the same individual—judging by the ink color and the handwriting—asked “[h]ey, and [what about] Brazil?” which is an expression of surprise meant to punctuate the narrative and express amazement that Brazil is absent from the list. At first glance, the question looks absurd: why would Brazil be listed in the first place? The battle of Monte Cassino took

<sup>153</sup> The public library was closed in the 1990s and Böhmler’s book is now deposited in the nearby Mário de Andrade Library. I am thankful to the library’s staff for granting me access to the copy in spite of the fact that the library was closed under renovations and the book was in storage. All references from here forward are from this specific book unless noted otherwise.

place between January and May 1944, before the Brazilians arrived in Italy. Is it possible that in spite of reading more than 300 pages, the reader did not know that? While it is conceivable that mere ignorance generated the reader's sense of insult, he/she might have been misled by the book itself.



**Figure 3:** Two Maps from Böhmler's translated books. Left: Map of the battle of Rome in the English translation. Right: The corresponding map at the Portuguese edition, illustrating the FEB's positions in the campaign. Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino* (London: Cassell, 1964), p. 272; Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino* (São Paulo: Livraria Editôra Flamboyant, 1966), p. 304

Like other translated books, modifications to the original text and layout were sometimes made to adjust the book to the taste of the intended audience. The above mentioned comment in Böhmler's translated book was at the end of the tenth chapter about the Allied conquest of Rome. While the English version of the text illustrated the chapter with a map of the Battle of Rome, the Portuguese version includes a map of the Italian peninsula that shows the positions of the FEB in September 1944 and May 1945

with arrows marking its advance.<sup>154</sup> In the following chapter, a two-page long block of text about the FEB was added in the Portuguese version. In the English version the Brazilians are mentioned once and not in a flattering way:

“With a complete disregard for the great opportunities of the hour, the Combined Chiefs of Staff crippled Alexander’s victorious progress and hamstrung the victory of casino and the capture of Rome. From the 5<sup>th</sup> Army they took away its best divisions and made no adequate replacements. From the United States came one solitary division, the U.S. 92 (coloured) Division, and it was later followed by the Brazilian Corps. That, of course, did not begin to compensate for the loss of the French Expeditionary Corps and the U.S. 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, which had formed the nucleus of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army.”<sup>155</sup>

The equivalent Portuguese text is interrupted by a lengthy narrative on the FEB. It tells of the arrival of the Brazilians, their battles, achievements and victories; it eulogizes the Brazilian soldier, and it mentions commanders Mascarenhas de Moraes, Zenóbio da Costa and Minister Gaspar Dutra.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> The map in the English version can be found in: Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino* (London,: Cassell, 1964), 272. The Portuguese version can be found in Rudolf Böhmler, *Monte Cassino* (São Paulo: Livraria Editôra Flamboyant, 1966), 304.

<sup>155</sup> Böhmler, *Monte Cassino (English)*, 288.

<sup>156</sup> Böhmler, *Monte Cassino*, 308-9.

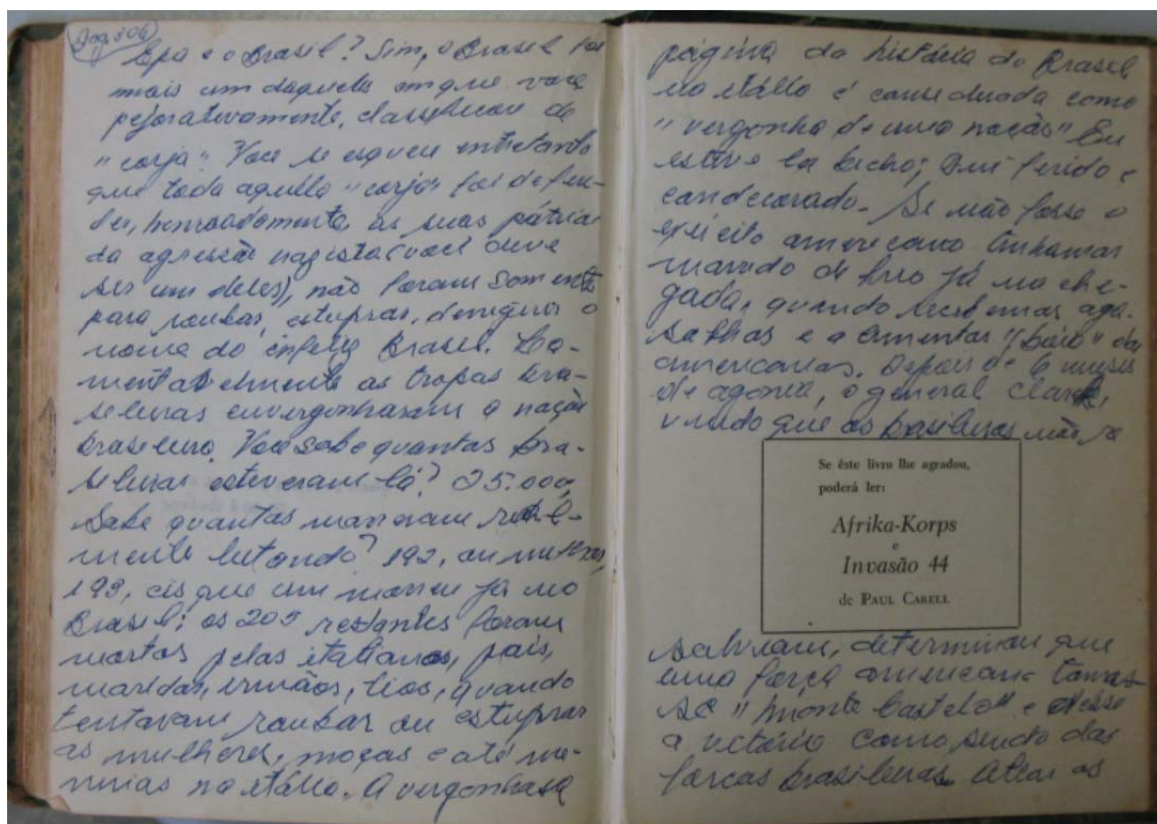


Figure 4: Hand written comments at the end of Böhmler, Monte Cassino., 1966.

The first reader's comments were answered by a second reader, who added to the margins of page 306—under the wonder regarding Brazil's absence from the list—another comment directing the readers to the end of the book, where he wrote a two-and-a-half-page long comment that is replicated here in full:

Hey, and [what about] Brazil? Yes, Brazil was one more of those you, pejoratively, classified as "riffraff." In the meanwhile you Forget that all this "riffraff" went to defend, honorably, their homelands of the Nazi aggression (you are probably one of them), they did not go just to rob, rape, denigrate the name of unfortunate Brazil. Lamentably, the Brazilian troops shamed the Brazilian nation. Do you know how many Brazilians were there? 25,000. Do you know how many died actually fighting? 192, or better, 193, ... since one died already in Brazil; the other 205 were killed by the Italians, fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, when they tried robbing or raping women, girls, and even female children in Italy. The shameful page in Brazilian history in Italy is considered as "national shame." I was there, dude; I was wounded and decorated. If not for the American Army we would have died of cold upon arriving, when we received American shelter and

food. After 6 months of suffering, General Clark, seeing that the Brazilians would not save him, decided that an American force would conquer “Monte Castelo” and would present the victory as if it was achieved by the Brazilian forces. Actually, the Brazilian forces were champions in stealth and robbery, especially of vehicles. Mate, the Brazilian military men should silence about the shame of the Brazilian participation in the Second World War.

The second reader begins his text by referring to the derogatory term the first reader used to describe the Allied forces in Italy and demands respect for them as saving the world from Nazism. He then differentiates between the honorable Allies and the Brazilians, whom he accuses of dishonorable behavior and even war crimes against the civilian Italian population. He claims that most of the FEB dead were actually killed by Italian men while defending, or avenging, the honor of Italian women. The author then claims his knowledge is authentic as he is a wounded and decorated veteran, like a memoir writer, and uses this prestige to condemn the Brazilian Army. According to this reader, not only was the Brazilian Army dependent on the Americans, who clothed and fed its soldiers, it was also incompetent to the point that General Clark assigned American troops to conquer Monte Castelo and Brazilians simply took credit for the victory. The reader believes the Brazilian Army excelled in two things only: committing atrocities and silencing the truth. The second reader, then, is consuming the heroic and eulogized narrative offered to him in a very critical manner. In fact, his position is beyond criticism and is on the verge of a conspiracy theory.

Without doubt, some Brazilians did commit atrocities against civilians in Italy. A statistical summary of the cases brought before the FEB Military Court records such

violations as sexual crimes, homicide and theft.<sup>157</sup> However, these few cases do not accord with the exaggerated number of “205” Brazilians killed by Italians for their atrocities that the second reader posits. His claim, however, is not completely unique, and might have been influenced by earlier literary claims of Brazilian soldiers committing atrocities in Italy, who were then celebrated in Brazil by the army as war heroes.

A fictional example can be found in the 1963 play *O berço do herói* by the prominent Brazilian dramaturge Alfredo de Freitas Dias Gomes—known as Dias Gomes. The play tells of a drama occurring in a small Brazilian town when the town’s fallen FEB soldier, corporal Jorge, suddenly appears alive and well in the local bordello. Jorge allegedly died in the Italian campaign, but upon his return he became a local hero. Soon, Jorge’s statue decorated the main square of his town, which also renamed itself after him. The corporal’s sudden appearance jeopardizes many of the town’s prominent figures, such as the mayor who enjoys the tourists’ revenue, the widow who enjoys the prestige and pension, the priest who enjoys the contributions to the church, and the prostitutes who enjoy the capitalist growth. To their horror, the hero revealed his true whereabouts: he was not missing in battle, as earlier presumed. Rather, he was living under an alias in Italy after having deserted the army for killing an Italian civilian. A decade later, an Italian recognized him in the street so he fled to Brazil with the hope of receiving amnesty. This revelation complicates the plot, and the army sends a general to solve the problem. The dilemma is solved when the town’s people murder the returning soldier and

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<sup>157</sup> The statistical summary according to the nature of the violation can be found on page 625. The actual cases are presented in the book itself. See: Bento Costa Lima Leite de Albuquerque, *Justiça Militar na Campanha da Itália: Constituição, Legislação, Decisões* (Fortaleza: Imprensa Oficial, 1958).

restore his heroic image as a fallen soldier, a narrative that is more palatable for all participants—except the murdered soldier—and is preferable to them over the truth.<sup>158</sup>

The Brazilian public could not watch the play, which was censored, but it still could read its script, which appeared in book form. On July 22, 1965, four and a half hours before the premiere of the play in Teatro Princesa Isabel, three agents from the director's office in the State of Guanabara's Judicial Police (Gabinete do Superintendente da Polícia Judiciária do Estado da Guanabara) informed Dias Gomes that in spite of previous approval by the censors, his play could not be performed. Officials claimed the reason was that the original authorized play was altered, but Carlos Lacerda, the Governor of the State of Guanabara at the time, publicly revealed the true reason of the censorship when he accused Gomes of immorality and of being subversive, saying that "if you want to make a revolution, seize arms."<sup>159</sup> The obvious criticism of the military institution contributed to the censorship as well.<sup>160</sup> Despite protests from many artists throughout the country, including an open letter to the President of the Republic with about 1,500 signatures, the ban remained in effect.<sup>161</sup>

Ten years later Gomes adapted *O Berço do Herói* into a television mini-series and relocated it to the north-eastern sertão under the name: "The fabulous story of Roque Santeiro and his spirited widow, which was without ever being" (*A Fabulosa História de Roque Santeiro e Sua Fogosa Viúva, a Que Era Sem Nunca Ter Sido*). Yet again, the

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<sup>158</sup> For an early published text see: Dias Gomes, *O Berço do Herói* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira S.A., 1965).. For analyses of the play see: Leon F. Lyday, "Structure and Theme in Dias Gomes' 'O Berço do Herói'," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 37, no. 2 (1972).; Iná Camargo Costa, "Dias Gomes: Um Dramaturgo Nacional-Popular" (Universidade de São Paulo, 1987), ch. 5.

<sup>159</sup> Gomes told of the banning of his play in his short commentary about himself "Eu, Dias Gomes" at his collected work. Dias Gomes, *Coleção Dias Gomes: Vol. 1 Os Heróis Vencidos* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bertrand Brasil S.A., 1989), 424.

<sup>160</sup> Lyday, "Structure and Theme in Dias Gomes' 'O Berço do Herói'," 11-2.

<sup>161</sup> For Dias Gomes's narration of the episode see: Dias Gomes, "O Berço do Herói e as Armas do Carlos," *Revista Civilização Brasileira*, no. 4 (1965).

series was censored following a wiretapped phone conversation between Gomes and the historian Nelson Wernack Sodré when Gomes told his friend about the relation between the two pieces.<sup>162</sup> In 1976, while Gomes was author-in-residence at Penn State University, the play was performed for the first time and directed by Manuel Duque.<sup>163</sup> In Brazil, however, the ban on the play remained in effect until 1982; it was performed by two theatre groups from Campinas, São Paulo, the following year.<sup>164</sup> It was available for readers, however, at least since 1965 when it was published by the prominent Rio de Janeiro based publishing house *Editores civilização brasileira*.

The play is a political comedy that criticizes and mocks the eulogized version of FEB history. In a deeper sense the play questions state-imposed official histories and myths and how they affect both society and the individual. Its main theme, according to Lyday, is “the suppression of individual freedom and liberty by stronger forces in society. Additionally, the play reads as a caustic satire of military, religious, and political institutions.”<sup>165</sup> Although written before the Military coup of 1964, the existence of such characters as a cowardly soldier and a dishonest general was daring, and after the coup, even more so.<sup>166</sup>

According to my reading of the handwritten comment the second reader left at the end of Böhmler’s book, the reader was making the same point and using the same device as Dias Gomes. He mocked the official heroic version of the history of the FEB by offering an alternative narrative that paints a picture of the armed forces with an

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<sup>162</sup> Gomes, *Coleção Dias Gomes: Vol. 1 Os Heróis Vencidos*, 424.

<sup>163</sup> According to an entry in Gomes’s chronology. *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>164</sup> Costa, "Dias Gomes: Um Dramaturgo Nacional-Popular", comment no. 32 on p. 78.

<sup>165</sup> Lyday, "Structure and Theme in Dias Gomes' "O Berco Do Heroi", 11.

<sup>166</sup> Costa, "Dias Gomes: Um Dramaturgo Nacional-Popular", 78.



unflattering brush. His comment, then, is not a real criticism of the FEB, but a criticism of the army and the military regime.

His criticism, however, was misunderstood by a third reader who, in a two-word comment at the end of the lengthy handwritten narrative, condemned the second writer as a “veado facista,” which translates as “fascist fag.” The third reader also commented on page 306 to the first reader, crossing out his derogatory remark regarding the Allied forces as riffraff and replacing it with “heroes.” Moreover, on page 308, he responded to the first reader in the same patriotic spirit. On that page the first reader crossed out the word “homens” (men) in the informative sentence “his [Mascarenhas de Moraes] division counted 25,000 men,” which was inserted in the Portuguese translation as mentioned above, and he wrote a derogatory replacement. The third reader crossed the first reader’s word (and thus it is not intelligible any longer) and replaced it with “giants.” This third reader believed the narrative myth about the FEB. His commitment caused him to miss the second reader’s usage of the FEB only to criticize the army as well as the first reader, patriotic as well, whose anger stemming from the absence of the FEB from Böhmler’s text caused him to classify the other fighting forces in a derogatory manner.

The “dialogue” among the pages of a public library book took place in the late 1980s. I am able to date it thanks to the way I came across it, which was not accidental. During my dissertation research in São Paulo I conversed with my colleague and friend, the FEB historian Cesar Campiani Maximiano, about how we became interested in this topic. Maximiano told me about the book he had read while he was an adolescent in the 1980s, where he witnessed the comments in the book. I was fascinated by this evidence of reader response and persisted in locating the exact copy. Despite the fact that the

library where Maximiano read the book did not exist any longer, I was able to locate the copy in storage at the Mário de Andrade library.

While a unique piece of evidence, the conversation recorded in the margins of the library book is not anecdotal. The resemblance between the second reader's narrative and a prominent Brazilian artist's play, as well as to similar illustrated narratives that appeared in Brazilian war comics in the 1970s—which are explored in the fourth chapter—demonstrate that this interpretation of the FEB's role in World War II is not isolated. The conversation suggests that some readers of the veterans' memoirs eternalized their exalted version of history—now reinforced by other genres where text was added to the translated version available to the local market—to the point that they were expecting it even where the plot or the timeline did not require it. Others were not convinced by the eulogized narratives and adapted them to criticize their contemporary reality of living under a Military Regime.

### Chapter 3: Commemoration without Remembrance: FEB Monuments in Time and Space<sup>1</sup>

One early morning on October 19, 2008, the students and faculty rushing to class at the prestigious *Universidade de São Paulo* noticed an unusual sight at the university's entrance. A brilliant orange life jacket decorated the Armando de Salles Oliveira monument, located in the *Praça Reinaldo*

*Porchat* at the *Cidade Universitária*. The same morning, professionals and blue-collar workers on the *Avenida Paulista*, the financial hub of Brazil and one of the city's "postcards," passed by the *Anhanguera* monument, which was wearing the same life jacket. Tens of thousands of confused *paulistanos* across the city met fourteen other monuments decorated the same way in such central locations as *Praça Panamericana*, *Praça do Patriarca*, *Parque Ibirapuera*, and the *Monumento à*

*Independência* in *Ipiranga*. The project, titled "Survival" (*Sobrevivência*), was on display for

almost two months. According to the small signs next to the monuments, by clothing the monuments artist Eduardo Srur meant to bring the monuments to the public's attention and to make people think about the monuments and the space where they were located.



**Figure 5:** *Anhanguera*, Luiz Brizzolara, 1924. Located in *Parque Siquiera Campos (Trianon)* since 1935

<sup>1</sup> An earlier and partial version of this chapter was published as: Uri Rosenheck, "Entre a Comemoração do Passado e a Construção do Futuro: os Monumentos da FEB em Seus Contextos," *Militares e Política* 3(2008): 7-16.

The project did not try to promote a specific ideology, but rather was intended to provoke passersby collectively to re-imagine the city's history and space.

In his artistic endeavor, Srur expresses dissatisfaction with the weak collective memory in Brazil. Why is it, then, that in spite of this criticism, as well as veterans and researchers' persistent assertion that the FEB has been forgotten by the world, by Brazil and by the Brazilians, about 200 war monuments commemorate the FEB throughout Brazil?<sup>2</sup> Previous authors on studies of monuments have argued that the abundance and social visibility of war monuments as cultural artifacts justified their study, and that, taken as a form of cultural expression, one can read in them a whole range of meanings about a commemorating society, from its power relations to its values and ideology.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I ask why Brazilian communities desired to commemorate the FEB. What can one learn from the monuments about the ways that commemorating communities understood the FEB and what it meant for them? Which values did they assign such monuments? Who are these communities? Furthermore, as the phrase "written in stone" suggests, the monuments were intended for future generations to interpret in specific ways - did the interpretations survive over time? How did successors reinterpret the messages? Finally, why, facing these monuments, do many still argue that the FEB has been forgotten?

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<sup>2</sup> On the forgetting of the FEB see, for example: Neves, "A Força Expedicionária Brasileira: 1944 - 1945," 295.; Maximiano, *Onde Estão Nossos Heróis*, 102.; Cytrynowicz, *Guerra Sem Guerra*, 287 - 320.; Fernandes, *Estrada Para Forno*, 312 - 20.

<sup>3</sup> For the monuments as visual expressions of society's desires see: Arnold Whittick, *War Memorials* (London: Country Life Limited, 1946), 1.; For monuments as an abundant cultural artifacts see: Alan Borg, *War Memorials: From Antiquity to the Present* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991), ix. and Oz Almog, "War Casualties Monuments in Israel: A Semiotic Analysis," in *Megamot* (1992), 182.; For the war monument as a useful source for cultural and social analysis see: Chris Maclean and Jock Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials* (Historical Branch, 1990), 10.

### ***Number and Dispersion***

In early 1983 the FEB Veterans' Association (*Associação nacional dos veteranos da força expedicionária brasileira*, hence forward: ANVFEB) surveyed the ways Brazilians commemorated the FEB throughout the country. It sent letters to association members and to municipalities' mayors asking for information regarding monuments and other forms of commemoration dedicated to the FEB in their jurisdiction. The association gathered the inquiry's results in five handwritten volumes deposited in the association's national council.<sup>4</sup> Besides plaques, street names and a few public buildings, especially schools, the survey lists 192 monuments built between 1945 and 1984. This survey was an extension of an earlier one, published in 1960 by João Baptista de Mattos, which documented 105 FEB monuments.<sup>5</sup> While the 1960 survey records the inauguration year of the monuments, the availability of this data varies in the 1984 survey and therefore does not allow for an accurate assessment of the rate of monument construction. Therefore, the analysis of the rate of monument construction is broken into the first two years (1945-6), for which the data is complete, and before and after the 1960 survey.

At first glance, it seems as if the rate of FEB monument building went down by almost 50 percent after 1960. The yearly average dropped from seven monuments per year during the first fifteen years to less than three and a half for the next twenty-five years. Sixty-three of the pre-1960 monuments were built before the end of 1946. If we disregard this initial commemoration phase, only forty-two monuments were built over

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<sup>4</sup> In early 2009, the Rio de Janeiro branch of ANVFEB was experiencing financial difficulties and closed temporarily. While the Army and the association agreed that the artifacts from their small museums would be moved to the National Museum, it is still unclear where their archives will be deposited.

<sup>5</sup> For the earlier count see: João Baptista de Mattos, *Os Monumentos Nacionais: A Força Expedicionária no Bronze* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa do Exército, 1960). Mattos' survey was first published in two parts in the *Revista Militar Brasileira* in January and June 1960 and later that year in book form. The publication date means that his survey includes data on monuments built before 1959 at the latest.

the next thirteen years, an average of slightly above three monuments per year, just under the post-1960 average. We can infer that after the first urge to commemorate the FEB in monuments diminished, the rate of constructing monuments was more or less constant.

**Table 2: FEB monuments and Porto Alegre monuments built by periods, 1945 – 84**

Period	FEB	Porto Alegre			
	Monuments (Av.)	Monuments (Av.)	Contemporary work (Av.)	Other (Av.)	Total (Av.)
1945 – 59	105 (7)	13 (0.87)	0 (0)	3 (0.2)	16 (1.07)
1945-6	63 (31.5) <sup>6</sup>	1 (0.5)	0 (0)	0(0)	1 (0.5)
1947-59	42 (3.23)	12 (0.92)	0 (0)	3 (0.23)	15 (1.15)
1960 – 84	87 (3.48)	26 (1.04)	25 (1)	13 (0.52)	64 (2.56)
1945 – 84	192 (4.8)	39 (0.98)	25 (0.63)	16 (0.4)	80 (2)

**Source:** *Livros de Comemoração* in acervo da ANVFEB - Rio de Janeiro; Mattos, João Baptista de. *Os Monumentos Nacionais: A Força Expedicionária No Bronze*. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa do Exército, 1960; Alves, José Francisco. *A Escultura Pública De Porto Alegre: História, Contexto E Significado*. Porto Alegre: artfoio, 2004, 251-255

The comparison between the rate of construction for FEB monuments versus other public monuments and other elements erected in the city of Porto Alegre for the 1945–1984 period, shows that on average for every five FEB monuments that were erected, only one monument and one other physical element—such as a non-monumental contemporary work—were built (see table 2). The data on Porto Alegre is broken down into monuments, contemporary works of art, and other types of monumental/artistic elements. In addition, I took only the data on elements present in the public space and omitted the data on monuments in semi-public spaces as this data is not available with regards to FEB monuments. The comparison between the rate of erecting FEB monuments throughout Brazil and the rates of erecting monuments, and other artistic elements in the public space of Porto Alegre, clearly shows the exceptional representation of the FEB in stone and bronze. With the exception of the 1945-1946 period, which was

<sup>6</sup> In fact, since the war ended in May 1945 the sixty-three monuments were built in a little more than a year rather than in two years. This increases the average to forty-two monuments per year.

abnormal in the rate of FEB-monument building, between 1947 and 1959 Portoalegrenses erected on average more than three times the number of FEB monuments than any other kind of monument in Porto Alegre and slightly less than three times more than any other element in the public space in that city. During the second period (1960-1984), the relation between FEB monuments and Porto Alegre monuments remained about the same, but the introduction of contemporary art to the public space lowered the ratio. For every monumental or artistic element displayed in Porto Alegre's public space, 1.36 FEB monuments were erected.

Table 3-1 compares the FEB monuments in Porto Alegre because the city's data is the most complete data set I could find on Brazilian monuments. No complete monumental survey exists for Brazil as a whole, and most of the work on specific cities is selective. Moreover, Porto Alegre is a good candidate for a comparative analysis of where most FEB monuments stand. The city's location in Southern Brazil corresponds to where most of the FEB monuments are, but is not in the over represented areas of São Paulo and Minas Gerais (see discussion below). As the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil's southernmost state, it is neither a small town in the interior nor an enormous metropolis like São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro. If we take the Porto Alegre data to be representative for Brazil, we can conclude that in the public sphere, the FEB was significantly over-represented when compared to other monumental and artistic elements.

Although the total number of World War II monuments in Brazil is not high, the number of Brazilian war monuments per fallen soldier is among the highest in the world. As a comparison, Robert Shipley counted no less than 1,232 war monuments in Canada, and although he stresses that this is not a complete number, he is convinced that he

surveyed the majority of them.<sup>7</sup> About 60,000 Canadian soldiers perished in the First World War and an additional 37,000 fell in the Second World War.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Canadian ratio of monuments per fallen soldiers is one to 78.73. However, since Shipley's survey counted monuments dedicated to additional wars "and even to minor skirmishes," whose fallen were not calculated here, the ratio is even larger. New Zealand commemorated its 18,000 fallen soldiers from World War I in 452 memorials, including twenty-three halls, seven libraries and a few bridges, a ratio of one monument per 39.82 dead.<sup>9</sup> In Britain, Colin McIntyre estimates 40,000 war memorials commemorate all wars.<sup>10</sup> The United Kingdom lost 702,000 soldiers in World War I (including Irish regiments) and an additional 300,000 in World War II.<sup>11</sup> While the number of fallen includes the revolution in Ireland, the data does not include the dead of other wars, such as the Boer War and others. The UK ratio is one monument per twenty-five and a half fallen soldiers whereas in Israel, the ratio between monuments for all its wars fought before 1990 to fallen soldiers is one to seventeen.<sup>12</sup>

The New Zealand expeditionary force to the Boer War resembles the Brazilian case in that both wars initiated the two countries' citizens into new national experiences of a large-scale war overseas, and both resulted in few casualties. Forty-four monuments

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<sup>7</sup> Based on the list in Robert Shipley, *To Mark Our Place: a History of Canadian War Memorials* (Toronto: NC Press, 1987), Appendix B: List of Monuments, 178-87.

<sup>8</sup> For World War I data see: Jeff Keshen, "The Great War Soldiers as National Builders in Canada and Australia," in *Canada and the Great War: Western Front Association Papers*, ed. Briton Cooper Busch (Montreal ; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 4.; For World war II see: Ian Dear and M. R. D. Foot, *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, New ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), "Demography, Table 1: Approximate war-related deaths of major combatant nations in the Second World War," 225.

<sup>9</sup> Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 69-70, 78.

<sup>10</sup> Colin McIntyre, *Monuments of War: How to Read a War Memorial* (London: Robert Hale, 1990), 49.

<sup>11</sup> For World War I numbers see: *ibid.*, 131-2.; For World War II numbers see: Dear and Foot, *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, "Demography, Table 1: Approximate war-related deaths of major combatant nations in the Second World War," 225.

<sup>12</sup> Almog, "War Casualties Monuments in Israel," 182.



commemorate 228 fallen out of 6,500 volunteers in this war, a ratio of one monument for more than every five soldiers.<sup>13</sup> In comparison to Brazil's 192 monuments commemorating its 465 World War II fallen soldiers, a ratio of one monument per 2.42 fallen soldiers, the Brazilian war dead are commemorated twice as often. It is difficult to imagine how other combatant countries who suffered tens or hundreds of thousands of dead could match this ratio.

National commemorative legacies and combatant experience point to a critical difference in commemoration efforts. Many of the Allied countries, such as the United States and New Zealand, chose to commemorate their World War II dead in playgrounds, community centers and parks, rather than in ornamental monuments and statues. These communities preferred dedicating buildings and spaces they could use as "living" or "utilitarian" memorials. They did so not only because such communal spaces preserved the spirit of community experienced during the war, but also because of concerns that new monuments for the recently fallen soldiers would devalue existing World War I monuments and would duplicate their number. Similar concerns drove many communities in the United Kingdom and New Zealand to alter existing World War I monuments and dedicate them to the fallen of both wars by adding plaques or by turning the dedication of the "Great War" into the plural by engraving the letter "s" after "War."<sup>14</sup> In Brazil, these legacies did not apply.

### ***The Geography of Memory***

While the FEB monuments are abundant, the regionally uneven participation in the FEB resulted in a geographically uneven dispersion of the monuments throughout

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<sup>13</sup> Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 47.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 137 - 9.

Brazil. From the beginning of the FEB, Brazilian state propaganda made a deliberate effort to present the FEB as a national force composed of soldiers from all over Brazil. A good example of this is the well-known first stanza of the *Canção do expedicionário*, the song most associated with the FEB:

<i>Você sabe de onde eu venho?</i>	<i>Do you know where I am coming from?</i>
<i>Venho do morro, do Engenho,</i>	<i>I am coming from the hill, from the sugar</i>
<i>Das selvas, dos cafezais,</i>	<i>plantation,</i>
<i>Da boa terra do coco,</i>	<i>From the forest, from the coffee plantations,</i>
<i>Da choupana onde um é pouco,</i>	<i>From the good land of coconut</i>
<i>Dois é bom, três é demais,</i>	<i>From the hut where one is few,</i>
<i>Venho das praias sedosas,</i>	<i>Two is good, three is too many,</i>
<i>Das montanhas alterosas,</i>	<i>I am coming from the silky beaches,</i>
<i>Dos pampas, do seringal,</i>	<i>From the towering mountains,</i>
<i>Das margens crespas dos rios,</i>	<i>From the plains, from the rubber tree forests,</i>
<i>Dos verdes mares bravios</i>	<i>From the curly river banks,</i>
<i>Da minha terra natal.”</i>	<i>From the wild green seas,</i>
	<i>From my native land.</i>

The poet who composed the song was Guilherme de Almeida (1890 – 1965), a *paulista* and leading Brazilian intellectual associated with the nationalistic project who, at the time of composition the song, was already a member of the *Academia Brasileira de Letras* for over a decade. In the song Almeida describes the varied landscapes and backgrounds from which the soldiers came.<sup>15</sup> Despite the inclusive argument, a closer look reveals that the scope of de Almeida’s Brazil is limited. The various landscapes (beaches, rivers, mountains, plains and seas) and institutions (rural plantations characteristic of São Paulo and Amazonia) the song ignores the urban setting as well as professionals, industrial workers, and soldiers coming from their military barracks. While the whole idea of the song is to present the FEB as a geographically and socially diverse organ, a national force, it fails to do so by choosing a discursive image of the traditionally oppressed, impoverished rural poor, over a description of a more diverse society. This

<sup>15</sup> “Paulista” denominates a person, place or a thing as belonging to, or originating in the state of São Paulo. “Paulistana” has the same meaning regarding the capital city of São Paulo.

may be due to the relative ease of mobilizing the urban population over the rural one to support the war effort.<sup>16</sup> This reading suggests that the song is less about presenting the FEB as representative of the nation and more about including parts of Brazil's periphery into the nation, the hut-dwelling poor population of the North and Northeast, where the coconut trees grow and rubber plantations exist. Almeida's decision to use the first person singular ("eu") in the song's lyrics also promotes unity over diversity. While the usage of the plural voice would have conveying the notion of a diverse unit, which is composed of soldiers coming from all over Brazil, the singularity of the singer, the *expedicionário*, means that he himself is coming from different origins, and thus embody Brazil rather than simply representing it.

The song was heavily used and still is today. Wartime propaganda often used the song in print and performance. It is reproduced in numerous books about the FEB, and is still often used in commemorative ceremonies. For example, FEB veterans paraded to the tune of this song on September 7, 2008, Brazil's Independence Day, in São Paulo. The song is an example of the myth that the FEB was a microcosm of Brazil, a product of a geographically diverse but unified nation. The sole disharmony is the class-based portrayal of the Brazilian soldier, another repeating argument on the absence of the middle and upper classes from the ranks.

Such assertions are common in FEB speeches, ceremonies and literature. While soldiers of all twenty-one states participated in the FEB, their regional origin deviated from the national population distribution.<sup>17</sup> Sixty two and a half percent were from the

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<sup>16</sup> On the mobilization of the São Paulo home front see: Cytrynowicz, *Guerra Sem Guerra*.

<sup>17</sup> During the war, Brazil consisted of twenty-one states, including the Federal District. Later changes fragmented some of the states and today Brazil is composed of twenty-seven states, including the Federal

Federal District and the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais while forty two and a half percent of Brazil's population resided there in 1940. Together with Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná, these five regions provided almost seventy-seven percent of the soldiers, but only fifty-three-and-a-half percent of the general population.<sup>18</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that most of the monuments are located in these regions, which contributed more soldiers to the FEB than their share in the population.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 3: Distribution of Monuments and Soldiers by Regions**

Region	# Monuments	% Monuments	# Soldiers <sup>20</sup>	% Soldiers	Ratio of Soldiers to Monuments
North	1	0.52%	372	1.57%	0.332
Northeast	10	5.21%	2,945	12.43%	0.419
Center-West	3	1.56%	790	3.33%	0.469
Southeast	135	70.31%	15,217	64.20%	1.095
South	43	22.40%	4,378	18.47%	1.212
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23,702</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>

**Source:** *Livros de Comemoração* in acervo da ANVFEB - Rio de Janeiro; Mattos, João Baptista de. *Os Monumentos Nacionais: A Força Expedicionária No Bronze*. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa do Exército, 1960; Moraes, João Baptista Mascarenhas de. *A F. E. B. pelo seu Comandante*. São Paulo: Instituto Progresso Editorial, 1947. 304. The same sources were used for all the following tables unless noted otherwise

Table 3 shows that almost ninety-three percent of all monuments are in the south and southeast while in the north, northeast and center-west there are far fewer FEB monuments. The ratio between the percentage of monuments in a specific region and the percentage of soldiers in the FEB from the same region indicates the level of

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District (which was moved in 1960 from Rio de Janeiro to the newly created Brasília). [This footnote has appeared twice elsewhere in the diss]

<sup>18</sup> For the regional origin of the soldiers see Moraes, *A F. E. B. pelo seu Comandante*, "Quadro da contribuição dos estados, em praças, para a organização da F.E.B.," 304.; for census data see Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil: Ano VII - 1946*, Table "Estado da população: I – População do Brasil, na data dos recenseamentos gerais: 2. Distribuição, Segundo as unidades da federação – 1872/940." p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> Mauad and Nunes observed the concentration of monuments in the south and southeast based on Mattos' 1960 book. However, they did not link it to the demography of the soldiers. Ana Maria Mauad and Daniela Ferreira Nunes, "Discurso de uma Morte Consumada: Monumento Dos Pracinhas," in *Cidade Vaidosa: Estudos Sobre Imaginária Urbana no Rio de Janeiro*, ed. Paulo Knauss (Rio de Janeiro: Sette Letras, 1999), 90.

<sup>20</sup> The data is on soldiers and non-commissioned officers only (*praças*). Data on officers is not available.

commemoration in monuments. A ratio of one represents a perfect match, a number smaller than one means that the share of regional monuments in national territory is smaller than the proportion of soldiers coming from that region of FEB soldiers, while a number larger than one represents over-commemoration. The table shows that level of commemoration increases as one advances southward.

**Table 4: Distribution of Monuments and Soldiers by States**

Region and State	# Monuments	% Monuments	# Soldiers	% Soldiers	Ratio of Soldiers to Monuments
<b>North</b>					
Amazonas	0	0%	91	0.38%	0
Para	1	0.5%	281	1.19%	0.439
<b>Northeast</b>					
Lagos	1	0.5%	148	0.62%	0.834
Bahia	3	1.6%	686	2.89%	0.540
Ciara	1	0.5%	377	1.59%	0.327
Marana	1	0.5%	134	0.57%	0.921
Paraiba	1	0.5%	349	1.47%	0.354
Pernambuco	3	1.6%	651	2.75%	0.569
Piaui	0	0.0%	67	0.28%	0
Rio Grande do Norte	0	0.0%	341	1.44%	0
Sergipe	0	0.0%	192	0.81%	0
<b>Center-West</b>					
Goiás	2	1.0%	111	0.47%	2.224
Mato Grosso	1	0.5%	679	2.86%	0.182
<b>Southeast</b>					
Espirito Santo	3	1.6%	345	1.46%	1.073
Minas Gerais	42	21.9%	2,947	12.43%	1.759
Rio de Janeiro	20	10.4%	8,036	33.90%	0.307
São Paulo	70	36.5%	3,889	16.41%	2.222
<b>South</b>					
Paraná	9	4.7%	1,542	6.51%	0.721
Rio Grande do Sul	23	12.0%	1,880	7.93%	1.510
Santa Catarina	11	5.7%	956	4.03%	1.420
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23,702</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>

However, when the regional data is analyzed by state, a more diverse image emerges (see Table 4). The state of Rio de Janeiro (including the Federal District)

presents a very low ratio between monuments and soldiers (0.307) lower than the average in the North and the Northeast and of any state in those two regions that built at least one monument. The state of Goya's in the Center-west also diverges from the regional pattern, and it shows an exceptionally high commemoration ratio (2.224) – the highest of all states.

Closer examination of the state of Rio de Janeiro, and its low commemoration rate, reveals that the most marked difference is not between northern and southern Brazil but between major urban centers and the rural towns in the interior. Unfortunately, no statistical data on the soldiers' hometowns exist. The reason for the lack of data is grounded in the evolution of the military's archival policies. At first, when João Batista Mascarenhas de Moraes was still alive, the FEB archive was an independent section within the *Arquivo Histórico do Exército* in Rio de Janeiro. After Mascarenhas' death in 1968, the AHEX gradually assimilated the degraded archive. A fellow historian remembers seeing the soldiers' personal files in the early 1980s, but most of them are no longer to be found in the archive.<sup>21</sup> In 2006, only about 1,000 existed, but there is no reliable data on the collection that will clarify whether it is representative or not. In mid-2009 a new policy came into effect and the access to these files was further restricted and their reproduction was prohibited.

Fortunately, since prior to 1960 the city of Rio de Janeiro was the old Federal District, data on the number of soldiers coming from the city of Rio de Janeiro does exist separately from the state data. Historian Cesar Campiani Maximiano estimates that the city of São Paulo contributed about 1,000 soldiers to the FEB. Maximiano bases his estimation on conversations with veterans, especially with Rubens Béra, who worked at

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<sup>21</sup> A private conversation with Samy Katz, Belo Horizonte, MG, May 2007.

the São Paulo branch of the *Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil* for about forty years. He also relies on Vicente Pedroso da Cruz, who estimated that the majority of the 800 *febianos* who marched in the victory parade in São Paulo on August 1, 1945, were natives of the capital.<sup>22</sup> Table 3 shows the relationship between these two important urban centers and the rest of the states in which they are located.

**Table 5: Distribution of Monuments and Soldiers in the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and their capitals**

City and State	# Monuments	% Monuments	# Soldiers	% Soldiers	Ratio between Soldiers and Monuments
City of Rio de Janeiro	2	1.04%	6,094	25.71%	0.041
State of Rio de Janeiro (w/out the capital)	18	9.38%	1,942	8.19%	1.144
City of Sao Paulo	6	3.13%	1,000	4.22%	0.741
State of São Paulo (w/out the capital)	64	33.33%	2,889	12.19%	2.735

While the commemoration ratio for the state of Rio de Janeiro is high (1.144), the city of Rio de Janeiro notably under-commemorates its soldiers (0.041). The same pattern, although less marked, can be found for São Paulo: while the state shows a high commemoration rate (2.735) the state's capital, in spite of its six monuments, under-commemorates the FEB (0.735). Therefore, while some differences in the commemorative intensity exist between regions and states, the greatest difference is between the large urban centers and the rural smaller towns. In monumental commemoration, the memory of the FEB is stronger in the rural areas while it is under-commemorated, or forgotten in monumental terms, in the large centers.

Historian Roney Cytrynowicz argues that the FEB is absent from the city of São Paulo's collective memory in general and from its physical public space in particular.

<sup>22</sup> E-mail from Cesar Campiani Maximiano to the author on October 3, 2009.

This is even more evident when compared to the memory of the 1932 Revolution, when the state of São Paulo revolted against the federal government to restore the constitutional order that Getúlio Vargas violated in 1930, when he seized power after losing an election to Júlio Prestes, former governor of São Paulo. Cytrynowicz 's explanations to this obliviousness are locally dependent: in contrast to the 1932 Revolution, so he argues, World War II was a national not a local war. The memory of the Second World War honored the New State and Getúlio Vargas, who the paulistana elite opposed. No unit left the city to participate in the FEB.<sup>23</sup> Cytrynowicz also suggests that the paulistana elite commemorated the multi-class coalition of volunteers that swept São Paulo but was reluctant to do so in relation to the lower class draftees of the FEB. While these explanations are convincing, they cannot explain why the same phenomenon of obliviousness repeats itself in the urban center of Rio de Janeiro.

Urban forgetting originates from the difference between Brazilian metropolises and small towns. I suggest that for the small sleepy towns of the interior, the soldiers who left to fight as part of a global conflict across the ocean constituted an extremely exceptional experience. However, the same event did not have the same unique effect in the international metropolises. Secondly, in small towns intimacy contributes to the personal relation of many toward such an extraordinary event, while in a large city, intimacy among people is not shared by large segments of the population. The prominent Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta articulated Brazilian social relations in the now classic metaphor of the "house" and the "street." In each sphere, so argues DaMatta, different codes of behavior govern, and the two codes co-exist. In the "street" one is regarded as an "individual," that is an autonomous being among his peers who is equal

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<sup>23</sup> Cytrynowicz, *Guerra Sem Guerra*, 304.



before the law and the state. In contrast, in the “house” one is a “person,” which is a relational position that is always connected to others and regarded according to one’s location in the social web.<sup>24</sup> In small towns, however, these spheres work differently. Using DaMatta’s classification, anthropologist Rosane Prado argues that in small rural towns one is always a “person” tied to others in an inescapable intimacy.<sup>25</sup>

Intimate communities did exist in big cities in the form of neighborhoods. In September 2, 1945, the journal *O Estado de S.Paulo* reported about neighborhood receptions and celebrations held for the returning *pracinhas*, the diminutive of *o praça* (enlisted man) and popular nickname for the FEB soldiers, in the Bom Retiro, Vila Mariana, Vila Maria, and Penha neighborhoods.<sup>26</sup> Fifty-five years afterward, in 2000, the Vila Prudente neighborhood in São Paulo erected a monument to its World War II *expedicionários*. However, not all neighborhoods are intimate. Moreover, even those neighborhoods that are intimate are still located in a city, and their dwellers go to other neighborhoods to shop, socialize, work and run errands, and thus can escape the constant intimacy. As Velho and Machado argue one can always choose to be “relatively anonymous” in the big cities thanks to the possibility of playing different roles in “socially distinct domains.”<sup>27</sup> The local perspective in the interpretation of the monuments is also apparent when analyzing their texts, as will be shown below.

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<sup>24</sup> DaMatta developed and demonstrated this concept in various locations. See: Roberto A. DaMatta, *A Casa & a Rua*, 5 ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1997), esp. ch. 2: “Cidadania”.

<sup>25</sup> Rosane Prado, “Small Town, Brazil: Heaven and Hell of Personalism,” in *The Brazilian Puzzle: Culture on the Borderlands of the Western World*, ed. David J. Hess and Roberto A. DaMatta (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> “Homenagens aos Expedicionários,” *O Estado de S.Paulo*. 2 de setembro de 1945.

<sup>27</sup> Gilberto Velho and Luiz Antônio Machado, “Organização Social do Meio Urbano,” *Anuário antropológico* 76(1977): 80.

### **Shape and Form**

FEB monuments are diverse in their shape and form. One can find obelisks, triumphal arches, statues of soldiers in multiple positions, engraved plaques narrating an episode, columns, a totem, alters, walls and abstract architectural designs, to list just a few forms the monuments take. While many monuments commemorate the dead, the majority celebrate the locality's *expedicionários*, living and dead. The most common form of FEB monument is an obelisk. Among the oldest forms of memorial in Western civilization, obelisks were built by Egyptians as a God-block—a type of monument—and used by them as a symbol of the king's military prowess and victories. Another interpretation of the meaning Egyptians invested in the obelisk is fertility and life, thus symbolizing the promise of eternal life as result of death in war. The Romans adopted the obelisk as a symbol of triumph, and in the later Christian world, it was associated with death and victory. The nineteenth-century colonialist practice of removing obelisks from the near east to the capitals of European cities contributed to the revival of erecting obelisks as victory monuments. The Egyptian obelisks in Paris, New York and London, known as Cleopatra's needle, set the example.<sup>28</sup> By the twentieth century, obelisks become one of the most abundant forms of war memorials.<sup>29</sup>

One reason why many Brazilian communities chose the obelisk as a form of commemoration is that it was a part of a global commemorative trend. The obelisk's ability to communicate attitudes such as grief, glory, civic virtues and gratitude grew out of the monumental encounter between victory and its cost. At the same time, the choice

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<sup>28</sup> Those three obelisks were not taken from the Middle East but were given as presents by Egyptian rulers.

<sup>29</sup> Borg, *War Memorials*, 2-5.; Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 97.

to continue the Western artistic tradition was a way to declare cultural belonging to that tradition.

An inward-focused interpretation highlights earlier obelisks in the Brazilian urban landscape as a source of artistic inspiration. By the end of World War II, at least two obelisks were famous in Rio de Janeiro. The *Monumento ao Barão do Rio Branco* stood at the junction of the *Araújo Pôrto Alegre* and *México* streets (today *Praça do Expedicionário* in the city's center), close to the 1922 exposition pavilion that celebrated Brazil's first centenary. The second, simply known as *O Obelisco*, was erected in 1906 to celebrate the development of the city, and was one of the city's symbols during the Old Republic. During the 1930 Revolution, the *gaúcho* riders tied their horses to it, an iconic picture that grew to be one of the revolution's



**Figure 6:** São José dos Campos, São Paulo Source: *Livros de Comemoração (Bahia)*, ANVFEB-Rio de Janeiro

visual symbols.<sup>30</sup> São Paulo's first monument was the obelisk *Pirâmide do Piques* (1814) located in *Ladeira do Piquetes* (today: *Obelisco da Memória* located in the renamed *Ladeira da Memória*). It was homage to the city's governing triumvirate and served as a reference to travelers approaching the city.<sup>31</sup> In Porto Alegre, five obelisks were built in the 1920s and 1930s, four of which celebrated the contribution of ethnic groups to the city (Italian, Portuguese, Jewish and Syrian-Lebanese) and were located in

<sup>30</sup> The people of Brazil's southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul are called *gaúchos*.

<sup>31</sup> Miriam Escobar, *Esculturas no Espaço Público em São Paulo* (São Paulo: VEGA), 28, 58.; Dulce Soares and Ana Cândida Vespucci, *Monumentos Paulistanos: Memória em Praça Pública* (São Paulo: Empresa das artes, 1989), s.p.

the city's main square.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the FEB obelisks continued in a Brazilian artistic tradition of using the form of the obelisk to mark a central location of a city.

Finally, obelisks were chosen because their relatively simple design resulted in lower costs, quicker building and provided a more convenient form to add textual messages in the future.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, fifty out of the seventy-one monuments built before 1950 (70.4%) took the shape of the obelisk. During the following decade, an additional seven obelisks were erected, putting the fifty-seven obelisks at roughly half of all the FEB monuments erected before 1960. Thus, while the obelisk was the most popular form until 1950, its popularity diminished, and later monuments show greater variety.

Other than obelisks, fifty-four (28%) FEB monuments are statues of human figures. Their dispersion, however, is not even, thus revealing a regional pattern. The (100%) Maranhão monument portrays a human figure, as do two out of the three (67%) Bahia monuments and the same number in Pernambuco. Fifteen (33%) monuments in Minas Gerais, seven (35%) in Rio de Janeiro, fifteen (21%) in São Paulo, five (45%) in Santa Catarina, one (11%) in Paraná, and six (26%) in Rio Grande do Sul are of people. In regional terms this mean that fifty percent of the monuments in the Northeast, twenty-seven in the Southeast, and twenty-eight in the South are of human figures.

Most of the figures are of unnamed soldiers, yet seventeen (31.5%) are of a specific soldier. The majority of the named statues are of fallen soldiers from the municipality, with three exceptions: Frei Orlando, Marechal João Batista Mascarenhas de Morães, and the Duque de Caxias. One statue is shaped after Maj. Antônio Álvares da Silva, known as Frei Orlando, a military Chaplain who became one of the most

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<sup>32</sup> José Francisco Alves, *A Escultura Pública de Porto Alegre: História, Contexto e Significado* (Porto Alegre: artfoio, 2004), 31, 251-2.

<sup>33</sup> Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 97.

celebrated symbols of the FEB. Frei Orlando was a Franciscan priest who served in the FEB as a military Chaplain in the 11 Infantry Regiment. He died in a firing accident in February 1945 and became one of the most known fallen *febianos*, second, perhaps, only to Max Wolff Filho, a Sergeant famous for his bravery who excelled in patrols and was killed during one of them. Many FEB personal narratives mention Frei Orlando and narrate his death, and he became the patron of the Brazilian Army's religious Assistance Service. Frei Orlando was also the highest-ranking Brazilian officer to fall in Italy.<sup>34</sup> The second and only person whose bust appears more than once, is Marechal João Batista Mascarenhas de Morães, the commander of the FEB. He is commemorated in his hometown of São Gabriel, Rio Grande do Sul, but his image is found in five additional places. The last is of the Duque de Caxias, the patron of the Brazilian Army in Nova Granada, São Paulo.

The commemoration of the FEB with a statue of the Duke of Caxias is exceptional, even surprising, as among FEB circles and beyond, Caxias usually represents values that are opposed to the FEB. Luís Alves de Lima e Silva, the Duke of Caxias was a nineteenth-century Brazilian politician and a prominent military figure. He replaced Marechal Manuel Luís Osório as *the* military hero and became the patron of the army. Osorio was of a humble origin, began his military career as a simple soldier, was a liberal, and gained an immediate reputation for excelling in external wars. In contrast, Caxias came from a more socially and economically privileged background, began his career at officer's school, was a conservative, and the military institution began cultivating his reputation only in the 1920s during the army's internal struggles. Many

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<sup>34</sup>Gentil Palhares, *Frei Orlando: O Capelão Que Não Voltou* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército Editora, 1982).

*febianos* held Caxias up as a symbol of the army that was left behind in Brazil during World War II. For the *febianos* the “Army of the FEB” was composed of citizen-soldiers and was characterized by the recognition of the simple soldier’s wisdom and resourcefulness and by an “American style” form of relaxed discipline. In contrast, the “Army of Caxias” symbolized the old “rigid” institution where regular officers and non-commissioned officers condescended to the rank and file, valorized military honor and discipline and had no “real” combat experience.<sup>35</sup> A provocative edited volume first published in 1949 by low-ranking officers from the reserve introduced the dichotomy between the FEB and the rest of the army to the wider public.<sup>36</sup> The book went into two additional editions, was reviewed in the press, and for decades was the clearest critical voice of the FEB.<sup>37</sup> Thus, honoring the FEB with a bust of Caxias is a strange sight. However, I believe the bust does not represent an assertion on the nature of the FEB or an argument about the FEB’s place in the army but rather an attempt to honor the FEB by employing a celebrated military image. While members of the FEB distinguished themselves from the regular army and inverted Caxias as a symbol, the public was not necessarily aware of these notions, especially not as soon as November 1945, when the Nova Granada monument was unveiled. This interpretation is also a reminder of the acute difference between the knowledge and memory of the FEB among its veterans and among the public.

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<sup>35</sup> Celso Castro, "Entre Caxias e Osório: a Criação do Culto ao Patrono do Exército Brasileiro.," *Estudos Históricos* 14, no. 25 (2000).; Francisco César Alves Ferraz, "A Guerra Que Não Acabou: A Reintegração Social Dos Veteranos da Força Expedicionária Brasileira (1945 - 2000)" (Universidade de São Paulo, 2002), 90 - 98.

<sup>36</sup> José X. Góis de Andrede, "Espírito da F.E.B. e Espírito «do Caxias»," in *Depoimento de Oficiais da Reserva Sobre a FEB* (Rio de Janeiro: Cobraci Publicações, 1949).

<sup>37</sup> In his study on the historiography of the FEB, Neves describes the book as the most important book about the FEB that contradicts the official history of the FEB. Neves, "A FEB; Uma Perspectiva Histórica", 28.

Out of the fifty-four representations of human figures, thirty-seven (68.5%) appear in statues or engraved in stone. These forms allow the artist to express more complicated ideas than the geometrical shapes of the obelisk or blocks of stone. In the former countries of the British Empire, for example, one of the most common figures is of a soldier with his head bowed and his hands resting on his rifle with its muzzle resting on the ground. This military gesture, named “Resting on Arms Reversed,” expresses mourning and is used in military funerals and ceremonies. It is the most common statue position in Britain, a typical expression in post-World War I Canadian war monuments, and about a quarter of the New Zealand soldiers’ statues in World War I monuments are positioned in the same way.<sup>38</sup> In sharp contrast, I could not find even one monumental figure in Brazil that conveys the suffering imposed by war or the grief over lost lives.<sup>39</sup> A quarter of all statues (nine) are of soldiers standing still with their rifles on their sides. Maclean interprets this “at ease” position as if the soldier is guarding the site sacred to the dead, and thus implicitly can relate to homage for the dead.<sup>40</sup> The majority of the statues (twenty-seven, 73%), however, depict soldiers in more active, even aggressive, positions as advancing (twelve, 32.4%), charging (twelve, 32.4%) or in victory gestures (three, 8%). These images present the soldier not as a victim, but as an active subject, and instead of expressing the cost of war, they highlight its gains. This might be explained by the relatively low number of casualties suffered by the Brazilians in the war. In a similar fashion the New Zealand Boer War monuments do not express grief but Imperial pride.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 1998), 135.; Shipley, *To Mark Our Place*, 116 – 8, 76.; Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 99.

<sup>39</sup> This is the case in post-World War I Canadian monuments. Shipley, *To Mark Our Place*, 116 - 8.

<sup>40</sup> Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 62.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 48 - 9.

Most artists sculpted soldier statues with attention to detail and designed them realistically. Thus, many artists were careful to present soldiers in the American uniform. This detail signaled the statues of the FEB as separate from the Brazilian Army and its traditional uniforms. The representation was further enforced by the common inclusion of the FEB shoulder tag, as well as the American 5<sup>th</sup> Army's, since the FEB operated in Italy under its command. Few statues offer a non-realistic image of the soldier. An example for visual exaggeration can be found in the monument of São José dos Campos, São Paulo, where the most obvious detail in the shirtless soldier carrying the flag in a victory gesture is his muscled abdomen and masculine appearance.

In spite of the realistic depiction of soldiers, the statues offer the viewer an idealistic image of the war. This is mostly apparent in the positioning of the statues: while many show advancing soldiers in the heat of battle or on patrol, all soldiers appear to be cleanly, muscular and healthy. There is no trace of dirt, hardship or struggle, and there are no wounded or dead to communicate the cost of war or the loss of young life. In that sense, the statues celebrate Brazilian masculinity, military victory, potency and virility.

FEB monuments do not represent any female figures, with one exception: a female allegorical representation of victory is incorporated into the arc of triumph in Porto Alegre. Excluding monuments, however, other FEB memorials of the period do represent allegorical female figures. For example, three of the five stamps issued on victory day, May 8, 1945, to celebrate the end of the war include female figures representing *Saudade*, Glory and Peace.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the national monument in Rio de

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<sup>42</sup> In the RHM's *Catálogo de selos do Brasil* 2008, Editora RHM, São Paulo, 2008 they are C-198, C-199, and C-201 respectively.



Janeiro was to have portrayed a statue of a mourning female figure inspired by Michelangelo's *La Pietà*, representing the motherland, holding her dead son's corpse.<sup>43</sup> However, after the contest ended, the army demanded that the original design be replaced with one of three soldiers representing the three branches of the armed forces. In spite of the sixty-seven female nurses who served in the FEB and the mobilization of the female population during the war, monuments of the FEB are strictly masculine.<sup>44</sup>

### ***(Lack of) Christian Iconography and Ethnicity***

The exclusion of the *La Pietà*-like statue from the National Monument points also to the secular nature of commemoration in Brazil. While the cross as a religious form of war monument is very common in some countries, notably in the United Kingdom, it is rare in Brazil.<sup>45</sup> Three explanations contribute to the rarity of the cross in Brazilian FEB monuments: the secular nature of the post-Imperial Brazilian state; the decline of the church's power there; and the rejection of an architectural tradition of authority. The first explanation for the absence of the cross might be that communities, and especially political communities, such as municipalities, were reluctant to use religious iconography in war monuments because of the separation of state and church in Brazil. In 1889, with

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<sup>43</sup> I wish to thank Jennifer Heil for pointing the Renaissance origins of the figure.

<sup>44</sup> On the nurses and the mobilization of the feminine population see: Cytrynowicz, *Guerra Sem Guerra*, Ch. 5-6.

<sup>45</sup> Cross-like war memorials are most abundant in the United Kingdom, but are also popular in other countries of the Commonwealth of Nations. See, for example: Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 102. One noticeable exception to this rule is the monument in Jacutinga, Minas Gerais, which commemorates the FEB with Christian symbols. The tiled picture presents a tonsured monk, or a pilgrim, who is kneeling, patting a dog and welcoming doves while fish are in a nearby pool.

the death of the Brazilian Empire, where Catholicism had an official role, the republic created itself as a secular state.<sup>46</sup>

While the state was secular, Brazilians were not. The 1940 census registered that 95.01% of the population were Roman Catholics, and an additional 2.7% were either Protestants or Orthodox, making 97.71% of the population Christians.<sup>47</sup> In spite of these numbers, the church was alarmed by the fact that its effectiveness in reaching the masses had diminished. It lost members to the rising influence of Protestantism and spiritualism, and few that were members of the Catholic Church actively practiced their faith. Moreover, after the 1945 re-democratization, the church joined forces with rural oligarchic elites against the secularization of Brazilian society, whose power diminished as society urbanized and industrialized.<sup>48</sup> Thus, it did not make much sense to celebrate the FEB in relation to the church's weakening position in politics and society.

A third explanation lies in the nature of the monument and the Brazilian architectural tradition. Crosses have been associated with war within Christendom since the fourth century, and they gained their military connotation from their resemblance to the medieval sword during the Crusades. The Christian symbolism also associated with crosses contributed to their symbolic power. Their extensive usage in Britain, however, was also inspired by the standing Celtic Crosses, which were perceived as a “distinctively British type.”<sup>49</sup> In contrast to the British nationalization” of the cross, in colonial Brazil, the Church erected standing crosses in plazas to put religious authority on public display,

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<sup>46</sup> The Army declared the republic of Brazil in November 15, 1889. Thus began a period in Brazilian history commonly known as the *República Velha* (Old Republic), which ended with the coup d'état on October 1930 that brought Getúlio Vargas to power.

<sup>47</sup> Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil: Ano X - 1949* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 1950), 51.

<sup>48</sup> Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986).

<sup>49</sup> Borg, *War Memorials*, 8.

and thus the cross came to symbolize institutional potency and yet another architectural and symbolic instrument in the ongoing process of conquest and colonization.<sup>50</sup> Alan Borg argues: “[t]he one thing a memorial has to do is to convey some generally recognized meaning about what is being memorialized.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the standing cross in Brazil was not an appropriate recognizable symbol to represent military victory, democracy or other liberal values for which the FEB stood.

Very few monuments situate the FEB in larger narrative. One noticeable exception can be found in Alagoinhas, Bahia, where an homage to two fallen soldiers from the city was incorporated into a wooden painted totem, which is a landmark for the city’s tourists. White crosses symbolizing the death of FEB soldiers are accompanied by the FEB’s Smoking Cobra emblem, which is one detail among many on the totem that includes a range of symbols, flags and episodes from local and national history. In this monument, the FEB is another brick in the edifice of the national narrative.



**Figure 7:** *Totem de Alagoinhas*, Alagoinhas, Bahia. Enlarged in the top right corner is the section dedicated to the FEB. Source: *Livros de Comemoração (Bahia)*, ANVFEB-RJ

Another noteworthy and unique example of commemorating the FEB within the framework of commemorating another topic is the national monument for immigrants (*monumento nacional ao imigrante*) in Caxias do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul. The monument by Italian immigrants, who began colonizing the area beginning in 1875, was planned as

<sup>50</sup> James R. Curtis, "Praças, Place, and Public Life in Brazil," *The Geographical Review* 90, no. 4 (2000): 477.

<sup>51</sup> Borg, *War Memorials*, 70.

part of the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the city. According to a booklet published forty years after the monument's inauguration, a subcommittee of the central organizing committee responsible for the monument debated whom the monument should honor: Italian immigrants, any immigrant regardless of his/her origin, or all Brazilian ethnic groups who were present in the area, including the black, Indian and population of Portuguese descent.<sup>52</sup> The disagreement concentrated on the element that would represent the fusion of the different groups and, at the same time, would also represent the connection between Brazil and Italy. At that stage, it was suggested to include a *pracinha* to symbolize the relations between the two nations. The debate escalated and one committee member accused his colleagues of racism. In return, the committee filed suit against the accuser and the case was taken up in the local press. At least one newspaper article questioned the direct relation between the FEB and the colonization of the area.<sup>53</sup> A few months later, during the 1950 traditional *Festa da Uva* (Grape Festival), the monument's cornerstone was unveiled in the presence of the Brazilian President and the state's governor. A new committee agreed on the design, commissioned artists and collected donations, and four years later, in February 1954, President Getúlio Vargas, now democratically elected, inaugurated the monument. Despite some questions, then, the FEB appears on the monument as a symbol of international connections and of national unity and inclusiveness.

The monument is composed of a massive stone and marble edifice. Above a 250m<sup>2</sup>-wide crypt stands a 5m high bronze statue of an immigrant couple with their baby. Behind them stands a huge obelisk with three curved stone plaques narrating the

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<sup>52</sup> *A Nação Brasileira ao Imigrante: Construção de um Referencial Para Caxias do Sul*, (Caxias do Sul: s.n.; Gráfica da UCS, 1994).

<sup>53</sup> *O Momento*, Caxias do Sul, July 30, 1949. Cited in *ibid.*, 3.

immigration process from bottom to top. After receiving the land and cultivating crops, the highest plaque portrays the son of the immigrants returning from the war in Italy with the 5<sup>th</sup> Army emblem on his shoulder. The participation of the immigrants' children in the FEB appears to be the final stage in becoming Brazilians by participating in the national endeavor. The monument represents the FEB as the ultimate manifestation of nationalism and the last chain in binding the immigrants to their new home.

The narrative of this role of the FEB in the immigration process exists in the comics as well. Since the late 1960s, cartoonist Ignacio Justo participated in a small group of artists who drew comics about war and who “nationalized” the genre by publishing original stories about the

FEB.<sup>54</sup> In his comics “*Conquista*” (Conquest), three stories embedded one into another tell a story about the integration and true nationalism of German-Brazilians.<sup>55</sup> In the story, a narrator recalls his meeting with Henrich and Erika Kuntz, two Germans who met while serving in the First World War and



**Figure 8:** A detail from *O Monumento ao Imigrante*, Caxias do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul. Source: *Livros de Comemoração (Rio Grande do Sul)*, ANVFEB-RJ

who later, tired by war, immigrated to Brazil. The couple became scientists helping to protect the environment and was naturalized in Brazil “because we were grateful to this

<sup>54</sup> Most Brazilian comics at the time translated, copied and even plagiarized North American comics. For more on the “nationalization” of comics in Brazil, see: Waldomiro C. S. Vergueiro, “Histórias em Quadrinhos e Identidade Nacional, O Caso 'Pererê',” *Revista Comunicações e Artes* 15, no. 24 (1990). For an in-depth discussion on FEB comics see chapter IV.

<sup>55</sup> Ignacio Justo, “Conquista,” *Almenaque de combate* 3(1973).

wonderful land that welcomed us.”<sup>56</sup> When German submarines attacked Brazilian ships, João and Antonio, the couple’s twin boys who bore Portuguese-Brazilian names and who served in the army, enlisted in the FEB. On the Italian front, the two brothers took part in a patrol that came across an enemy position. Their lieutenant approached the enemy “like a Cobra,” a proficiency Justo links implicitly to his Indian grandfather. Despite his ability, the Germans kill the lieutenant. The brothers recovered their commander’s body and found a Brazilian flag and a letter that charges them to raise the flag “if this flag is yours as well.” The brothers showed the letter to their superior, but it did not move the arrogant and narrow-minded Captain. In contrast, the brothers understood the symbolic power of the Brazilian flag over the German position will have on the troops’ morale and sought to fulfill the lieutenant’s last request. While advancing, they were hurt by German tanks, and in spite of the fact that their shirts were torn off, revealing their masculine bodies, they were determined to show their respect to the flag, to Brazil and to the bloody cost already paid, and they raised it on a nearby tree. Justo, who gained his reputation for his skill in drawing airplanes, ends the story with a Brazilian Air force attack on the hill and the death of the brothers.

As in the monument for the immigrants, the comics too represent immigrants contributing to Brazil through their work and choice of a new fatherland, a process their sons complete by enlisting in the FEB. The comics continue the narrative and tell of the ultimate sacrifice that the immigrants’ sons are offering to their country.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 4.

### ***Inscriptions, Identities and Values (or Who Fought for What?)***

Regional identities are important in Brazil. Under the Old Republic's federal political structure, states enjoyed extensive powers. Barbara Weinstein argues that regionalism in Brazil fulfilled the same function that centralization did in other Latin American countries. In both cases the phenomenon became the vehicle to modernize through which economic elites took advantage of local strong men (*coroneis*) to better control the labor force and the political machine.<sup>57</sup> During the 1920s, toward the end of the Old Republic, there were at least two opposing views on the kind of relations that should exist between regional and national identities in Brazil. The São Paulo-based Modernist Movement sought to erase regional identities in order to create a unified national one. On the other hand, the up-and-coming anthropologist and intellectual Gilberto Freyre argued that the only way to construct a national identity was through regional ones.<sup>58</sup> In the New State, Getúlio Vargas launched an unprecedented nationalistic campaign, which was symbolized by the burning of the states' flags (*A queima das bandeiras*, November 29, 1937), an act that Daryle Williams characterized as "not merely a celebration of national unity, but rather an assault upon regional autonomy..."<sup>59</sup> In spite of the great success in promoting *Brasilidade*, regional identities did not vanish. In fact, one of the constant challenges Vargas faced was the regional paulista elite, which articulated its demands in national terms but realized them in a regional revolt in 1932. Regional identity in Brazil reflects more than a geographic loyalty; it includes a common set of assumptions, images and discursive claims about racial identity, "progress" and "backwardness," and work

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<sup>57</sup> Barbara Weinstein, "Brazilian Regionalism (Review Essay)," *Latin American Research Review* 17, no. 2 (1982).

<sup>58</sup> Ruben George Oliven, *Tradition Matters: Modern Gaúcho Identity in Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), Ch. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945*, 10.

ethics.<sup>60</sup> In this light, one might expect that in the memory of the FEB, and its monumental manifestation, regional identities will take the fore as well.

Few monuments pay homage to soldiers based on their regional affiliation. The only one in the database to do so explicitly is the monument in Novo Hamburgo, Rio Grande do Sul, which is dedicated to “Gaúchos integrantes da FEB,” that is to all *febianos* originating from Rio Grande do Sul. Two other monuments honor soldiers beyond municipal borders. The Cuiabá monument in Mato Grosso bears the names of 170 soldiers from the city and nearby localities and the Juiz da Fora monument presents the names of the fallen of the state of Minas Gerais. Two other monuments, in Guaxupé and, Barretos, reference their states by incorporating images of the Minas Gerais triangular symbol and the state of São Paulo’s flag respectively. These monuments testify to the importance of regional identities in Brazil. For the memory of the FEB, still, local identity in the community level was more significant to the remembering community than regional identity, which incorporated several towns and even states.

The majority of the monuments to the FEB does not commemorate fallen soldiers but are dedicated to all soldiers, dead or alive, coming from a specific locality. This practice is not unique to Brazil; other countries that suffered few casualties in the war exhibit the same phenomenon in their monuments.<sup>61</sup> The FEB monuments do not express sorrow for the fallen by a bereaved community, but pay tribute to the living by

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<sup>60</sup> On the creation of regional identities and images in Brazil see, for example: Oliven, *Tradition Matters: Modern Gaúcho Identity in Brazil.*; Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Ministério do Planejamento Orçamento e Gestão., *Atlas Das Representações Literárias de Regiões Brasileiras*, 2 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2006).; Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr, *A Invenção do Nordeste e Outras Artes* (Recife, São Paulo: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Cortez Editora, 1999).

<sup>61</sup> Such was the case, for example, in the South African War monuments in New Zealand, where out of 6,500 volunteers 228 died. See Maclean and Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, 47-9.



maintaining a proud people. The inscriptions on the monuments repeatedly state that the *expedicionários* were “sons of this soil,” a part of the local people, and representatives of their communities. The inscriptions were dedicated “[t]o the Alagoanos of the FEB” (Maceió, Alagoas), “the heroes of Assis” (Assis, São Paulo), to Atibaianos, Burianos and Itatibenses and to those who “carried the civic spirit of Perdões to the War” (Perdões, Minas Gerais). It seems, then, as in some other countries, that the war monument shows the local community’s part in the nation, and at the same time, it represents local patriotism that helps distinguish it from other municipalities by its civic attributes.<sup>62</sup> This double-edged sword allows the community to belong to something bigger without losing its uniqueness and identity.

The local meaning of the FEB monument also serves to explain the difference in the level of commemoration between the countryside and the metropolis. While the small localities use the monument to mark their place in the nation, cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro do not need the memory of the FEB in order to secure their role in the national life. Thus, in light of the abundance of local interpretations of a national event such as the FEB, and the scarcity of regional ones, we can do Freyre one better and say that the road to national identity begins less with a regional identity and more with a local one.

Monuments are not the only way to commemorate in the civicscape—a portmanteau of cityscape and civic space that signifies the physical and architectural representations in a designated space for civic rituals.<sup>63</sup> A monument is a type of

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<sup>62</sup> For the meaning of local monumental commemoration in Israel see: Almog, “War Casualties Monuments in Israel,” 185.

<sup>63</sup> Daryle Williams, “Civicscape and Memoryscape: The First Vargas Regime and Rio de Janeiro,” in *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives*, ed. Jenes R. Hentschke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

memorial, i.e. a place of memory, which is distinct in its physical-plastic and non-functional character from other memorials like commemorative days, school names or books.<sup>64</sup> For their lack of utilitarian function and their capacity to provoke sentiments, the war monument and the commemorative ritual are the memorials that best communicate values and virtues.<sup>65</sup> The inscriptions on the monuments most often explain to the observer that the FEB fought for “democracy,” “liberty” and “civic spirit.” Less frequently one finds the words “victory,” “honor” (especially national honor), “national integrity” and “human values.”

With the exception of the monuments situated in military garrisons and dedicated to their units, the text of other FEB monuments rarely mentions the armed forces. One notable exception is the monument in the *praça Ex-Combatente* in São Gonçalo, Rio de Janeiro, whose inscription honors “the eternal armed classes” for being “the guardians of the democratic liberties and of the fatherland’s integrity.” Even in this case, the glorification of the armed forces is done by means of civilian and democratic language. The inscriptions on the monuments, then, communicate a civilian perception of the FEB and honor it not for its military achievements, but for its political and human dimensions. This egalitarian image, however, is slightly undermined by the tendency to list the names of the commemorated soldiers by rank rather than in alphabetical order, for instance. This hierarchical naming practice is not that common in FEB monuments, but it is still practiced more frequently than some other countries’ World War II monuments.

### ***Reinterpretation, Militarization and Resistance***

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<sup>64</sup> Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 4.

<sup>65</sup> James M. Mayo, “War Memorials as Political Memory,” *Geographical Review* 78, no. 1 (1988): 68.

While monuments are a good source for understanding the society that erected them, time moves on, generations pass, and new societies live with these monuments in their public sphere. Out of the 192 monuments registered in the ANVFEB archives, the date of unveiling for 120 is known. Sixty-three (52.5%) of them were constructed between 1945 and 1946 when Brazilian civil society took its first steps toward democracy after long years of Getúlio Vargas' New State dictatorship. Another thirty-two (26.6%) were built during the next twenty years. Thus, it is important to examine the ways in which later generations treated the monuments.

Francisco Cesar Alves Ferraz argues that memorials to the FEB were militarized over the years. Based on several *cine-jornais* that were screened before movies during the military dictatorship, Ferraz observes that the role of the veterans and the military authorities gradually changed. While previously it was the army that honored the veterans, increasingly the veterans were marginalized, physically placed among the crowds, yielding their place of honor to high officers, and put in such situations when it is them who pay homage to the armed forces.<sup>66</sup> Dennison

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**Figure 9:** The 1974 model for the second FEB monument in São Paulo in Santana (built in 1981). On the right is the entrance to the *Parque da Aeronáutica* in *Campo de Marte*. Source: Arquivo Cesar Maximiano. Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil – Secção de São Paulo, May 1974.

Oliveira analyzed the ceremony held to commemorate fifty years since the end of World War II in Curitiba and concluded that the causes and consequences of the war were

<sup>66</sup> Ferraz, "A Guerra Que Não Acabou", 345.

obscured, the military achievements were overstated, and the whole ceremony was a military one.<sup>67</sup>

The claim of the militarization of the monuments is also supported by their location. Cytrynowicz argues that the 1981 FEB monument in São Paulo was located remotely from the city's main memory area of *Parque do Ibirapuera*. Inaugurated in 1954 during celebrations of the city's fourth centennial, the park is one of the city's main open urban leisure spaces, especially for the upper middle class and elite whose neighborhoods are located close by. Moreover, in light of the modernization of another central place – *Avenida Paulista*, *Ibirapuera* became a refuge for urban memory. The veterans realized the monument's failure to leave its mark on the urban collective memory and sought to build a second monument closer to the park but were able to do so in a marginal location only. This geographic analysis supports Cytrynowicz's conclusion about the weakness of the memory of the FEB in the city. However, the first monument to the FEB in São Paulo was erected in 1952 at the end of the *Avenida Paulista*, which at the time was still at the heart of the residential area of the paulistana elite and was already transforming into a commercial area. With the urban growth of the city, the plaza was torn down for construction of the intersection of *Avenida Paulista* and *Avenida Consolação*, and the monument was moved to the Santana quarter, in the northern part of the city.<sup>68</sup>

When the second (1981) monument was planned in the early 1970s, its first suggested location was near Parque Ibirapuera, which is in great proximity to the city's

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<sup>67</sup> Dennison de Oliveira, "Cultura e Poder Nas Cerimônias Militares Das Forças Armadas Brasileiras: O Caso da Vitória de Monte Castelo," *Revista de Ciências Humanas (Curitiba)*, no. 9 (2000).

<sup>68</sup> Today, the old location at the end of Av. Paulista is named "praça Marechal Cordeiro de Farias" after the commander of the FEB's artillery.

main “memory site.” However, the Veterans’ association asked to situate the newly planned monument in Santana, where the first monument stood.<sup>69</sup> In the associations’ publications for the 1974 *Semana da Vitoria*, the Santana location is praised for the width of its avenues, which would allow for the construction of the grandiose new monument, and that would for allow parades to march from there to the center of the city.<sup>70</sup> The monument, once finally constructed, was significantly smaller than and had little to do with the earlier plan. Four elements from the original design remained. The idea that the monument would include a space for a small museum was kept, but instead of a museum, a post of the Military Police is stationed in the monument. The plan to have four flagpoles was kept and expanded as today multiple poles carry all Brazil’s states’ flags and more. The location in front of the big military base in *Campo de Marte* did not change. Finally, the idea that the monument should be composed of three concrete elements symbolizing the armed forces remained as well.

As the size of the 1981 monument diminished, so did the significance of its location. When the veterans’ association asked in the mid-1990s to commemorate their fallen comrades, they asked to do so in a more central place. In July 1995 they asked the city to place the new monument in the heart of *Ibirapuera*, in front of the obelisk of São Paulo, which commemorates the dead of the 1932 Revolution. The suggested location was chosen intentionally to create a link between the FEB monument, the 1932 Obelisk and two other monuments: the *Aviador* that was dedicated to the World War II pilots of

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<sup>69</sup> “Entre Marte e Anhembi o monument aos heróis da 2.a Guerra”, *O Diario de São Paulo*, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1972. The original location was on Rua Sena Madureira in Vila Clementino on one of the main avenues leading to Ibirapuera.

<sup>70</sup> Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil – Secção de São Paulo, May 1974, 2. I thank Cesar Campiani Maximiano for sharing this document from his private archive with me.

the Brazilian Air Force and the monument for Almirante Tamandaré, the patron of the Brazilian Navy.<sup>71</sup>

Image removed in compliance with copy rights requirements

**Figure 10:** The first Model for the 1997 São Paulo Monument for the Dead of World War II in *Parque Ibirapuera* by Alvaro Franklin da Silveira. Source: A letter from Jairo Junqueira da Silva, President of the AxeCB-SP to the Empresa Municipal de Urbanização – EMURB, SP. July 17, 1995. Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.2: “Monumento ao Ex-Combatente.”

The suggested monument was composed of fourteen life-sized bronze figures of soldiers engaged in a range of activities on the front. Some appear to be cheering a soldier holding a flag in a triumphant gesture; others were helping a wounded comrade or carrying a stretcher with a dead soldier on it. This representation of soldiers in their weakness was a normal scene on the front, but as we have seen was extremely rare in the

<sup>71</sup> A letter from Cel. Ref. Ex. Jairo Junqueira da Silva, Presidente da Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil, Seção de São Paulo to Claudio Ferreira Couto, Assessor Especial, 17 de julho de 1995. Deposited in Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: “Monumento ao Ex-Combatente.”

On the intention to link the four monuments see a letter from Claudio Ferreira Couto, Assessor Especial to Dra. Helle-Nice de Paschoal, Assessora, 11 de setembro de 1995. Deposited in Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: “Monumento ao Ex-Combatente.”

FEB monuments. A three-meter-high wall was to include the names of all the fallen and another wall was to be a tribute to the Marines and Air Force. The city rejected the proposed location since it was reserved for an auditorium planned by the celebrated architect Oscar Niemeyer, and it asked the association to suggest a new location, preferably outside of the park.<sup>72</sup>

During the following months, internal correspondence within the city council indicated that a possible alternative location would be the *Praça Carlos Gardel*. The plaza was close to the *Comando Militar do Sudeste*, the *Circulo Militar de São Paulo* – the social club of the armed forces’ officers, the Brazilian Army’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Command and next to the soon-to-be built *Colégio Militar*. In March 1996, the Veterans’ association suggested erecting a new monument in the nearby Praça Eisenhower across the street.<sup>73</sup> The new monument replaced the battle scene with a symbolic and abstract architectural monument, and the city preferred the new one. Included on the new design was a cylinder with the names of all Brazilian World War II fallen on which there were three metal figures of soldiers from the military’s three branches. In late February 1997 the city approved the monument in *Praça Eisenhower* and authorized the association to start erecting it. In early October, the association notified the city that it was ready to start erecting the monument in the *Praça Carlos Gardel*.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> A letter from Cristiano Ribeiro da Luz, Diretor Técnico DEPAVE-1 to Cel. Claudio Ferreira Couto, assessor Especial, 4 de agosto de 1995. Deposited in Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: “Monumento ao Ex-Combatente.”

<sup>73</sup> A letter from Cel. Ref. Ex. Jairo Junqueira da Silva, Presidente da Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil, Seção de São Paulo to Maria Aparecida Lomônico, Diretora do Departamento Técnico do Patrimônio Histórico – SMC, São Paulo, 4 de março de 1996. Deposited in Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: “Monumento ao Ex-Combatente.”

<sup>74</sup> A letter from Cel. Ref. Ex. Jairo Junqueira da Silva, Presidente da Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil, Seção de São Paulo to Dr. Reinaldo de Barros, secretario das obras da Prefeitura, 3 de outubro de

When the bulldozers began working in late 1997 the residents protested and, acting through the *Associação dos amigos das praças da rua Curitiba e Entorno* (APRACE), expressed their dissatisfaction with the planned monument. In a letter to the city, they argued that the city authorized construction of the monument in *Praça Eisenhower*, not *Carlos Gardel*. As a compromise, they suggested erecting it in the significantly smaller *Praça Ícaro de Castro Mello*, located in front of *Praça Carlos Gardel*.<sup>75</sup> The three locations are situated within about a quarter of a mile of one another. They are distinct, however, in the symbolic value that their names bare. Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890 – 1965) was the supreme commander of the Allied forces in Europe during World War II and later the first supreme commander of NATO and the 34<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. His merits as a soldier and a politician, and his links to the FEB bestowed prestige on the plaza bearing his name. Carlos Gardel (1890 - 1935) was the celebrated Argentinean Tango singer who became a culturally iconic figure in Latin America and beyond. Ícaro de Castro Mello (1913 - 1986) was a paulista architect who specialized in sports facilities. In spite of his importance in the Brazilian architectural modernist movement, his name did not enjoy the same prestige as Eisenhower and Gardel, and the plaza honoring him was significantly smaller.

APRACE's letter objected to the monument's location on technical matters while still supporting its construction in the area. However, in its first informative bulletin from December 1997, it expressed a more antagonistic view. An article explained that on top

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1997. Deposited in Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: "Monumento ao Ex-Combatente."

<sup>75</sup> A letter from Eng. Ricardo Yazbek To Alfredo Mário Savelli, Secretários das Administrações Regionais, 3 de dezembro de 1997. Deposited in Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: "Monumento ao Ex-Combatente."



of the current neglect of the “deformed, dangerous, badly maintained, lacking illumination and gardening, and home for ambulant petty merchants” plazas in the area, the Veterans’ association wishes to build a monument for the World War II dead.<sup>76</sup> The next article in the bulletin regarded the monument as “[a]nother attempt against the neighborhood,” and thus reveals the way the neighborhood association perceived the monument as an unwanted nuisance.<sup>77</sup>

Within a week, the city recognized APRACE’s claims and canceled the earlier authorization.<sup>78</sup> The veterans’ association explained that in spite of the fact it named the location *Praça Eisenhower*, it actually meant *Praça Carlos Gardel*, as was shown in the original plans, and as proof pointed to the plans it submitted, all consistent with the shape of *Praça Carlos Gardel*.<sup>79</sup> Due to insufficient documentation, I cannot reconstruct how the dispute was settled, but by the end of 1999 the monument was inaugurated in its current location at the *Praça Carlos Gardel*. The monument that was eventually constructed had two things in common with the other FEB monument in Santana: both include highly visible elements honoring the three branches of the armed forces, a relatively rare element in the monuments to the FEB, and all three are located in front of military facilities.

While the tendency for militarizing the memory of the FEB surrounding the monuments is evident, at least in large urban centers, other groups tried to appropriate the

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<sup>76</sup> “Monumento aos Ex-Combatentes,” *APRACE – Informativo*, número 1, Dezembro de 97. Deposited in the Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: “Monumento ao Ex-Combatente.”

<sup>77</sup> “Shows tiram sossego dos moradores,” *APRACE – Informativo*, número 1.

<sup>78</sup> Despacho de Jose Carlos Garcia, Administrador regional da Vila Mariana. 16 de dezembro de 1997.

<sup>79</sup> A letter from Cel. Ref. Ex. Jairo Junqueira da Silva, Presidente da Associação dos Ex-Combatentes do Brasil, Seção de São Paulo to an unclear recipient. 29 de junho de 1998. Deposited in Secretaria Municipal da cultura, Departamento do Patrimônio Histórica, Divisão de Preservação (DPH), Seção de Levantamento e Pesquisa, Pasta 04B.012.1: “Monumento ao Ex-Combatente.”

FEB's prestige and invest other meanings in the monuments. Ferraz tells of an episode that occurred on February 13, 1968 when artists from the Guanabara Theatre, in an act of protest against censorship, deposited flowers on the Unknown Soldier's tomb, an element of the monument, "for those who in the War fell for democracy and liberty." The following day Jamil Amiden, a veteran and a deputy in The Federal House of Representatives (Câmara Federal), protested the expulsion of the artists from the monument arguing that it was "sacred ground" and the "oracle of our democracy [and] origin of our liberty."<sup>80</sup> The fact that the monument honored a military unit, rather than, for example, a hero of Brazilian independence, and that the act of putting flowers on the cenotaph was an accepted ritual, was very convenient for the transmission of a subversive message against the army in a legitimate way.

This peaceful, symbolic action was not the only course of action the dictatorship's opposition took. The same year (1968) several hundred from the left, especially students and members of the Communist Party, formed several dozen urban and rural guerrilla movements (or terrorist groups, as seen by the regime) that operated throughout Brazil. These groups were poorly coordinated, failed in gaining popular support, and achieved visibility by robbing banks and kidnapping foreign diplomats to get their comrades freed. Their rebellion disrupted the military but did not pose a serious threat to the regime. The army managed to kill the guerrilla's most prominent leaders, Carlos Marighella, a former federal deputy for the Brazilian Communist Party, and Carlos Lamarca—an army captain who crossed the lines and joined the guerrilla—in November 1969 and September 1971

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<sup>80</sup> Ferraz, "A Guerra Que Não Acabou", 346. Less than a year afterward, on January 16, 1969, Amidan's political rights were stripped from him for ten years, together with dozens of other political figures. "Novas Cassações atingiram parlamento." *O Dia*, January 17, 1969.

respectively, and by early 1972 the different branches of the Military regime crushed the struggle permanently.<sup>81</sup>

In São Paulo, the location of the 1998 monument bears additional meaning. Before the construction of the FEB's monument, the plaza hosted a statue of General Newton Estilac Leal (1893 – 1955). As a young officer Leal took part in the *tenentes* revolts during the 1920s and was one of the commanders of Prestes' Column.<sup>82</sup> The *tenentes* were low-ranking officers and cadets who, beginning in 1922, revolted against the corrupt political arrangements and social control in Brazil's "Old Republic." The insurrectionary movement ended with Vargas's 1930 Revolution when many of them, including Leal, re-integrated into the army. Prestes' Column was one of these guerilla movements commanded by Luís Carlos Prestes, who would later become a Marxist, the leader of the Brazilian Communist Party, and a prominent and tragic political figure. Leal supported Vargas during the 1930 Revolution, during the New State, and when the army overthrew Vargas. During World War II Leal remained in Brazil and was part of the so-called "Exercito do Caxias" – the rigid and old-fashioned institution that resented the FEB and took its revenge on it upon its return. His brother "Zeno" Esilitac Leal was considered for the position of the FEB's chief of staff, but he was not elected due to a tradition in the Brazilian Army that the division's commander and chief of staff should be from different branches, and both Mascarenhas de Moraes and Zeno Leal were artillery

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<sup>81</sup> On the Brazilian guerrilla movements see: Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 84 – 125.; João Batista Berardo, *Guerrilhas e Guerrilheiros no Drama da América Latina* (São Paulo: Edições Populares, 1981).; James Kohl and John Litt, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America* (Cambridge, Mass.,: MIT Press, 1974), 29 - 170.

<sup>82</sup> On the Tenente Movement see: Frank D. McCann, *Soldiers of the Patria: A History of the Brazilian Army, 1889-1937* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), Ch. 7.; On Prestes' Column see: Neill Macaulay, *The Prestes Column; Revolution in Brazil* ([New York,: New Viewpoints, 1974).

officers.<sup>83</sup> After the War, Leal became one of the prominent leaders of the faction among the Army's officers that supported left wing nationalism. Under this banner, he won the 1950 presidential elections of the *Club Militar* and despite the fact that he ran against the FEB veterans Cordeiro de Farias and Castelo Branco, many former *febianos* supported him.<sup>84</sup> As the Korean conflict began, radicals on the left as well as communists successfully equated nationalism with anti-Americanism, and Leal's prestige within larger segments of the officers' corps was damaged. In January 1951 Vargas, now elected as a populist president, appointed Leal as his Minister of War. In his new position, the anti-communist faction targeted Leal and Vargas began distancing himself from the nationalist faction, until it successfully forced Leal to resign in March 1952. He ran again for president of the Military Club in May 1952 but lost to the moderate nationalists who favored cooperation with the United States.<sup>85</sup>

The veterans association's achievement in putting the FEB's monument in Leal's place bears many possible subversive interpretations. One can see the transformation as the victory of the rank and file, as most of the *febianos* were, over the General and Minister of War. Another possibility is to see the exchange in light of the São Paulo versus Vargas's centralism conflict, as Leal not only supported Vargas, but also participated in the suppression of the 1932 São Paulo uprisings. During the campaign for the monument, the association repeatedly addresses the "Sons of São Paulo," and Estilac Leal was, during most of his career, Vargas's ally who participated in the oppression of the city's 1934 revolt. Reflecting on the old rivalry between the FEB and the rest of the

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<sup>83</sup> Silveira, *A FEB Por um Soldado*, 208.

<sup>84</sup> Smallman, "The Official Story," 246.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964; an Experiment in Democracy* (New York, : Oxford University Press, 1967), 104 - 07.; Smallman, *Fear & Memory in the Brazilian Army and Society, 1889-1954*, Ch. 7.

Brazilian Army, the new monument might also represent the symbolic triumph of the “Army of the FEB” over the “Army of Caxias,” which stayed behind.

Finally, the replacement of Estilac Leal’s statue with the monument the association struggled to erect for years can be understood as an affirmation of the São Paulo branch of the veterans’ association’s political loyalties. Since the beginning of the veterans’ association in 1946, the national council was openly associated with the Communist Party, which was legal between 1945 and 1949. Several local branches, including the São Paulo’s, did not support this political orientation; they described theirs as a struggle against the politicization of the association and publically denounced the national council’s political agenda. The army’s hierarchy did not support the early association’s leadership, and in the 1949 elections, career officers among the veterans managed to take control of the national council. The conservatives’ hold on the association was firm, and it grew stronger after the 1964 military coup. The association’s leadership remained conservative after the return to democratic rule in 1985.<sup>86</sup> In light of the association’s fifty-year-long political tendencies, the replacement of the left-wing nationalist general’s bust with the FEB monument also took on a political meaning. However, revenge’s most likely tasted bittersweet as the home of Leal’s monument was the plaza across the street.

### ***Memory, Oblivion and Interpretation***

In contrast to the propaganda of the wartime state and the repeated claims of the FEB of being composed of soldiers from all of Brazil, different states and regions contributed unevenly to the FEB. Most of the soldiers came from the south and center-

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<sup>86</sup> Ferraz, "A Guerra Que Não Acabou", 293 - 328.

east states of Brazil while fewer, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the population, came from the North and the northeast. These regions, indeed, contributed their share to the war effort by sending tens of thousands to tap rubber in the Amazon Forest, guard the coast, and provide the Allies with airbases in Brazil, but they were less represented in the FEB.<sup>87</sup> It is no wonder, then, that in these regions, the FEB does not have the importance and symbolic strength it does further south. Not only had the fewer north and northeastern *febianos* turned out to be fewer agents of memory, but also these northern and northeastern communities had other silent narratives about their part in World War II to promote—and these stories are by far less known than the FEB’s. Bitterness toward the FEB in light of the neglect of the “Rubber Soldiers” might also have contributed to the weaker memory of the FEB in these regions. For example, more than sixty years after the war ended, Lupércio Freire Maia, an 86-year-old man who was a tapper in the Amazon during World War II, was quoted in the *International Herald Tribune* as saying “[w]hen I watch the Independence Day ceremonies on television and see the soldiers who fought in Europe parading in their uniforms, I feel sadness and dismay.”<sup>88</sup>

His sadness and dismay might have originated from another source of frustration as well. Seen from the Northern perspective, the *febianos* were not only Brazilians from other regions in Brazil, but also, ethnically speaking, other kinds of Brazilians. Brazilian

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<sup>87</sup> On the “Rubber Soldiers” see: Warren Dean, *Brazil and the Struggle for Rubber: a Study in Environmental History*, Studies in Environment and History (Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), ch. 6.; Morales, *Vai e Vem, Vira e Volta: as Rotas Dos Soldados da Borracha.*; Secreto, *Soldados da Borracha: Trabalhadores Entre o Sertão e a Amazônia no Governo Vargas.* On the North American air-bases in the Northeast and other Brazilian Contributions to the Allied war efforts see: McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance.*

<sup>88</sup> Larry Rohter, “Brazil ‘Rubber Soldiers’ Fight for Recognition,” *International Herald Tribune*, October 13, 2006.

regionalism is strongly linked to notions of race and modernity in which the south is perceived as “white,” “advanced,” “developed” and the motor of a modernizing Brazil, and the north and the north east as “non-white,” “backward,” impoverished and a burden to the nation.<sup>89</sup> Wartime propaganda visually represented the Brazilian Army as all white.<sup>90</sup> Within the FEB, commanders ordered marching soldiers in Brazil before their departure, and later on European soil, to exclude black soldiers.<sup>91</sup> Together with claims on the FEB’s role in modernizing the army and its contribution to the democratization of the political system, its association with the south is more likely.

The geography of memory of the FEB also points to a stronger commemorative narrative in the rural towns than the large urban centers. One can imagine how the personal stories of a handful of veterans were shared and remembered by their family, friends and acquaintances. While these social networks of memory are limited in their range, they have different impacts on communities in different sizes. In a small and intimate community, almost anyone might know “the veteran,” remember him from a lecture in school, from his place at the head of an Independence Day parade, or from his medals and beret. The town’s monuments are not anonymous but include the names of neighbors. In a large city, this intimacy is weaker, if it exists at all.

This geographic difference in remembrance influences, in turn, the historiography. Most of the researchers on the FEB, the repositories, and many of the veterans reside within the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo-Curitiba triangle —where many of

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<sup>89</sup> Barbara Weinstein, "Racializing Regional Difference: São Paulo Versus Brazil, 1932," in *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, ed. Nancy P. Appelbaum etc., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Maureen O'Dougherty, *Consumption Intensified: The Politics of Middle-Class Daily Life in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), Ch. 7.

<sup>90</sup> Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945*, 7-8.

<sup>91</sup> On these episodes and on the place of the discourse on racial discrimination in the memory of the FEB see Ch. 4.

the soldiers came from—and live in large urban centers. Not surprisingly, their subjective impressions are biased in the manner of the society in which they operate.

Although many of the monuments express values, such as democracy, liberty and human rights, and are mostly civilian in their form and text, a gradual process of militarization of the ceremonies conducted at their feet took place. While some groups suggested other interpretations for the meaning of the monuments, the armed forces successfully appropriated the memory of the FEB, especially following the construction of the national monument in Rio de Janeiro (1960). Ferraz records this process in many respects beyond the monuments and explains why the veterans generally cooperated with the process.

The armed forces' embrace of the veterans and the legacy of the FEB transformed the FEB into another chapter in the military history of Brazil. This is because those who opposed the armed forces, especially after the return to democratic rule in 1985, were not interested in promoting the memory of the FEB, as it would glorify the Military. Indeed, some scholars have argued that Brazilian Academia intentionally rejected civilian studies on military history in general because of the clashes between the two institutions.<sup>92</sup>

Societies do not forget, although they might actively choose not to remember. The FEB monuments teach us that sometimes societies choose neither to remember nor not to remember but simply change their interpretations of what they do remember. Thus, the language of the majority of the monuments built immediately after the war suggest that most of the Brazilian society interpreted the FEB as taking part in an ideological struggle for democracy and liberty to end dictatorship and oppression. By praising the FEB for those qualities, the community claimed those values as its own and was proud to

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<sup>92</sup> Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 12.; Oliveira, "Cultura e Poder," 51.



participate in the nation carrying such honorable flags. This ideological appropriation expressed more than mere global ideals. Rather, it was a very concrete political stand in the Brazil of 1945. When Brazilian artists engraved such terms as democracy and liberty into their war monuments, Brazil was still under Getúlio Vargas's dictatorial rule. Vargas came to power in a coup in 1930 and strengthened his hold on Brazil during a self-coup in 1937, when he installed the authoritarian New State. Thus, when the people of Ipauçu in São Paulo, Campo Largo in Paraná, and Alfenas in Minas Gerais dedicated their monuments to "the defenders of freedom" on October 20, 21, and 28 respectively, a few days before the armed forces deposed Vargas on October 29, 1945, the texts were not in harmony with the Brazilian political reality. These inscriptions document in stone and bronze the paradox of Vargas's authoritarian state, which sent troops to fight alongside the Allies to restore freedom, liberty and democracy on European soil.<sup>93</sup> The early monuments expressing this attitude dared the regime to actualize their promises of democratization while the later ones celebrated that realization.

For others, the same liberal rhetoric meant the promise of freedom from other forms of oppression, notably Communism. As early as the end of 1945, a small booklet titled "Useless Sacrifice?" warned its readers against voting for Iedo Fiuza, the Communist Party's presidential candidate. In comic form, the booklet briefly narrates Brazil's entry into World War II, the achievements of the brave *febianos*, and the price the country paid. Then, in an unexpected narrative turn, it denounces the communists for not being loyal to Brazil, for attacking God and the family, and for trying to indoctrinate

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<sup>93</sup> For the appropriation of the FEB's prestige and its usage as a symbol against the New State see: Francisco César Alves Ferraz, *Os Brasileiros e a Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2005), 66.; For its contribution to democratization of Brazilian society and the Army see: Bonalume Neto, *Nossa Segunda Guerra*, 217.; For a critical interpretation on the FEB's role in ending Vargas's dictatorship see: Smallman, "The Official Story."

Brazilians into communism. The booklet states that a communist future is opposed to the freedom for which the *pracinhas* fought.<sup>94</sup> The internal debate among the veterans, especially around the 1949 elections in their own organization, was fertile ground for the expression of such ideas. The São Gonçalo monument, mentioned earlier, is the monumental expression of that view. This interpretation of the FEB as a symbol of a democracy that emerged on the eve of the Cold War flourished under the military dictatorship.



**Figure 11:** Centro de Estudos Sociais, “Sacrifício Inútil?” Deposited in APERJ, Fondo DPS, Serie Folhetos No. 267. Left: the booklet’s cover. The title asks: “Useless Sacrifice?” Right: the last frame of the booklet (14/4). The text answers the question on the cover: “Do not turn in vain the brave *pracinhas*’ sacrifice by accepting the communist yoke.”

The ways in which the armed forces assigned new meaning to the known rhetoric of democracy expressed in and alongside the monuments is evident in the newsreels, known in Brazil as *cine jornais*. The first Brazilian newsreel appeared in Brazil as early as 1909, and their local character changed to a national one after World War I. In 1934, when the state required theaters to screen local films as part of the nationalistic campaign,

<sup>94</sup> APERJ, Fondo DPS, Serie Folhetos, 267. The booklet bears no date, but its content indicates that it was part of the December 1945 Elections’ propaganda.

the newsreels became more popular and systematic. In 1938, the state, via its *Departamento Nacional de Propaganda e Difusão Cultural*, and later through the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda* (DIP), started producing its newsreel *Cine Jornal Brasileiro*, which was distributed throughout most of Brazil. After the fall of the New State, the *Cine Jornal Brasileiro* transformed into the *Cine Jornal Informativo*, which was then produced by the *Agência Nacional*, and between 1971 and 1979 the Federal government produced a new newsreel titled *Brasil hoje*.<sup>95</sup> Movie theatres broadcast these newsreels prior to any commercial screening, and the regime used them as propaganda. Each newsreel was usually composed of five to seven short reports. By the late 1970s, however, the importance of the newsreels diminished because of the spread and evolution of the television and lowering rates of illiteracy.<sup>96</sup>

Under the military dictatorship, the images of the National Monument for World War II Dead and of the FEB in the newsreels functioned as political propaganda that appropriated the FEB's prestige and sought to transform the meaning that Brazilians assigned to the FEB's fight during the two earlier decades into one more compatible with the regime's politics. One such journal from 1966, two years after the military coup, shows a ceremony commemorating the end of the Second World War at the National Monument. The camera shows President Castelo Branco, the first president of the military dictatorship who was the head of the Operations Branch of the FEB, and military personnel conducting the ceremony with civilians watching. Simultaneously, the narrator

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<sup>95</sup> Lisa Shaw and Stephanie Dennison, *Brazilian National Cinema* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2007), Ch. 2.;

<sup>96</sup> José Inácio de Melo Souza, "Cinejornal," in *Enciclopédia do Cinema Brasileiro*, ed. Fernão Ramos and Luiz Felipe Miranda (São Paulo, SP: Editora SENAC São Paulo, 2000). Between 1960 and 1970 the percentage of people who owned a TV in urban households grew from 9.5% to 40%. Cited in Skidmore, *The Politics of Military*, 111.

explains that the FEB fought for the defense of the fatherland and civilization as well as for the democratic ideals that enabled and justify current human existence.<sup>97</sup> This explanation is an example of the Cold War-era discourse which frequently referenced the war against “subversives” and communism. At the same time, it suggests that the FEB fought for the contemporary “human existence” of Brazil under the military dictatorship with its armed forces waging war against the civilian society and the left.

Another newsreel from 1967 further advanced the argument on the gradual transformation of the memory of the FEB under the dictatorship. A report on the visit of the Japanese prince included the obligatory ceremony wherein foreign heads of state put flowers on the Grave of the Unknown Soldier in the National Monument. Unlike other diplomatic visits, such as of the Prince of Wales or the Norwegian King, this visit bore additional meaning. Under the gaze of hundreds of Brazilians of Japanese origin, the heir to the Japanese throne paid his respect to the Brazilian soldiers who died, as part of the Allied forces in World War II, to defeat the Axis powers of which his country was part. Beyond diplomatic bilateral relations, the screening of the event functioned as propaganda when it suggested a hierarchy between the two nations, which was different from the widespread image of Japan as an emerging world power that Brazil should imitate with the help of the Japanese-Brazilians.<sup>98</sup> The narrator explains that the homage is to the brave *pracinhas* and FEB members who gave their lives for “enhancing the high reputation of the armed forces.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Cine Jornal Informativo n. 31. 1966. EH/FIL 0263. VHS 10. 1:46:49.

<sup>98</sup> A subversive interpretation would point to the fact that while the Brazilian Army defeated Japan, although not directly, during World War II, Japan’s superiority over the militarily governed Brazil was a well-known fact. On the image of Japan in Brazil and transnational identities among Japanese-Brazilians see: Jeffrey Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

<sup>99</sup> Cine Jornal Informativo n. 66. 1967. EH/FIL 0293. VHS 12. 0:55:00

During the following year, another newsreel was even more explicit in equating the mission of the FEB with the military dictatorship's. It began with a report on the funeral of João Batista Mascarenhas de Moraes, the commander of the FEB, which began with a great crowd viewing his open coffin deposited in the National Monument. The narrator explains that Mascarenhas symbolized an era when Brazil fought for the defense of the culture, liberty and civilization of the entire world. The last report of the same newsreel showed officers who participated in the Eighth Conference of American Armies depositing flowers at the monument. This time the narrator explains to the audience that the Americas are free today with their armies united in order to prevent a "new catastrophe."<sup>100</sup>

The approximately eleven minute-long documentary "Operação Carajás," probably from 1971, used the FEB to equate the struggle of the FEB with the contemporary one against "subversives," that is the urban and rural leftist guerilla groups who opposed the military regime, and to ensure the viewers that the armed forces are ready for the task.<sup>101</sup> Most of the documentary showed military maneuvers in the Amazon against mock subversive enemies. Infantry and marines, helicopters, paratroopers and the navy, all collaborate to liberate a town held by the guerrillas; they surprise the enemy and give medical assistance to the civilian population, which in turn thanks the soldiers in the celebration of Mass. At the end of the documentary, the screen shows the National Monument for the World War II dead. The narrator explains that the monument is a symbol of the commitment that Brazilian soldiers have for the defense of

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<sup>100</sup> Cine Jornal Informativo n. 112. 1968. EH/FIL 0338. VHS 15. 0:01:09 and 0:07:21.

<sup>101</sup> For the evolution of the term "subversive" among Brazilian secret agencies see: Oliver Dinius, "Defending *Ordem* against *Progresso*: The Brazilian Political Police and Industrial Labor Control," in *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives*, ed. Jenes R. Hentschke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

the fatherland, and that Brazilians can be assured that the armed forces are capable of protecting Brazil against the enemies of freedom and justice. Fade out. The end.<sup>102</sup>

A 1974 newsreel covered President Ernesto Geisel's visit to the National Monument at Victory Day. The footage showed Geisel's visit interrupted by archival scenes of the Italian Campaign and of the 1960 reburial ceremony of the dead *febianos* at the National Monument's mausoleum. The voice interprets the images claiming that the liberty for which the FEB fought was not "freedom without government, which is anarchy, but freedom with order, which brings peace."<sup>103</sup> In this newsreel, the FEB is presented as an integral part of the army, which carried its flag to protect democracy and liberty from the "Red" threat. The FEB was transformed to symbolize the army, as seen in some monuments and ceremonies. It can also be seen in a reproduction of one detail of the national monument, the statue of the three soldiers of the three armed forces, in a 1972 stamp (C-729). One of a series of four stamps honoring the armed forces, the stamp with the monument detail serves to symbolize the unity of the three branches.

A third interpretation uses the memory of the FEB to attack the armed forces and to resist them. Such was the attempt to appropriate the memory of the FEB by honoring the FEB dead who fell for freedom as a protest against censorship. This attitude, however, is less apparent in the monuments, the majority of which were built before the military dictatorship, and there were few people who dared claiming it back from the army. A more common reaction was to adopt the association between the FEB and the armed forces and then simply avoid it.

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<sup>102</sup> Documentario: Operação Carajás. [1971]. EH/FIL 0910. VHS 24. 0:00:39.

<sup>103</sup> Brazil hoje n. 60. 1974. EH/FIL 0497. VHS 36. 0:46:04.

In the twenty-first century, matters may change again. Perhaps Oliveira's call to reclaim the FEB from Military History and to treat it as a national episode has been heard. In 2009, the Santana monument in São Paulo was closed for renovations. At the same time in Rio, the exhibition in the National Monument was about to be replaced and signs of the upcoming change are located in visible parts of the museum. At the entrance to the mausoleum, colorful signs inform the visitor that the monument is part of the "[t]o know in order to preserve" campaign on behalf of the city to revitalize its touristic attractions. While these are early signs of a change in public interest, level of preservation and even reinterpretation, no one knows what the future holds, but one is allowed to imagine Srur decorating the FEB monuments to provoke the passersby to consider what does the FEB mean to them.

## Chapter 4: The Other War Illustrated: Comics, Criticism, and Generational Shifts

In 1966, the popular magazine “*Manchete*” published an article with the provocative title: “The *pracinhas* who lost the war.” The article—accompanied by compassionate-provoking photographs—told the story of FEB veterans who lost their battle against the governmental and military bureaucracy in their fight to make a decent living and claim their rights. One of the case studies illustrated in the article is Alberto André Paroche, a documented war hero who could hardly support his family. The article also revealed that Paroche labored for five years to write his own history of the FEB, both as a book and as a comic book. To his disappointment, the *Biblioteca do Exército*, which published so many war memoirs, refused to publish his manuscripts. According to the article, a private publisher published parts of his 384-page long historical comic book in a series on World War II.<sup>1</sup> As excerpts of Paroche’s work analyzed in this chapter show, it is easy to imagine why the military press refused to publish his critical and provocative illustrated narrative, despite its quality.

This little known episode in Paroche’s life—even his son was not aware of the manuscripts’ existence—sheds light on the importance of the war comics as a war memorial. While the anti-militaristic interpretation of the war monuments was rare and hidden, it flourished in the comics. Moreover, the visual aspect of the illustrated narratives is powerful and affective, and it reached readers of all ages throughout Brazil. From the late 1950s to the present, the FEB has been a major topic in the Brazilian war comics. As a memorial, it was a battleground for competing narratives, some of which were harshly suppressed in other mediums until the re-democratization of the country in

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<sup>1</sup> Edison Cabral, “Os pracinhas the perderam a guerra,” *Manchete* 29 de outubro de 1966.



1985. Brazilian war comics provide us a window to early criticism of the FEB, of the Brazilian Army, and of war that circulated openly and were celebrated as popular culture artifacts. In this chapter, the analysis of the FEB comics exposes how subversive messages and interpretations reached wide audiences and defied official narratives that dominated other mainstream memorials. While the famous British magazine *War Illustrated* provided its readers with a patriotic and mobilizing experience during both world wars, the FEB comics—at least in their later generation—offered a post-war critical view and an illustrated narrative of the “other war.”

### **Comics in Brazil and Brazilian Comics**

Brazilian comics evolved under European and North American influence, and the same time were conditioned by the local economically-driven market for diverse media.<sup>2</sup> Two important sources of inspiration came together in the middle of the nineteenth century to create the European and North American modern comic strips. One was the German tradition of woodblock-illustrated children’s tales, such as Heinrich Hoffmann’s *Struwwelpeter* (1845) and Wilhelm Busch’s *Max und Moritz* (1865), where illustrations accompanied a narrative. The second was the political cartoon, whose origin is rooted in the seventeenth-century, and which became popular in the mid-nineteenth-century in

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<sup>2</sup> On the evolution of Brazilian Comics see: Álvaro de Moya and Reinaldo de Oliveira, "História (Dos Quadrinhos) no Brasil," in *Shazam!*, ed. Álvaro de Moya (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1970).; Zilda Augusta Anselmo, *Histórias em Quadrinhos* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1975), 64-73.; Gonçalo Júnior, *A Guerra Dos Gibis: a Formação do Mercado Editorial Brasileiro e a Censura Aos Quadrinhos, 1933-1964* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2004).; Laison de Holanda Cavalcanti, *Historia Del Humor Gráfico En El Brasil* (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 2005).; Waldomiro C. S. Vergueiro, *La Historieta Latinoamericana: Tomo III - Brasil* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones la Bañadera del Comic, 2008).; Waldomiro C. S. Vergueiro, "Brazilian Comics: Origin, Development, and Future Trends," in *Redrawing the Nation: National Identity in Latin/o American Comics*, ed. Héctor Fernández L'Hoest and Juan Poblete (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

mass-circulation magazines such as the British *Punch* (launched in 1841).<sup>3</sup> Brazilian comics also drew on these sources.<sup>4</sup> Beginning in 1837, when the first political caricature appeared in the *Jornal do Commercio*, this art form became very popular in the Brazilian press thanks to its ability to escape censorship and introduce subversive ideas and openly criticize the monarchy, church, and the institution of slavery. Furthermore, Europeans—like the German Henrique Fleuiss, the Italians Angelo Agostini and Luigi Borgomainerio, and the Portuguese Rafael Bordallo Pinheiro artists—were very active in this genre and brought with them the European style, concept and form of the newly emerging graphic art.<sup>5</sup> These influences reappeared in 1860 with the publication of *Semana Illustrada*, the first Brazilian illustrated magazine to present caricatures regularly. The magazine followed the example of earlier European illustrated newspapers, such as *Punch* and the French *Le Charivari* (launched in 1831). The most influential caricature artist that operated in Brazil at the time was Angelo Agostini (1843 – 1910), an Italian who drew sequential caricatures and therefore is considered by many Brazilian scholars to be the forerunner of the medium in the country. Beginning in 1869 Agostini published in *Vida Fluminense* the sequence “Nhô Quiim’s Adventures, or Impressions by A Trip to the Court”—the first Brazilian comic strip.

It took an additional forty-six years before the first Brazilian comic magazine appeared. Entitled, *O Tico-Tico* (1905),<sup>6</sup> the magazine offered its readers diverse stories

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<sup>3</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London ; New York: Verso, 2005), 165.

<sup>4</sup> In Brazil comics are often referred to as *histórias em quadrinhos*, abbreviated HQ, or simply *quadrinhos*. Another common denomination is *gibi*, derived from one of Brazil’s first comics magazine from the 1930s.

<sup>5</sup> Ana Luiza Martins and Tania Regina de Luca, *História da Imprensa no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2008), 64-7.

<sup>6</sup> The name is derived both from a common Brazilian bird and a contemporary Brazilian kindergarten bearing the same name.

on North American and Brazilian characters, and opened the door for the North American comics to influence the Brazilian industry. Its most famous character, “Chiquinho,” was considered original for a long time, but it was actually based on Richard Felton Outcault’s “Buster Brown.” Along Chiquinho’s side, national figures like “Kaximbown,” “Zé Macaco” and “Reco-Reco” also appeared for the first time in *O Tico-Tico*. The magazine survived for fifty-seven years and was the longest-published comic magazine in Brazil until 2008, when Donald Duck (*Pato Donald*)—which was first published in 1950—broke its long-standing record..

Following *O Tico-Tico*, several other comic magazines were produced during the first half of the twentieth-century. In 1929 *A Gazeta de São Paulo* published an illustrated supplement for children titled *A Gazetinha* and later re-titled *A Gazeta Juvenil*. In 1934 Adolfo Aizen (1907-1991)—who visited the United States and was impressed by the local comics industry and culture—published in Rio de Janeiro *A Nação*’s weekly supplement *O Suplemento Infantil*. The supplement became independent after a few weeks and circulated in about 360,000 weekly copies after changing its name to *O Suplemento Juvenil*. The adjective change in the supplement title from *infantile*—of children—to *juvenile*—of youth, or of teenager—signified the comics’ new market.<sup>7</sup> Roberto Marinho (1904-2003), the owner of the newspaper, and later the network “O Globo,” soon followed with *O Globo Juvenil*. The competition between Aizen and Marinho turned fruitful when during the 1930s the two published new magazines, *Mirim* and *Gibi* respectively. While these magazines mainly adapted North American stories and characters to a Brazilian context, they also created several original characters.

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<sup>7</sup> Vergueiro, "Brazilian Comics," 155-6.

During the first half of the twentieth-century, Brazilian comics were highly influenced by the North American comics industry, gained national readership, and changed the reading habits of the masses. The demand also provided local artists with professional opportunities. The comics imported, translated, copied and adapted from the United States were influenced by the techniques developed by propaganda and advertising experts. The visual image gained new sophistication in the delivery of messages to wide audiences with the spread of mass markets, the appearance of total warfare, and the new disciplines that studied the human behavior such as psychology and statistical sociology. Commercial advertising also contributed to the development of the comic book.<sup>8</sup>

After the Second World War a new era emerged in the Brazilian comics industry that was characterized by the dominance of three large publishing houses. In 1945, Aizen founded his own publishing house, *Editora Brasil America Ltda (EBAL)*, which became one of the biggest publishing houses in South America and one of the biggest publishing houses to specialize in comics in the world for more than three decades. In the years that followed, other communication tycoons, like Roberto Marinho, who founded *Rio Gráfica Editora Ltda*, and Assis Chateaubriand, the owner of “Diários Associados,” which controlled more than a hundred media agencies, entered the developing comics market.<sup>9</sup> These big publishing houses, together with other publishing houses, such as *Empresa Gráfica “O Cruzeiro S/A,”* were centered in Rio de Janeiro, and published mostly translations and adaptations of North American comics like Donald Duck, Tom and Jerry, Flash Gordon, Batman, Superman, Dick Tracy, and Tarzan. At the same time, smaller

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<sup>8</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us*, 167.

<sup>9</sup> On Chateaubriand see: Fernando Morais, *Chatô, o Rei do Brasil* (São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras, 1994).

publishing houses like *Editora Abril*, *Editora La Selva S.A.* and *Editor Taíka*, many of which were located in São Paulo, developed specialized niches, such as horror and erotic comics. In 1967 at least ten publishing houses in Brazil specialized in comics and fulfilled the readers' demand for the medium.

In 1949 EBAL introduced a new line of comics that adapted classics of Brazilian literature into comics. *Edição Maravilhosa*, as it was called, offered its readers titles like *O Guarani* by José de Alencar, *Casa Grande e Senzala* by Gylberto Freire, and *Os Sertões* by Euclides da Cunha. By publishing the classic titles of Brazilian and Western civilization, as well as content on national history and Christianity, Aizen hoped to ease parents' and teachers' aversions to comics.<sup>10</sup> During the first half of the 1950s, *Edição Maravilhosa* was the comics industry's answer to the heated discussions on the moral value of the US comics arriving in Brazil.<sup>11</sup>

In 1956 Jocelino Kubischek won the presidency and inspired Brazil to become modern, advanced, and more "Brazilian." At the same time Brazilian comics came into their own.<sup>12</sup> By the end of the decade, several original Brazilian comics appeared and gained readers. The most successful ones were *Pererê* by Ziraldo and *A turma da Mônica* by Maurício de Sousa, which appeared in 1959 and 1960 respectively. In spite of the long history Brazilian comics already had in the late 1950s, *Pererê* is considered by many, like Waldomiro Vergueiro, to be the first "real" national Brazilian comic. Its Brazilian folklorist roots, the local scene, the other characters, which correspond with typical

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<sup>10</sup> Waldomiro C. S. Vergueiro, "Children's Comics in Brazil: From *Chiquinho* to *Mônica*, a Difficult Journey," *International Journal of Comic Art* 1, no. 1 (1999): 175.; On *Edição Maravilhosa* see: Júnior, *A Guerra Dos Gibis*, Ch. 11.

<sup>11</sup> On the North American debate see, for example: Amy Kiste Nyberg, *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998). On the Brazilian debate see: Júnior, *A Guerra Dos Gibis*.

<sup>12</sup> Vergueiro, "Children's Comics," 176-7.; Vergueiro, "HQ e Identidade Nacional," 23.

Brazilian social figures like a *fazendeiro* and an Indian, and the usage of Brazilian idioms and slang, all contributed to its national character.<sup>13</sup>

In 1963, new legislation set quotas on translated comics and forced publishing houses to publish original Brazilian content, which was to be created and manufactured in Brazil. The new rules, however, were implemented only after the armed forces took power in 1964 and even then in a partial way. The small publishing houses, however, were more committed to the nationalization of the comics' project, and advertised themselves as producing "all Brazilian" comics even before legislation was passed.<sup>14</sup> For example, *Editora Continental* was established in 1959 and worked exclusively with Brazilian artists. Due to legal constraints *Continental* changed its name to *Editora Outubro* in homage to the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. In 1966, Miguel Penteadó left *Editora Outubro* and established *Gráfica Editora Penteadó LTDA* (GEP), which published the war comics magazine *Diário de Guerra*. During the same year *Outubro* was forced to change its name again, to *Editora Taíka*, which published *Combate* and *Almanaque Combate*.<sup>15</sup> It was in the beginning of this nationalization process, during the mid-1950s, that the FEB entered into the comics' genre as a subject of war stories, and editorials committed to the Brazilian-produced comics published FEB comics into the early 1970s.

### **War Stories in the Comics**

Scholars who analyze comics, both academics and artists, often claim that comics are not a genre defined by themes, but rather comprise a medium defined by its grammar

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<sup>13</sup> Anselmo, *Histórias em Quadrinhos*, 69.; Vergueiro, "HQ e Identidade Nacional."

<sup>14</sup> Júnior, *A Guerra Dos Gibis*, 384.

<sup>15</sup> On the circumstances that forces *Editora Continental* to change its name repeatedly see: *ibid.*, 314-5, 84.

and tools. Will Eisner refers to it as “Sequential Art” and as “a form of reading,” and Scott McCloud defines comics as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.”<sup>16</sup> As a result of these definitions comics are now considered a medium with several genres. Nevertheless, it favors certain genres and avoids others.<sup>17</sup> More favorable genres could be classified as more or less “appropriate,” “artistic,” “serious,” or “worthy,” and war was not often included. In her research on the consumption patterns of Brazilian youth comics Zilda Anselmo found that only 2.07 percent of her respondents preferred war comics.<sup>18</sup> In correlation to the small share the war comics occupied in the genre, studies on this genre are also marginal within the field.<sup>19</sup>

War in all its forms was apparent in North American and European comics from the early twentieth-century. Many early war comics illustrated Caribbean pirates and conflicts on the Western front. Comics offering historical fiction narratives, which appeared in the United States starting in the mid-1920s, also adopted war as a common

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<sup>16</sup>Will Eisner, *Comics & Sequential Art* (Poorhouse Press, 1985), 7.; Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Kitchen Sink Press, 1993), 20.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin F. Towel, "An Examination of Historiography in the Comics Medium," *International Journal of Comic Art* 5, no. 2 (2003): 261.

<sup>18</sup> Anselmo, *Histórias em Quadrinhos*, 140.

<sup>19</sup> A very informative recent book on war comics, and the only one I know that treats the evolution of the genre, is Mike Conroy, *War Stories: a Graphic History* (New York: Collins Design, an Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 2009).; a brief, but unique, treatment of war comics as a genre can be found in Barker's appendix titled “The Forgotten Cause for Concern.” Martin Barker, *A Haunt of Fears: The Strange History of British Horror Comics Campaign* (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), 200-17.; on War comics and cartoons during the inter-war period Ron Goulart, *The Adventurous Decade: Comic Strips in the Thirties* (Neshannock, Pennsylvania: Hermes Press, 2005), ch. 11: The Boys in Uniform, 173-85. and Donna Kornhaber, "Animating the War: The First World War: And Children's Cartoons in America," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 31(2007).; a selection of war-time World War II North American comics can be seen in Michael Uslan, *America at War: The Best of Dc War Comics*, A Fireside Book (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).; On post-World War II war comics see: Leonardo Rifas, "Cold War Comics," *International Journal of Comic Art* 2, no. 1 (2000).; War comics are absent from the prolific secondary literature on Brazilian comics. The single exception is the recent preliminary article Francisco César Alves Ferraz and João Paulo Delgado Wolff, "Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos: Narrativas da Participação do País na Segunda Guerra Mundial," *História & Ensino (UEL)* 13(2007).

theme. While they were characterized by a realistic style, more fictional elements were gradually introduced into the historical comics until its basis in fiction surpassed its historical grounding.<sup>20</sup> Such historical comics were not bound by the codes of realism embodied in other visual arts like photography and film, and it offered its readers images of the past that were not captured in other visual media.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, not only did historical comics reach an audience who may have read few historical narratives, but also the graphic and dramatic representations had the power to be remembered and influence, in Morris-Suzuki's words, "the way in which we see the present and re-remember the past."<sup>22</sup>

After World War I, many readers were not interested in comics, as well as other forms of popular culture, about war. In the mid-1930s, however, comic strips about the war in magazines gained popularity in the United States. The most successful one was "Don Winslow of the Navy," created in 1935 by Frank V. Martinek. It first appeared in the *Chicago Daily News*, and after a year it turned into a full page in the Sunday newspaper. It was reprinted in several editions and was adapted into a series of hardcover juvenile novels as well as a radio program. The strip continued, with a different author, until 1955. Other military branches had their own comic strips in the 1930s, such as "Sergeant Stony Craig," "Wiley of West Point," and "Navy Bob Steele."<sup>23</sup>

During World War II comics went to war on a large scale. A study of North American comics that appeared in Sunday newspapers concluded that between 1940 and

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<sup>20</sup> Towel, "An Examination of Historiography," 265- 69.

<sup>21</sup> Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us*, 159.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>23</sup> Goulart, *Adventurous Decade*, 173-80.



1944 no less than eighteen percent of comics were about the war.<sup>24</sup> In the United States, artists brought the European war into their comics and sent their super heroes to fight evil Germans. After World War II the war comics reached their peak during the Korean War in the early 1950s and remained very popular throughout the decade. Beginning in the 1960s and with the Vietnam War, several magazines offered a more critical view of the war and their comics were deliberately anti-military and pacifist.

### ***The Sample***

Comics were the object of academic inquiry in Brazil starting in the late 1960s, and more vigorously starting in the early 1970s, when the University of Brasilia's College of Communications offered the first course on comics in Brazil. In the early 1980s, the first library dedicated exclusively to comics was created in Curitiba, Paraná. A 1994 survey revealed that 57 out of 157 libraries in São Paulo included comics in their collections.<sup>25</sup> These *gibitecas*, however, hold mainly recent mainstream comics rather than historical ones. Thus, the corpus of FEB comics used in this research is eclectic. Issues of *Coleção de aventuras* were found in the veterans' associations of Curitiba and Rio de Janeiro. The São Paulo association had a relatively large collection, which is now held by a private collector, the FEB scholar César Campiani Maximiano. While these branches kept their collections in libraries, the Moji das Cruzes branch incorporated a few *Combate* issues, donated by the local resident, author, and veteran Alberto André Paroche, into its permanent exhibition. Oli Antonio Coimbra, the owner of the second hand store "Tunel do Tempo" in Curitiba, historian Francisco Cesar Alves Ferraz, and

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<sup>24</sup> F. E. Barcus, "The World of Sunday Comics," in *The Funnies*, ed. D. M. White and R. H. Abel (New York: The Free press, 1967)., cited in Anselmo, *Histórias em Quadrinhos*, 83.

<sup>25</sup> Waldomiro C. S. Vergueiro, "Comic Book Collections in Brazilian Public Libraries," *New Library World* 95, no. 1117 (1994).

Waldomiro Vergueiro, the head of the Escola de Comunicações, Universidade de São Paulo, kindly let me peruse their private collections. Finally, several issues were found in second-hand book stores (*sebos*) and virtual market places. Consequently, my sample includes forty-two issues of eleven different magazines published between 1957 and the mid-1970s, which include 105 FEB-related comic-stories. The magazines are *Editora Garimar's Coleção de aventuras*, *Serviço Secreto*, *Homens em Guerra*, and probably *Batismo de Fogo* (a special addition of *Serviço secreto*); *Editora Taika's Combate* and *Almenaque Combate*; *Grafica Editora Penteado LTDA (GEP)'s Diário de Guerra* and *Almenaque diário de Guerra*; *Editora Maya's Homens em Guerra*; *Editora Ninja's Pelotão Suicida*. It also includes several of Carlos Estevão's stories on his created character "Dr. Macarra." These stories emerged in a 1981-edited booklet, and it is unclear if they were published as a part of the original comics series in the 1960s—when they were created.<sup>26</sup>

The two most represented magazines in the sample are *Coleção de aventuras* (eighteen issues) and *Combate*, including *Almenaque de Combate*, (twelve issues). Unlike in the United States and several other countries, no index of Brazilian comics exists. Therefore, it is impossible to know if the sample is representative of the genre or not. For example, one cannot conclude from the sample that *Combate* had more issues than *Homens de Guerra*, or whether or not the 18 issues of *Coleção de aventuras*

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<sup>26</sup> Estevão's first comic book in the Dr. Macarra series appeared in April 1962, and Estevão created the FEB-related Dr. Macarra stories before he died in 1970. The stories in this corpus appear in a posthumously edited booklet with no indication on the original time and place of publication of its content. For that reason this comic was excluded from the statistical calculation but not from the analysis. See: Carlos Estevão de Souza, *Dr. Macarra um Playboy na FEB e Outras Histórias* (Rio de Janeiro: Distribuidora Record de Serviços de Imprensa S.A., 1981).

represent eighty or fifty-five per cent of the entire published issues of that specific magazine.

Some of these comic magazines were dedicated to war in general and provided their readers with FEB comics from time to time. Others were dedicated almost exclusively to the FEB. Most stories are short, between four and twelve pages long, and other than the magazines' covers, are in black and white.

Among the artists who drew the FEB comics, one can find some names that later became famous in Brazilian comics, and who are considered by such scholars as Vergueiro as the "great masters" of the genre in Brazil. For example, Guetúlio Delfin was a young artist when in the late 1950s he drew FEB stories in *Coleção de aventuras* and in 1958 had a successful career when he adapted *Capitão sete* to television. Nicola (Nico) Rosso (1910 – 1981) was born in Turin, Italy, and arrived in Brazil in 1947. He worked as an illustrator for *Editora Brasilgráfica* and several other publishing houses, and taught at the *Escola Panamericana de Arte*. In 1966 he took part in *Editora Taika's Almenaque de Combate* together with Ignácio Justo.<sup>27</sup> Another foreign-born FEB comics' artist was Rodolfo Zalla. Born in Buenos Aires in 1931, Zalla arrived in Brazil in 1963 to work for Barbosa Lessa and the newspaper *Última Hora*. Between 1965 and 1970 he worked for *Editora Outubro* and at the same time worked in Colorado on Westerns and illustrated FEB comics in *Combate*. During the years to follow he wrote and illustrated didactic books for IBEP.<sup>28</sup> Ignácio Justo, who worked for *Editora Continental*, became famous for his World War II comics, especially the planes and pilots. Born in 1932 he first

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<sup>27</sup> Alexandre Valença Alves Barbosa, "Histórias em Quadrinhos Sobre a História do Brasil na Década de 50: A Narrativa Doa Artistas da Ebal e Outras Editoras" (Universidade de São Paulo, 2006), 183-7.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 196-7.

published his comic art at the age of ten. During the 1950s Justo worked for *Editora La Selva* and in 1959 for *Continental*. In the 1960s and 1970s he primarily worked on war comics and on *Combate*. His World War II stories were based on conversations with veteran officers and were influenced by North American comics.<sup>29</sup>

### ***FEB Comics' Readers***

During the second half of the 1950s, Brazilian comics were popular among children and adolescents.<sup>30</sup> Until the 1960s, the majority of Brazilian comics were targeting children while fewer comics appealed to adolescents and were mainly adaptations of North American superheroes, which were consumed mostly by young boys.<sup>31</sup> Only by the 1980s did Brazilian comics become popular among a significant adult readership, but even that only lasted for a few years.<sup>32</sup>

Who were these comics' readers? In 1971 Zilda Augusta Anselmo conducted a study on Brazilian adolescents' attitudes toward comics and their consumption and reading habits. The case study surveyed 525 adolescents aged eleven to twenty who attended schools in the city of Santo André in the state of São Paulo, which was identified by earlier researchers as representative of the state of São Paulo. According to Anselmo, ninety percent of Brazilian adolescents read comics either regularly or occasionally, and most of them started reading comics between the ages of seven and thirteen. Those who read comics were usually interested in a large variety of titles and magazines. This pattern brings Anselmo to conclude that they were more interested in

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 199-201.

<sup>30</sup> Júnior, *A Guerra Dos Gibis*, 295.

<sup>31</sup> Vergueiro, "Children's Comics," 185.; Nadilson Manoel da Silva, "Brazilian Adult Comics: The Age of the Market," *International Journal of Comic Art* 1, no. 1 (1999): 187.

<sup>32</sup> Waldomiro C. S. Vergueiro, "Brazilian Superheroes in Search of Their Own Identities," *International Journal of Comic Art* 2, no. 2 (2000): 166.

consuming the medium than in a specific genre. Reading comics was the third favored activity of Brazilian youth after watching television and listening to music. About twenty-four percent of comics readers invested up to half-an-hour a day in reading comics; about forty-two percent invested between half-an-hour and a full hour, and the rest read comics for more than an hour a day. During this time fifty-six percent read between one and three comic magazines a week; about twenty-two percent read between four and six magazines; and the remaining readers read between seven and nine comic magazines every week.<sup>33</sup>

The FEB comic magazines were also targeting this young audience. In an advertisement the magazine *Combate* was defined as *infant-juvenis*.<sup>34</sup> In a letter that was published in *Coleção de Aventuras* number twelve, Marechal Mascarenhas de Moraes defined it as destined for *a mocidade* (young adults), but also for the wider public. The types of advertisements in the FEB comics suggest their readers were indeed adolescents and young male adults. These ads were about professional training, sexual education and products, erotic literature, body building, popular literature, and of course, other comics for adolescents. Ferraz and Wolff infer from the magazines' price, their level of language and the ads for professional training that the readers were also of the lower classes and had secondary education at most.<sup>35</sup>

While the Brazilian war comics targeted youth and adolescents, they were also appealing to older audiences. As in the United States, Brazilian war comics were also

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<sup>33</sup> Anselmo, *Histórias em Quadrinhos*, 113.

<sup>34</sup> The advertisement appeared in *Almenaque de Combate* III, which was also published by *Editores Taika*.

<sup>35</sup> Ferraz and Wolff, "Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos," 7.

popular among military personnel and World War II veterans.<sup>36</sup> Thus, in an unnumbered issue of *Coleção de Aventuras* there are several letters from veterans' associations testifying that their members read the magazine. In issue number eighteen of the same magazine the entire back cover is an advertisement for the VII National Convention of Brazil's Ex-Combatants that was to be held in November 1958. The audience for this ad were the FEB veterans, most of which were in their mid-thirties at the time. Issue number twenty-one published a thank-you-letter from the Brazilian Army battalion that was stationed in Rafah to maintain the cease fire between Israel and Egypt as part of the UN forces in this conflict zone, which also demonstrated the military readership of the comics.

José Marques de Melo surveyed comic publishing houses in Brazil in 1967 and found that *Combate*, published by Editora Taika, was circulated in 35,000 monthly copies.<sup>37</sup> Ferraz and Wolf—who focus their analysis on *Coleção de aventuras*—argue that the FEB comics were circulated in about 30,000 copies, but it is not clear on what this estimation is based.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, there is no data on other FEB comics since *Coleção de aventuras* was not circulating at the time and other magazines did not yet circulate. These numbers, however, are of newly published issues, and not of readers. In her study, Anselmo found that about forty-two percent of the adolescents reading comics were regularly exchanging magazines with their friends.<sup>39</sup> Educated estimates on the number of readers who use a single issue in Mexico vary between four and, when taking

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<sup>36</sup> On the popularity of North American war comics among soldiers in the 1950s see: Rifas, "Cold War Comics," 5.

<sup>37</sup> José Marques de Melo, *Comunicação Social, Teoria e Pesquisa* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1970), 206.

<sup>38</sup> Ferraz and Wolff, "Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos," PAGE NEEDED.

<sup>39</sup> Anselmo, *Histórias em Quadrinhos*, 114.

into account rentals and resells, twelve.<sup>40</sup> Applying the same numbers to Brazilian war comics results in conservative estimates of 120,000 readers of each issue to the more generous estimate of 360,000 readers.

### ***Two Waves of FEB comics in Brazil***

Comics about the FEB are as old as the FEB itself. While in Italy, several trench journals included short and crude comic strips that dealt with the soldiers' own experience on the front and in the rear, as well as their imaginations of what was happening in the home front. For example, a three-panel comic strip in *O Chicote* mocked failed relations between Brazilians and female Italians.<sup>41</sup> Another five-panel comic in *O Expedicionário* narrated the agony of a soldier who was fooled by an Italian woman to believe he would spend intimate time with her in return for some chocolate only to find her husband and children waiting for his gifts at her home.<sup>42</sup> The audience of these graphic representations was limited to soldiers alone.

During the late 1940s, the FEB was used in political campaigns that spread their messages in comic-like pamphlets. Among the political pamphlets that circulated in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, the Political Police archives preserve the already mentioned one-page-left-wing comics that narrated the history of the FEB to attack President Dutra and his amnesty policy and called for the release of the communist activist and decorated FEB veteran Salomão Malina.<sup>43</sup> From the Right, a fourteen-page long and well-drawn comic also narrated the history of the FEB in order to equate its fight for democracy with

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<sup>40</sup> Harold E. Jr. Hinds and Charles M. Tatum, *Not Just for Children: The Mexican Comic Book in the Late 1960s and 1970s* (Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 6.

<sup>41</sup> "Instantâneos na Itália." *O Chicote*. Ano I, No. 3. Itália. 11 de Março de 1945.

<sup>42</sup> "Tragedias da vida de campanha." *O Expedicionário*. Ano I, No. 3, 3 de fevereiro de 1945.

<sup>43</sup> "Salomão Molina Herói de Montese," APERJ, Fondo DPS, Serie Panfletos, 881.

the anti-communist propaganda of the time.<sup>44</sup> However, these graphic representations of the FEB were not comics per se, and the FEB had to wait almost a decade before it became the subject of nationally circulated, commercial comics magazine.

The first comics to be published in a magazine on the FEB appeared in January 1957 and were an illustrated adaptation of Lucia Benedetti's novel *Três soldados*. Benedetti's story was published first as a sequence in the weekly *O Cruzeiro* during 1955, and later it appeared as a book in 1956.<sup>45</sup> Its adaptation was part of the series *Edição Maravilhosa*, which was meant to improve the comics' image in the eye of concerned parents and moralistic critics. Thus, the FEB became a theme in the comics as part of the battle over transforming the comics from a genre into a medium. It was chosen for its ability to promote "positive," "moral," and "civic" images to the less than reputable comics industry. Three months later, on March 1957, *Estúdio Gráfico Garimar S.A* launched what seems to be the first Brazilian comics magazine dedicated to war: *Coleção de aventuras*.<sup>46</sup>

At least twenty-two monthly issues and three special issues of *Coleção de Aventuras* were published between 1957 and 1959.<sup>47</sup> At first, the magazine offered mostly translated stories, especially on the Korean War. Ferraz and Wolff note that by its thirteenth issue the magazine focused exclusively on the FEB.<sup>48</sup> However, the change was gradual. The first FEB story in *Coleção de aventuras* appeared in its sixth issue, and

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<sup>44</sup> Centro de Estudos Sociais, "Sacrifício Inútil?" Deposited in APERJ, Fondo DPS, Serie Folhetos No. 267. Also see Figure 11.

<sup>45</sup> Lúcia Benedetti, *Três Soldados*, Coleção Contemporânea (Rio de Janeiro: O Cruzeiro, 1956).

<sup>46</sup> While the first issue is not included in the sample, its publication date was calculated based on other issues' publication dates and on the assumption that indeed it was published once a month as stated.

<sup>47</sup> My holdings include copies of issues 6 – 18, 21, 22 and three special issues.

<sup>48</sup> Ferraz and Wolff, "Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos," 11.



its cover carried both the FEB's name on top and its Smoking Cobra emblem.<sup>49</sup>

Gradually it offered its readers original stories about the FEB, and by issues eight and nine the majority of the stories were about Brazil's World War II experience. In 1957, by its seventeenth issue *Coleção de Aventuras* presented itself as focusing exclusively on the FEB. Despite this ambition, the twenty-second issue included non-FEB-related stories, which suggests a lack of original material.



**Figure 12:** Left: cover of *Coleção de aventuras* #6, 1957; Right: cover of *Coleção de aventuras* #17, 1958. The covers demonstrate the change in the focus of the magazine. Most of the early covers portrayed non-FEB-related episodes, like the one on the left of British troops in what might be the evacuation from Dunkirk. On the right the title already bears the words “Força Expedicionária Brasileira” and bears the Ex-Combatentes’ symbol with the FEB and FAB squadron’s emblems. The image on the cover is more related to the FEB comics

These pioneering comic stories were mainly adaptations of the veteran Paulo Vidal’s popular column *Heróis esquecidos* (Forgotten Heroes), which was published the previous year in the newspaper *Tribuna da Imprensa*. Vidal, who served in Italy as a driver at the Advanced Command Post of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brazilian Infantry Division, published

<sup>49</sup> While the sample does not include any issue of *Coleção de aventuras* prior to number six, an answer to one of the readers’ question in issue number eleven explained that the first FEB story appeared in the sixth issue. The same answer was given in the same section in the thirteenth issue.

his first column on July 26, 1956, and continued to publish about forty additional columns, usually twice a week, until early 1957. In 1960 he collected his columns into a book bearing the columns' title.<sup>50</sup> By the end of the magazine's first year, other sources than Vidal were adapted to comics. Such were several memoirs and collected stories as well as veterans' personal experiences that were sent to the publishing house at its request.<sup>51</sup> At this first stage, then, artists mostly adapted veterans' stories to narrate based-on-a-true-story comics. Its stated mission was to glorify the FEB and to educate young readers. Garimar also published other comics magazines dedicated to war, such as *Serviço secreto*, which rarely included stories about the FEB. *Coleção de aventuras* seems to have been circulated for about two years, until early 1959, and when its publication stopped for uncertain reasons, the first wave of FEB comics came to its end.

The second wave of FEB comics appeared about half a decade afterward, when *Editora Taika* launched *Combate* in 1966, and soon several new comic magazines dedicated to war followed.<sup>52</sup> Eugênio Colonnese, a notable and award-winning cartoonist of Italian origin who grew up and was trained in Argentina and operated in Brazil during the 1960s and 1970s, argues that a wave of war films in television and cinema generated this interest in war comics.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the two cartoonists and collectors Umberto

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<sup>50</sup> Paulo Vidal, *Heróis Esquecidos* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições GRD, 1960).

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Joaquim Araújo Machado e Flávio Colin. "Eu vi o 'Front.'" *Coleção de aventuras* #15. Garimar. 1958. Which was based on Machado's memoir. Gutemberg Monteiro's "Os 17 de Abetaia." *Coleção de Aventuras* #15. Garimar. 1958 was based on Nelson de Carvalho, *Soldado! Este, o teu Regimento* (Rio de Janeiro: Oficinas Henrique Velho, 1946). and Getúlio Delphin and Hélio Pôrto's "Cumprimento do dever." *Coleção de aventuras* #17 was based on Carvalho's same book.

<sup>52</sup> As discussed above, the publication dates of most of the second wave war magazines are not known. However, when Melo surveyed the Brazilian comics industry in 1967, of all the known war comics only *Combate*, which was first published the year before, was in his list. Melo's data is based on *Veículos Brasileiros de Publicidade*. São Paulo: Editora Propaganda, 1967. See: Melo, *Comunicação Social*, 199-210.

<sup>53</sup> Cited in Franco de Rosa, "E. Colonnese: O Comendador Dos Quadrinhos," in *O Espírito da Guerra: Eugênio Colonnese* (Vinhedo, SP: Editora Opera Grafica, 2001), s. p.

Losso and Argemiro Antunes argue that super-heroes, western and war comics were the most “disputadas” in the 1960s and 1970s, which also testifies to a renewed interest in them.<sup>54</sup>

The second wave differed from the first mainly in its plurality of voices. This plurality manifested itself, first, in the several magazines and publishing houses that replaced the hegemonic *Coleção de aventuras* during the late 1950s. During the decade between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, the leading war comic magazines were *Combate*, *Homens em guerra*, *Pelotão suicida*, *Diário de guerra*, *Batismo de fogo* and *Serviço secreto*. None of these was dedicated exclusively to the FEB, but FEB stories were common. Unlike *Coleção de aventuras*, these magazines lacked any explicit claim to educate readers and advertised themselves as having recreational value, not a moral and civic one. However, they did carry a nationalistic banner, which manifested itself in their intention to publish Brazilian stories by Brazilian authors.

The plurality also manifested itself in the source of inspiration for the stories. While in *Coleção de Aventuras* more than forty per cent of the FEB stories were adaptations of a single author, Paulo Vidal, during the second phase fewer stories claimed to be based on true stories, and those that did were based on a larger variety of sources.

Finally, the plurality of magazines, sources and artists also resulted in more diverse themes. While in the first phase of the FEB comics one could mainly find a simple and straightforward story of individual courage and heroism on the battlefield, in the second phase stories about veterans’ post-war experience, about race and ethnicity, about national identity, the meaning of war, its damages and so on also appeared.

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<sup>54</sup> Barbosa, "Histórias em Quadrinhos Sobre a História do Brasi", 201.

### ***True and Fictional Stories***

One of the characteristics of the first-wave stories about the FEB in *Coleção de Aventuras* is the claim that the comics are based on true stories. Most of Vidal's stories, like his magazine column, carry his name and military identification number to enhance credibility. In the introduction to his 1960 book, Vidal emphasizes the efforts he made to maintain the veracity of his column, such as consulting his personal diary, other veterans' testimonies and official documents.<sup>55</sup> And Vidal was not the sole source for reality-based comics. Some of the stories narrated episodes from books and memoirs and even from official registers of decorated fallen soldiers. Beyond previously published material, *Coleção de Aventuras* called its veteran readers to send their photos and stories, and some of them were adopted into comics. Some of the stories bore an illustrated seal stating "Real Life Story." This seal appeared in several non-FEB stories about the Korean War, and it is not clear if they are indeed based on true stories.<sup>56</sup> The Garimar publishing house even had a military consultant, Adão Alves Viana, also a veteran of the Italian Campaign who served in the FEB's artillery. Such explicit claims for authenticity are less frequent in the second wave of the FEB comics, but they do exist. Such is Alberto André Paroche's "The General's Knives," which is based on the 1949 edited volume that several reserves officers published about the FEB and which provides the exact pages from which the story is taken.<sup>57</sup>

The absence of a claim for authenticity does not mean the story is fictional. For example, Lino Silva's "The Lonely Conqueror" tells of João Ferreira da Silva who,

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<sup>55</sup> Vidal, *Heróis Esquecidos*, 16.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, "Colina 812." *Coleção de aventuras* #6. Estudio Grafico Garimar, 1957. Ferraz and Wolff argue that most of the non-FEB stories, in spite of their claims to authenticity, are fictional. Ferraz and Wolff, "Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos," 11.

<sup>57</sup> The comic was published in *Combate* #38. The original story appears in Arruda, "Impressões."

during the first failed attempt to conquer Monte Castelo—the FEB’s most famous battle—disobeyed the retreat order and charged alone to the top of the mountain where he met his death. The first panel in the story notes that it is a part of “Real Life Story” series, but does not name the source of the narrative. Nonetheless, the story’s text is a word-to-word citation of Silva’s postmortem first-class cross decoration.<sup>58</sup> Another example is Getúlio Delphin’s story “The Telephonist *praçinha*,” which tells Olavo Soares do Amaral’s true heroic story without mentioning its sources.<sup>59</sup> In addition, authors provided real historical background to fictional stories and intertwined historical details, such as units’ affiliation and geographic locations, in the plot to increase likelihood.<sup>60</sup> To the eyes of the reader, the visual aspects of the comics carry the message that the stories are real, historical and accurate.

The idea of authenticity is also achieved through the great attention many of the artists gave to visual realism in a way that helps the reader to believe the story’s plausibility.<sup>61</sup> For example, in the story “Despair,” which takes place in August 1944, Alberto André Paroche is careful to draw the soldiers’ shoulder emblem which simply states “Brasil,” instead of the better known Smoking Cobra symbol, which was introduced months later.<sup>62</sup> Colonnese testifies on the thoroughness and accuracy of the

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<sup>58</sup> Compare to Ministério da Guerra, *Os Mortos da FEB: Boletim Especial do Exército* (Rio de Janeiro 1946), 70-71.

<sup>59</sup> Getúlio Delphin, “O praçinha telefonista.” *Serviço Secreto* #12, 1969. Delphin’s story can be compared to *ibid.*, 90.

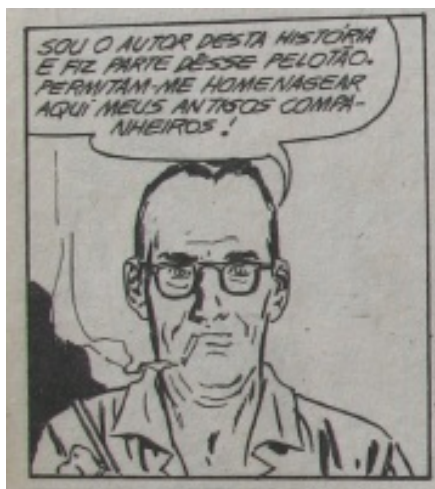
<sup>60</sup> Towel, “An Examination of Historiography,” 264.

<sup>61</sup> For several examples on to what extent artists went to confirm visual authenticity see: Rosa, “Colonnese.”

<sup>62</sup> Alberto André Paroche (w and I), “Desespêro.” *Almanaque Diário de Guerra*. [probably by Grafica Editora Penteadado LTDA – GEP]

artists to the level of getting the weapon's correct model, drawing each army with the actual weapons it used, and the FEB's smoking cobra in the correct direction.<sup>63</sup>

Paroche, a FEB veteran, also drew himself, the narrator, as a veteran who tells his own experience in several of the stories. He is part of the story and not external to the plot. While Paulo Vidal was a driver in the Brazilian' Infantry Division headquarters, Paroche was a first-line infantry soldier in the sixth infantry regiment who saw battle in Italy and drew autobiographical and documented comics.<sup>64</sup> As a result, the differentiation between "true" and "fictional" stories, and the classification of the FEB magazines according to this criterion, like Ferraz and Wolff suggest, is problematic and not very useful.<sup>65</sup>



**Figure 13:** "I am the author of this story and I was a part of this platoon. Allow me to pay homage here to my old friends." Alberto André Paroche draws himself inside his narrative and thus claims authenticity. Alberto André Paroche, "Santa Maria Viliana." *Almenaque diário de Guerra*.

Although fictional, the non-explicitly-factual stories are plausible and do not drift to the fantastic. In the U.S. one can find some "weird" war comics, such as "The War that

<sup>63</sup> Rosa, "Colonnese," [s.p.].

<sup>64</sup> Colonnese testifies that Paroche's stories were well documented. Cited in: *ibid*.

<sup>65</sup> Ferraz and Wolff differentiate between *Coleção de aventuras* and *Serviço secreto*, as offering mainly "true" stories, and *Combate*, *Diário de Guerra*, and *Pelotão suicida*, which mix "true" and "fictional" stories. Ferraz and Wolff, "Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos," 6.

Time Forgot!: The Killing Ground!” which was published in *Our Fighting Forces* #102 in August 1966 in two parts. In this story American sailors fight giant sea monsters and escape them by reaching an island only to face dinosaurs there.<sup>66</sup> The series “The War that Time Forgot!” ran for several years in the DC Comics’ magazine *Star Spangled War Stories*. The magazine *Weird War Tales* portrayed death as a uniform-wearing skeleton and other unrealistic characters for 124 issues between 1971 and 1983.<sup>67</sup> Such comics were translated into Portuguese or inspired Brazilian artists. Thus, in the Brazilian war comics one story portrays American soldiers with beautiful nude women bathing in a spring in the middle of a Vietnamese jungle. Another depicts a pilot with a mysterious dancing Arab girl in an oasis in the Western Desert. A third story is about a World War I pilot who fights flying monsters.<sup>68</sup> In contrast, the FEB stories do not stray farther from verisimilitude than to overstate valor and sketch unlikely encounters between Brazilians and Germans.

### ***On Bravery and Heroes***

In the battles the comics depict, Brazilians demonstrate such courage and valor that even their enemies recognize their bravery. Artists drew Germans frantically stating before being slaughtered that Brazilians are demons or expressing their frustration at Brazilian success. For example, when Germans retreat from the battlefield, one German asks his comrade why they are running away from two Brazilians, and his friend answers:

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<sup>66</sup> The story was reprinted in: Uslan, *America at War: The Best of Dc War Comics*, 164-77.

<sup>67</sup> Conroy, *War Stories*, 82.

<sup>68</sup> For examples of fantastic non-FEB stories see: Luis Merí (w), Rodolfo Zalla (i). “As Ninfas.” *Pelotão Suicida* #1. Editora Ninja; Luis Merí (w), Rodolfo Zalla (i). “As A dança do ventre.” *Pelotão Suicida* #1. Editora Ninja; Francisco de Asis (i). “Horror nas Alturas!” *Combate* #28. Taika [based on a story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle].

“they are demons.”<sup>69</sup> In another story, a German soldier cries to his friends: “[I]et’s retreat! They are demons! They are stripping us like pigs!!!”<sup>70</sup> In a third story a German soldier witnesses his friends being slaughtered by the Brazilians in face-to-face combat and states: “[I]et’s return! These Brazilians are savages in the use of cold steel.”<sup>71</sup> Finally, in a more calculated manner, a German officer reacts to his sergeant’s enthusiasm for facing the Brazilians and reminds him that “...in the Serchio valley they proved that they are good fighters.”<sup>72</sup>



**Figure 14:** “Let’s retreat! They are demons! They are stripping us like pigs!!!” artists illustrated Germans in hysterical moment expressing fear of and admiration to the Brazilians as a vehicle for self-praise. Alberto André Paroche. “Estrada 64.” *Combate* #37. Editora Taika

Artists’ inserting of such metaphors as “demons,” “pigs” and “savages” as the way Germans see the Brazilians reinforces the bravery of the Brazilians. In Portuguese, “demônio” is a noun with theological and mythical meanings, but more generally speaking it personifies all things evil. Moreover, the expression “como um demônio”

<sup>69</sup> “Morrer na Guerra,” *Almenaque de combate*, #III, 3/6.

<sup>70</sup> “Estrada 64,” *Combate*, # 37, 6/6.

<sup>71</sup> “Ume triste canção de Natal,” *Combate*, #23, 7/2.

<sup>72</sup> “Facas do General,” *Combate*, #38, 4/4.



(like a demon), means doing something with enthusiasm and passion.<sup>73</sup> Thus in the comics, the term is used either as a negative term in the mouth of the Germans, which translates to a compliment when coming from an opponent, or as a metaphor of appreciation from the enemy. The designation of the Brazilians as “savages” by the Germans functions similarly as a derogatory term that translates to a compliment when coming from an opponent. However, the metaphors of being slaughtered “like a pig” and “savage” also expresses an ironic sense of humor. In the first, the comical effect is achieved when the supposedly pure-blooded and superior Aryan soldiers will be treated like pigs, a filthy animal. The second metaphor echoes the first through the mockery to the “civilized” and “advanced” embodiment of Western culture who will be bitten by “savages.”<sup>74</sup>

Not only are the Germans impressed by the Brazilians’ performance, but also by their extraordinary bravery. For example, in one story a wounded Brazilian soldier receives good medical aid from Germans who recognize his bravery.<sup>75</sup> In another story, after witnessing a Brazilian risk his life while saving one of his soldiers, the Germans stop shooting in his direction, admire him, and follow his example: “[s]top shooting! This man is a hero! Let’s save ours quickly as well!!!” When the Germans capture the brave sergeant they address him respectfully: “[h]enceforth I feel honored to have people like you as enemies, sergeant...[people] as committed, courageous, and more than anything with cold blood!”<sup>76</sup> In this last example, the individual act of bravery is attributed to the Brazilian collective. For example, in the story “I Was the Germans’ Prisoner,” the

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<sup>73</sup> “Demônio,” in *Novo dicionário Aurélio da língua portuguesa*, ed. Aurélio Buarque de Holanda Ferreira, Marina Baird Ferreira, and Margarida dos Anjos (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Positivo, 2004).

<sup>74</sup> I wish to extend my thanks to Ruben Oliven for pointing out this irony to me.

<sup>75</sup> “Uma Paraevsna Neve,” *Coleção de aventuras*, #12, 6/5.

<sup>76</sup> “Sangue frio,” *Almnaque diário de Guerra*, 10/4-5.

German captain tells the captured Brazilian officers that the Brazilians are courageous and that the Germans never saw soldiers advance with such bravery while facing machine guns.<sup>77</sup> The same claim is rephrased in another story when one German curses the Brazilians and says: “[c]ursed [Brazilians]! [They] always advance.”<sup>78</sup> These two expressions are based on the published experiences of Emilio Varoli, who fell into German hands and published his experiences—including the episode when Germans expressed their admiration for Brazilians’ courage.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to the German enemy, the American allies recognize the Brazilians’ valor as well. Thus, in the story “Sergeant Aurlino” when the Americans recognize the sergeant’s bravery, it registers as a sign of success.<sup>80</sup> In another story FEB officers are filled with pride when the American commander, General Willis Crittenberger, praises them.<sup>81</sup>

Even among brave Brazilians, some demonstrate greater valor and heroism. Ferraz and Paulo Delgado Wolff have argued that some known FEB heroes are exemplary of author Paulo Delgado’s great uncle Max Wolff Filho.<sup>82</sup> Wolff, however, is the exception to the rule of anonymity. Usually, the FEB comics present the reader with a multiplicity of heroes, and only a few of them is identifiable. Unlike many of the North

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<sup>77</sup> “Fui prisioneiro dos Alemãs,” *Coleção das aventuras*, #14, 7/1.

<sup>78</sup> “Pelotão Brandi,” *Coleção de aventuras*, #9, 4/1.

<sup>79</sup> Emilio Varoli, “Aventuras de um Prisioneiro na Alemanha Nazista,” in *Depoimento de Oficiais da Reserva Sobre a F.E.B.*, ed. Demócrito Cavalcanti de Arruda and et. el. (São Paulo: Instituto Progresso editorial 1949).

<sup>80</sup> “O sargento Aurlino,” *Coleção de aventuras*, #8, 5/1.

<sup>81</sup> “O mais sangrenta batalha da FEB,” *Coleção de aventuras*, #9, 1-2.

<sup>82</sup> Ferraz and Wolff, “Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos,” 12. Max Wolff Filho was a sergeant in the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment who stood out for his bravery and achievements in patrols in no-man’s-land during the winter of 1944-5. He died in this patrol in February 1945. He was a relative of João Paulo Delgado Wolff, the article’s author. An authoritative biography of Wolff has yet to be written. The most complete account of his life and role in the FEB can be found in Dennison de Oliveira, *Os Soldados Alemães de Vargas* (Curitiba: Juruá Editora, 2008), 61-93.

American war comics, the FEB comics do not have “a hero,” whose adventures are narrated in several episodes. Each story stands for itself, and each hero is a one-story individual. Thus, the FEB hero that emerges from the comics is not a unique and exceptional individual. There is no distinct group composed of serial heroes—like the US characters “Sergeant York,” “Combat Kelly,” and the men of “The Hunted Tank”—that give (an illustrated) face to FEB heroism. The hero is not the exceptional man, but the unexceptional one. He is not characterized by his uniqueness, but by his ordinariness. He does not stand out among the masses, but he is one of them. Representing his individuality is less important than showing, above all, that he is a Brazilian.

The portrayal of every Brazilian as an FEB hero occurs even in stories where the narrative also tells of an individual’s post-war life. For example, the story about lieutenant Deschamps interrupts in the middle to tell the reader that “today” he is in the reserves and works in a firm as the head of its sales department, while another protagonist in the story owns a company that sells a well-known brand of shampoo.<sup>83</sup> Visually, in most of the stories the soldiers do not stand out in their physical appearance and wear the widely spread mustache of the time. Thus, the comics tell its readers that the FEB heroes are walking among us: they are touchable, reachable, and accessible.

Martin Barker articulates a similar idea when he argues that the association of the collective war comics hero with the whole American man. This association, in turn, contributed to the transformation of America itself to the hero. Barker sees this process as a vehicle to carry Cold War ideology through a mechanism he calls the “normalization of America.” The process presented, visually and textually, specific perceptions of what is

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<sup>83</sup> Paulo Vidal. “Tenente Deschamps.” *Coleção de aventuras* sem numero, 7/1.

America, who is the enemy, who is a collaborator and what should America do to avoid the ill-fated end its adversaries bring upon it as “normal” and taken for granted. Thus the values, attitudes, and preoccupations portrayed in the comics, such as nationalism, cold war political dichotomies and fear from a fifth column, are assigned to the American public, not to a specific character, and “normalize” them as the consensual view. The ordinary hero, who denies his own heroism and who is an agent unbound to the military hierarchy, is a tool used to create an identification between the reader and the hero.<sup>84</sup> The FEB comics should also be understood not only as a portrayal of societal attitudes that the artist expresses, but also as a shaper of such attitudes and as a means of sophisticated propaganda.

The only significant exception to the single-story hero is André Paroche’s autobiographical comics, in which he portrays himself as the hero. However, even his stories are not presented as another episode in the ongoing story of a single character, but rather as a way to claim authenticity. The autobiographical claim is made in the comics itself as Paroche draws himself telling his own story. This was confirmed to me in an electronic correspondence with his son, where he recalled several episodes his father told him which also appear in the comics, without being aware that they were drawn at all.<sup>85</sup>

Visually, Brazilians are sometimes portrayed in a hyper-masculine ways, thus adding a physical and gendered dimension to their valor. For example, in the story “An Ambush for a Combatant” the main protagonist is a Brazilian soldier who walks through

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<sup>84</sup> Barker, *A Haunt of Fears*, ”Appendix: The Forgotten Cause for Concern,” 200-17.

<sup>85</sup> Personal correspondence with Alberto André Paroche Filho, December 23, 2009.

the forest and fights the Germans by himself.<sup>86</sup> Throughout the story he is drawn as a well-built man with a hairy body. Textually he is described as “[a] crude strong man in body and soul.”<sup>87</sup> The aesthetics of the male body are also apparent in the story “Conquest.” In this story, when two brother-soldiers suffer deadly wounds, they tear off their shirts so it will be easier for them to raise the national flag.<sup>88</sup> Similar representations can be seen in “The Treason Hill.”<sup>89</sup>



**Figure 15:** Left to right: Ignacio Justo, “Conquista.” *Almenaque de combate*, #III; Natan. “A colina do traição.” *Combate*, # 28. Editor Taika; Ignacio Justo e Pedro Mauro. “Tocaia para um combatente.” *Almenaque combate*, #1/70. Editora Taika. Examples of hyper-masculinity.

A closer look at the examples in this section reveals another difference between the first wave of FEB comics and the second. In the first wave authors tended to look for legitimacy from the outside from both Americans and Germans, and the Brazilians’ achievements were more often presented as acts of exceptional bravery. In contrast, the claim for bravery in the second wave comics is replaced with a representation of

<sup>86</sup> The main protagonist’s name is “Alberto André,” and there are some similarities between him and Alberto André Paroche, such as the fact both worked in the Port of Santos and share the same anti-military sentiment. It is thus possible that the story is an homage to Paroche.

<sup>87</sup> Ignacio Justo e Pedro Mauro. “Tocaia para um combatente.” *Almenaque combate*, #1/70. Editora Taika.

<sup>88</sup> Ignacio Justo. “Conquista.” *Almenaque de combate*, #III

<sup>89</sup> Natan. “A colina do traição.” *Combate*, # 28. Editor Taika; Ignacio Justo e Pedro Mauro. “Tocaia para um combatente.” *Almenaque combate*, #1/70. Editora Taika.

Germans' admiration for Brazilian performance and is reinforced by the hyper-masculinity of Brazilians.

### ***Anti-militaristic Attitudes***

While the emphasis on Brazilian bravery is colored nationalistically by glorifying war as a scene for exhibiting national excellence, the FEB comics also voice an anti-militaristic attitude. Artists express this anti-militaristic attitude by portraying characters condemning and cursing war and mourning the loss of human lives—friends and foes alike. For example, Henrich, a World War I German pilot—who later in the plot would immigrate to Brazil and his children join the FEB—is fed up with war. He loses his will to fight and cannot see the use of fighting any longer. He thus surrenders, which the author explains there is no shame in doing, and his adversary wins without glory.<sup>90</sup> In another story a character states that: “[w]ar, mother of all cursed things, harvested lives regardless of nationality. The men that shot were human beings, I do not feel the glory in this act.”<sup>91</sup> The same attitudes are universal and are shared by Brazilians and Germans alike. Thus, a German soldier tells his comrade: “[t]his is war, son! If it wasn’t, they could be good friends...”<sup>92</sup> The anti-militaristic attitude is evident in a monologue by a Brazilian soldier who walks by himself in the woods:

“Cursed war! I am here like an idiot, being a useful instrument to those who made the war... War, damned war. To destroy human beings or be destroyed by them... I applied my intelligence for destruction, and we are rational, what an irony... I consider that I was more useful when I worked as a stevedore there in Santos.”<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> “Conquista.” *Almenaque de combate* #3, 3/3-5.

<sup>91</sup> “Morrer na guerra.” *Almenaque de combate* #3, 4/5.

<sup>92</sup> “Morrer na guerra.” *Almenaque de combate* #3, 5/3.

<sup>93</sup> Ignacio Justo e Pedro Mauro. “Tocaia para um combatente.” *Almenaque combate*, #1/70. Editora Taika, 1/3, 6/1 6/2, 6/6.

In this monologue the anti-militarism is expressed through the agony over the loss of lives, the irony in deploying human intelligence and rationality to destroy life, and the waste of human labor and creativity when deploying him to war.

A second way to condemn war, and to explain Brazilian attitudes toward it, can be called “religious Christian pacifism.” In several stories the characters refuse to kill an enemy due to his Christian belief and his promise to a priest. For example, Corporal Lima—to whom the author calls “Biblia”—refuses to engage in battle saying that “I cannot do that, my religion does not allow it!” When his sergeant does not accept his religious pacifism and reminds Lima that the enemy will kill him, he adds “[t]hey are my brothers as well! I cannot kill them, I refuse!”<sup>94</sup> In another story, Soldier Juliano is struggling between his duty to save his comrades and to stop the advancing Germans and his promise to his priest not to kill.<sup>95</sup>



**Figure 16:** Religious Christian Pacifism. Pedro Mauro e Ignacio Justo. “Os heróis morrem lutando.” *Almenaque de combate* #1/70, 9/1-3.

<sup>94</sup> Milton Mattos e Edno e Edmundo rodrigues. “O grande covarde.” *Almenaque diário de Guerra*, 3/6, 4/1.

<sup>95</sup> Pedro Mauro e Ignacio Justo. “Os heróis morrem lutando.” *Almenaque de combate* #1/70, 9/1-3.

Nonetheless, whether secular or religious, anti-military statements are not sustained in the comics' message. Eventually the characters justify violence with the recurring statement "kill or get killed."

The dynamic between the resistance to war and killing, and the acceptance of the need to engage in battle, reinforces another component in Brazilian national identity that sees Brazil as a peaceful nation. For example, in August 1942 Brazil did not declare war on the Axis Forces, but, in a subtle Brazilian way, recognized the state of war existing between the two countries.<sup>96</sup>

The third way artists expressed negative attitudes toward war was by elaborating on the human price paid by Italian civilians and Brazilian veterans alike. Stories tell of sexual abuses by German troops of the civilian population, and how they were subjected to other atrocities. They speak of civilian casualties and of Italian women prostituting and their children stealing food out of hunger under the Allies.<sup>97</sup> They follow wounded veterans through months and years of medical care in the U.S. and tell of their disabilities, hardships, and the personal price they paid daily. They mention alcoholism, nightmares, the inability to find stable jobs, alienation from their families who do not understand what they have experienced, and other manifestations of post-traumatic stress.

<sup>98</sup> This characterizes mostly comics of the second wave, and they correspond with the

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<sup>96</sup> On Brazil's deliberation whether to declare war or to recognize its existence see: McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 289-90.

<sup>97</sup> See, for example: Alberto André Parche. "Tragédia no morro." *Diario de Guerra* #12; Alberto André Paroche, Nico Rosso, e Rogério Geraldés. "Alberta." *Combate* #25. Editora Taika.

<sup>98</sup> See: Alberto André Paroche e Ignacio Justo. "Os sinos da Glória." *Almenaque de combate* #3. Editora Taika; Ignacio Justo e Pedro Mauro. "Tocaia para um combatente." *Almenaque combate*, #1/70. Editora Taika; Alberto André Paroche. "Os heróis vencidos." *Almenaque diário de guerra*; "Drama no mar." *Diário de guerra* #1-12; Paulo Vidal "Soldado Amaro." *Coleção de aventuras* #8. Editora Garimar. 1957; Joaquim Araújo Machado e Flávio Colin. "Eu vi o 'Front.'" *Coleção de aventuras* #15. Editora Garimar. 1958; Alberto André Parche. "Tragédia no morro." *Diario de Guerra* #12.



anti-military comics that circulated at the same time in the U.S. in reaction to the Vietnam War. For example, in the story “Desespêro” (Despair), a Brazilian soldier in a rear camp spots a young Italian woman who appears hungry. He approaches her and they engage in a conversation that ends by him following her to her home, providing for her and meeting her children. Her little girl is afraid of him, and when she explains to him that this is because a German soldier killed her father, he tries to explain to her that there is a difference between Germans and Brazilians. The child, however, rejects the explanation and says that “all soldiers are assassins.” Later the woman falls in love with the soldier, but he is not able to stay with her. The desperate woman—who cannot provide for her children and refuses to be a prostitute—knowingly steps into a mine field and explodes in front of her horrified children and Brazilian lover.<sup>99</sup> In such stories, the anti-militaristic sentiment paints all war, all armies, and all soldiers as bearers of evil, death and suffering. Is it possible that the philosophical pacifism and the historical comment were understood as contemporary criticism of the army and the Brazilian military regime?

Here the historian faces a dilemma: were contemporaries interpreting these messages as subversive, or is she imposing the idea of “subversion” onto them? There is no decisive answer to this questions, but circumstantial clues support the idea that at least some of the readers understood these messages as a criticism of the military institution as a whole. First, it should be mentioned that the military and authoritarian Latin American regimes of the late 1960s and early 1970s did perceive the genre of comics, and the artists who created them, as a potential threat to the regime. In Mexico, comic artists, editors

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<sup>99</sup> Alberto André Paroche. “Desespêro.” *Almenaque diário de Guerra*.

and distributors were fined or served time in jail for violating the industry's standards, such as by publishing erotic or immoral content or by using non-standard Spanish, and their comics were banned or censored as a result. Less frequently they were harassed or received threats. At the same time, however, the authorities were more tolerant of political content in comics than in other media since they believed comics were less influential to the masses and thus less dangerous.<sup>100</sup>

Some comics' artists experienced even harsher consequences. In the extreme case of the Argentinean Héctor Germán Oesterheld, the military regime transformed this concern into action. Oesterheld—who collaborated with Hugo Pratt in the 1950s in the creation of the comics on the military reporter Ernie Pike—was kidnapped, together with his daughters, in April 1977 by the Argentinean dictatorship for participating in the left-wing militant group the *Montoneros* and was last seen alive the following year.<sup>101</sup> While no such extreme case is documented in the history of Brazilian comics, the regime indeed kept an open eye on the genre. Right from the beginning, the first censorship law by the military dictatorship in 1964 enforced an already decreed but not yet implemented censorship code on comics.

Within this context of seeing the comics as a potential treat and its artists as possible subversives, one should look carefully at the shred of evidence of an encounter that happened one day in the *paulista* town of Moji das Cruzes. In this encounter two

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<sup>100</sup> Hinds and Tatum, *Not Just for Children*, 14-15.

<sup>101</sup> On Oesterheld and Pratt's collective creation see: Hector Germán Oesterheld and Hugo Pratt, *Nueva Biblioteca Clarín de La Historieta: Sargento Kirk / Ernie Pike* (Buenos Aires: Arte Gráfico Editorial Argentino S.A., 2006). On Oesterheld's revolutionary comics in particular, and on the Montonros' political usage of graphic art in general see: Fernando Reati, "Argentina's Montoneros: Comics, Cartoons, and Images as Political Propaganda in the Underground Guerrilla Press of the 1970s," in *Redrawing the Nation: National Identity in Latin/o American Comics*, ed. Héctor Fernández L'Hoest and Juan Poblete (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

military representatives of an unknown agency knocked on the door of Alberto André Paroche, the loudest anti-Military voice in Brazilian comics at the time. According to his son, they asked Paroche what exactly it was he wanted to achieve in his comics, and they threatened him to stop drawing.<sup>102</sup> While it is unknown what exactly was said in the conversation, who participated, when it took place and what resulted from it, we know at least that some military personnel interpreted Paroche's comics as sufficiently subversive to threaten him, or to suggest to him that he needed to reconsider his messages.

### ***On Commanders***

Some of the first-wave FEB comics illustrate the FEB's high command favorably. For example, General Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias is favorably illustrated in "The FEB's Bloodiest Battle," a story that was dedicated to "Nelson de Mello's detachment" and its commander, and General Zenóbio da Costa was neutrally mentioned and illustrated in the following story in the same issue.<sup>103</sup> Mascarenhas de Moraes himself—the only individual that appears in four different comics—is described favorably as a sensitive commander in three stories. In "A Liar in the Front" he is attentive to a soldier who bragged about deeds he did not commit, and instead of exposing him, he cooperates with his lie only to turn him into a good soldier; in "The Spy" he understands a soldier who deserted his unit to join the FEB and gives him a chance to prove himself; and in "I saw

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<sup>102</sup> The story was recounted to me in personal correspondence with Alberto André Paroche Filho, December 23, 2009.

<sup>103</sup> Paulo Vedal e Flavio Colin. "A mais sangranta batalha da FEB." *Coleção de aventuras* #9. Garimar. 1957; Paulo Vidal e Getúlio Delphin. "Destacamento Nelson de Mello." *Coleção de aventuras* #11. Garimar. 1958; Astrogildo Asis. "A campanha de obuzes do 11o R.I. na Guerra." *Coleção de aventuras* #11. Garimar. 1958.

the ‘Front’” he is mentioned as a commander who was close to his soldiers and suffered with them.<sup>104</sup>

Nonetheless, the general rule in the comics—especially in the second wave after the 1964 military coup—is to valorize the rank and file, the Non Commissioned Officers (NCO) and the lower ranking officers.<sup>105</sup> These lower ranked protagonists have the opportunity to excel because many of the FEB comics’ plots tell of small units patrolling no-man’s-land during the hard winter of 1944 – 45. In this generic story most of the patrols are commanded by NCOs, who often lose their radio connections with their superiors and have to operate independently when encountering the enemy. Even when they narrate major battles and significant events in FEB history—such as *Monte Castelo* and *Montese*—they often do so by focusing on small units and isolated episodes. For example, in the story “Massacred” three Brazilian soldiers lose contact with their commanders while defending a hill. They are all killed after collecting the enemy high price, and their own Brazilian command is not aware of their achievement and actions.<sup>106</sup> The attack on Monte Castelo is narrated in several stories through the perspective of an individual and his heroism. This is the case in “The Telephonist *pracinha*” and “The Lonely Conqueror.”<sup>107</sup> The battle of Montese is also narrated using Alberto Rossi’s sacrifice in “Terra de ninguém!”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Milton Mattos e Edno e Edmundo Rodrigues. “Um mentiroso no front.” *Almenaue diário de Guerra*; Getúlio Delphin. “O espião.” *Coleção de aventuras* #14. Garimar. 1958. And was reprinted in *Homens em Guerra* #7 (edição especial de *Serviço secreto*). Editora Maya. 1958; Joaquim Araújo Machado e Flávio Colin. “Eu vi o ‘Front.’” *Coleção de aventuras* #15. Garimar. 1958.

<sup>105</sup> This observation can also be found in Ferraz and Wolff, “Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos,” 12-14.

<sup>106</sup> Alberto André Paroche. “Massacrados.” *Combate* #40. Editora Taika.

<sup>107</sup> Getúlio Delphin. “O pracinha telefonista.” *Serviço secreto* #12. 1969; Lino Silva. “O conquistador solitário.” *Coleção de aventuras* #14. Garimar. 1958. The story was reprinted in *Homens em Guerra* #15. 1969.

<sup>108</sup> Paulo Vidal (w) e M. Sardella. “Terra de ninguém!” *Coleção de aventuras* #8. Garimar. 1957.

Ferraz and Wolff add that higher ranking commanders rarely appear in the comics, and when they do it is only to order their subordinates to carry out difficult missions.<sup>109</sup> The commanders' distance, incompetence, and lack of understanding of the dilemmas soldiers face on the front put the soldiers in impossible situations. For example, in "To Kill or To Die" a lieutenant pays with his own life for his lack of professionalism and arrogance, while his soldier, the target of his mockery, survives.<sup>110</sup> In the story "Conquest" the company's commander is unable to grasp the combat situation that the fallen lieutenant and the rank and file do and is described as arrogant and as a technocrat.<sup>111</sup> Finally, in the story "A Tragedy on the Hill" Paroche tells of distant commanders who order an advanced observation post to deploy an artillery battery despite the fact that the soldiers do not see the enemy. The result of this reckless command from afar is the horrible death of civilian woman and a child, and it is the soldiers who pay the price with their post-traumatic stress during the years that follow.<sup>112</sup>

While these stories show the victimization of soldiers by their own commanders, they also situate them in the middle of glorious defeats—such as Custer's last stand in the Battle of Little Bighorn and Davy Crockett's at the Alamo in US history—which give them with the opportunity to perform acts of extraordinary bravery and to demonstrate moral behavior.

The cautious treatment of the FEB's high commander, Mascarenhas de Moraes, demonstrates the limits of criticism that comic artists dared to pass. Ferraz and Wolff point to one story condemning Mascarenhas de Moraes as an example of the criticism of

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<sup>109</sup> Ferraz and Wolff, "Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos," 12 – 14.

<sup>110</sup> Ignacio Justo e Pedro Mauro. "Matar ou morrer." *Almenaque de combate* #1/70. Editora Taika.

<sup>111</sup> Ignacio Justo. "Conquista." *Almenaque de combate* #3. Editora Taika.

<sup>112</sup> Alberto André Parche. "Tragédia no morro." *Diario de Guerra* #12.

the high officers in the comics. The story, “The General’s Knives,” is André Paroche’s comic adaptation of an episode previously narrated in the 1949 controversial edited volume by the reserves officers.<sup>113</sup> It tells of the sixth infantry regiment’s second battalion, which was ordered on November 2, 1944 to substitute a North American one in Torre de Norone the following night. Due to extreme fatigue and lack of ammunition the battalion asked Mascarenhas de Moraes to postpone the exchange by twenty-four hours. Mascarenhas de Moraes refused to authorize the delay, accused the commanders of cowardice, and solved their ammunition shortage by ordering them to use their bayonets. The story and the comics also emphasize Mascarenhas de Moraes’ underestimation of the lower rank reserves officers. The story gained publicity in the press and *O Mundo* gave it the provocative headline: “Jungle Knives against Machine Guns.”<sup>114</sup>

Paroche’s comic version of the story, however, does not mention Mascarenhas de Moraes by name. Moreover, the unnamed general does not resemble Mascarenhas de Moraes at all. The lack of naming limits the criticism and only hints—by giving the bibliographic information of the original story as a reference—to the subject of the criticism. As the harsh reaction to a criticism of Mascarenhas de Moraes in a popular history magazine *Nossa História* demonstrates, the difficulty of criticizing him was neither limited to comics nor to the late 1960s. In 2005—sixty years after the Second World War—*Nossa História* dedicated its January issue to the FEB. Luis Felipe da Silva Neves’s article on the ability of the Brazilian soldiers to face the German Army included

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<sup>113</sup> Alberto André Paroche. “As facas do general.” *Combate* #38, s/d. The original story can be found in Arruda, “Impressões,” 72 – 75. An interpretation of the episode as an example of Mascarenhas’ willingness to go far in order to gain the American command’s confidence see: McCann, *Brazilian-American Alliance*, 409-10. Ferraz and Wolff’s analysis of this comic can be found in Ferraz and Wolff, “Histórias do Brasil em Quadrinhos,” 12 – 14.

<sup>114</sup> “Facas de Mato Contra Metralhadores.” *O Mundo*. 20 de outubro de 1949.

one paragraph which criticized Mascarenhas de Moraes and doubted the wisdom of his appointment to command the FEB from a military point of view.<sup>115</sup> After the first couple of months during which the issue was praised by readers and reviewers, several high officers attacked Neves for his treatment of Moraes, and one of them said the article was disrespectful to the “national memory.”<sup>116</sup> In what seems to be a reaction to such criticism, *Nossa História* published a flattering article about Mascarenhas de Moraes in its August issue.<sup>117</sup>

While his high rank and reputation protected Mascarenhas de Moraes and forced Paroche to be indirect and suggestive in his criticism, other commanders did not enjoy this privilege. An example of the explicit mockery of officers can be found in the story “Santa Maria Villiana,” where Paroche describes several officers who visited his advanced observation post. For him they were “saco B” and “war tourists,” but after the war, he informs the reader, they were considered “heroes” and received a chest full of medals.<sup>118</sup>

The criticism of false heroism is evident in a unique comic by Estêvão that was drawn on an unknown date.<sup>119</sup> In this six-page comic, Estêvão narrates a dialogue between the immodest Dr. Macarra and a woman he impresses with his FEB past. In

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<sup>115</sup> Luis Felipe da Silva Neves, "E a Cobra Fumou!," *Nossa História* Janeiro 2005.

<sup>116</sup> Several positive letters were published in *Nossa História*'s March issue number 17. A favorable review of the issue in general and of Neves's article in particular was written by Boris Schneiderman, a leading Brazilian intellectual and an FEB veteran who wrote one of the most successful romances on the FEB. See: Boris Schneiderman. "Verdades e vergonhas: Dossiê relembra atividade da Força Expedicionária Brasileira na 2ª Guerra." *O Estado de S.Paulo*. 6 de fevereiro de 2005. D6. Several letters condemning Neves's article were published in *Nossa História*, 18, abril 2005. One of the commentators, General Carlos de Meira Mattos, also wrote directly to the president of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional and to *Nossa História*'s committee of editors a detailed letter of protest, which was also archived in the ANVFEB-RJ. See G. Carlos de Meira Mattos to Pedro Corrêa do Lago, 17 de janeiro de 2005, assunto; "revista NOSSA HISTÓRIA". ANVFEB-RJ.

<sup>117</sup> Priscilla Leal, "O Homem Que Enfrentou os Nazistas," *Nossa História*, agosto 2005.

<sup>118</sup> Alberto André Paroche. "Santa Maria Villivana." *Almanaque Diario de Guerra*, 6/2-3.

<sup>119</sup> Estêvão de Souza, *Dr. Macarra*.

seventeen paired frames Dr. Macarra tells the woman of a heroic deed, while in the second frame Estêvão shows us what “really” happened. The story begins when the woman asks Dr. Macarra how he lost his front tooth, and he answers that it was during the conquest of Monte Castelo. The second frame reveals that he actually lost it while drinking spirits bearing that name. In Portuguese the verb *tomar*—to take—also means to drink, and thus Dr. Macarras’s answer, “na tomada de Monte Castelo”—“during the capturing of Monte Castelo” or “while drinking [the spirit named] *Monte Castelo*—is both accurate and a lie. In another frame the woman asks if he was wounded, and Dr. Macarra answers that in the first attack he spent five days in hospital. The next frame reveals that he was hospitalized because he failed to fight due to his fear of combat.<sup>120</sup> In these short exaggerated tales, Estêvão mocks the heroic stories the veterans tell about their experiences in Italy. He does not claim that they are being deceitful as much as they are being creative in the way they tell their stories.

The criticism of the FEB’s high officers—in spite of these moderating effects—also extends to the contemporary military establishment. Analyzing comics under Franco’s Spain, Salvador Vazquez de Praga has argued that:

“Historical comics were also popular because, by locating an adventure in a remote period, writers could more freely explore themes which would attract the ire of the censor if discussed in a contemporary setting.”<sup>121</sup>

In suit, I read the FEB comics as a criticism of the military institution and the military government of the 1950s – 1970s for their remoteness from the people, their immorality, lack of responsibility, incompetence, lack of understanding and care of the simple people, and their appropriation of the FEB past to honor themselves.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Vazquez de Praga, Salvador. *Los comics del Franquismo*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980. 91-107. Cited in Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us*, 168.





**Figure 17:** Two episodes from Carlos Estêvão de Souza. *Dr. Macarra um Playboy na FEB e outras histórias*. Rio de Janeiro; Distribuidora Record de Serviços de Imprensa S.A., 1981

### ***Fighting “Superman”***

During World War II, North American cartoonists recruited comic superheroes to fight the Germans. The morally dichotomous world of the superheroes, divided between ultimate good and evil, and the idea of the superhero as taking the altruistic role of saving society, acting for the greater good, and standing for what is right, fit well into the narrative of the Allied war against the Axis. In Brazil, however, it was the Germans—the “others”—who were considered to be “superhuman.” During the campaign, and especially upon meeting German prisoners of war, the image of the ultimate soldier eroded. In the FEB comics too one finds echoes of these different views of the opponent.

In some cases Brazilians respect their German foes, such as in the case of the Brazilian soldier who mocks the surrounding Germans as cowards, and his friend correct him saying: “I did not say so about a German.”<sup>122</sup> In another occasion in the same story, a soldier says: “we have to consider that the Germans are natural warriors.”<sup>123</sup> In others, Brazilians underestimate the Germans. Upon watching the surrendering Germans, one soldier says: “So, these are Hitler’s ‘supermen’!”<sup>124</sup> The refutation of the supernatural quality of the Germans can also be seen in the story “The Boy Simeão” where the narrator describes a German patrol as “supermen,” with quotation marks to indicate that he means this ironically.<sup>125</sup>

In the comics’ plot, however, the role of the German soldier stretches beyond his military competency to his motivation. Ferraz and Wolff argue that the Germans are portrayed as devoted Nazis, ideologically motivated in the Battlefield. Indeed, one can find portrayals of the bloodthirsty German soldier, such as in the story “Santa Maria Villiana,” where while loading a mortar a soldier says enthusiastically: “[t]his is my favorite pastime, ‘Kapitan’!”<sup>126</sup> Visually too, German officers sometimes wear long black coats that do not resemble the Wehrmacht uniforms but other Nazi organizations, such as the SS or the Gestapo. The Germans are also cruel toward the civilian population and are aggressive especially towards women. Thus, German officers do not hesitate to kill a female member of the resistance, to suggestively sexually assault an Italian woman, and to crucify another girl who assisted the Brazilians (see section on anti-militarism). The Germans can be merciless toward their Brazilian prisoners, and they disobey the

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<sup>122</sup> “Matar ou morrer.” *Almenaque combate* #1/70. 5/1.

<sup>123</sup> Ignacio Justo e Pedro Mauro. “Matar ou morrer.” *Almenaque de combate* #1/70. Editora Taika, 3/5

<sup>124</sup> “Um punhdo de Bravos.” *Combate* # 23. Editora taika, 4/2.

<sup>125</sup> Getúlio Delphin. “O garoto Simeão” *Coleção de aventuras* #10. Editora Garimar, 4/1.

<sup>126</sup> Alberto André Paroche. “Santa Maria Villiana.” *Almenaque Diário de Guerra*, 7/4

international laws of war, as for example in the story “The 17 of Abataia” when they shoot in cold blood seventeen soldiers in order to force them to give the Germans information. However, the Brazilians are not deterred by the Germans’ cruel interrogation methods, and they die one by one loyal to their comrades and country.<sup>127</sup> Some educators found the story important enough to print one of its pages in a 1977 school textbook where the children were asked to see how the Italians appreciated Brazilians’ bravery. The Brazilians’ heroic resistance is amplified by the Germans’ cruel behavior.<sup>128</sup>

Cruelty only partially characterizes the Germans, who are multi-faceted as the German soldier is also portrayed as a human being with family, feelings, honor, and even a dislike of war. In one comic, for example, a Brazilian soldier wonders if his dead adversary was a good man, a good citizen, and whether or not he had a family.<sup>129</sup> The specific reference for the German as a good citizen that he might have simply complying with his patriotic obligation to fight for his country while in war, rather than supporting its regime’s ideological view. In another story, a German soldier encounters a sole Brazilian soldier in his foxhole on Christmas Eve. The two soldiers sit together, share a meal and wine, and sing when a Brazilian patrol misunderstands the situation and kills them both.<sup>130</sup>

There are also references to the low morale of the Germans and their unwillingness to fight. Ferraz and Wolff refer to one image of a German soldier thinking

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<sup>127</sup> Gutemberg Monteiro. “Os 17 de Abetaia.” *Coleção de Aventuras* #15. Editora Garimar. 1958.

<sup>128</sup> Luciano Vaz Ferreira Ramos, *Historia Geral: Ensino de Primeiro Grau, Area de Estudos Sociais* (São Paulo: Editora do Brasil, 1977), 254-55.

<sup>129</sup> “Saco B foi promovido a saco A.” *Coleção de aventuras* #11. 7/5.

<sup>130</sup> This story reiterates true events from World War I, when German and British soldiers stopped fighting and played soccer between the trenches in Christmas 1914 for several hours before they went back to killing each other.

of a hotdog and beer as an example of a stereotypical representation, but the context of the image is the soldiers' tiredness of the war as he says: "[d]dam it! What wouldn't I give to be in Germany drinking having bear with a sausage."<sup>131</sup> In a second story, one German tells his friend: "[a]ll the world against us! We will not win this war.. How much would I like return home... when will this end? I am done with war!"<sup>132</sup> The Germans' low morale qualifies their ideological fanaticism and shows their human side.

It seems that like the Brazilians, the German Army had an internal division among its ranks. German officers are the ones portrayed showing cruelty, while soldiers expose their human side. In the comics, Brazilian and German soldiers alike complied with their duty, but they are human figures, and not just warriors. Officers of both nationalities are more extreme figures: the Brazilian ones are demanding and insensitive to their troops while the Germans ones are cruel and are blamed for war crimes. The good/evil dichotomy according to national lines is blurred by a second dichotomy of soldiers and commanders, which crosses these simplistic lines.

### ***Racial National Identity***

Artists assign German characters a racial prejudice against the Brazilians as an inferior race composed of "blacks." For example, in "Road 64" one German expresses his astonishment at the Brazilians' accomplishments by saying: "Damned! How can an inferior race, how can blacks resist the snow? Devils"<sup>133</sup> Additionally, in the story "Alberta" a German lieutenant mocks an Italian girl for her hope that the Brazilians will

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<sup>131</sup> "As facas do general." *Combate* #38. 4/5.

<sup>132</sup> "Os heróis vencidos." *Almenaque diário de Guerra*. 6/3-6.

<sup>133</sup> Alberto André Paroche e Nico Rosso. "Estrada 64," *Combate* #37. Editora Taika, 13/4. The story also appeared in *Almenaque combate* #6-74.

free her by saying that the Brazilians are “[s]avage blacks. Inferior race.”<sup>134</sup> Artists represented racial prejudice in contradictory ways. One way was to show how prejudice hurt soldiers in the battlefield, as is the case in both “Road 64” and “Alberta.” A second way was to reveal their pride in their racial heritage by promoting the concept of a “racial democracy,” an ideology about the egalitarian relations between the races and the positive value of miscegenation that dominated Brazilian thought for most of the middle of the twentieth century. They express this idea implicitly by drawing black soldiers among the Brazilians without assigning their appearance in the plot with any special meaning—they are simply the same as everyone else, thus appearing to be a natural part of the Brazilian demographic landscape (see Table 6). The most explicit claim for the superiority of the Brazilian model of race relations can be found in the story, “Weekend at the ‘Front.’” In this story two Brazilian soldiers are driving to Naples to socialize with Italian women. While on their way, the white soldier tells the black one that “The Europeans are like the Americans: [for them] a black man is only good for war or for jail.” His surprised comrade answers “[b]ut in Brazil we do not have this!” “Of course,” the white soldier corrects his naïve comrade: “[d]o you think that the entire world is like ours?”<sup>135</sup>

Nevertheless, in order for a narrative to make a statement on racial relations it is not enough to embed statements in the text; such relations need to be demonstrated in the plot and imagery as well. The question that arises is how would the observer know to which racial category an illustrated figure belongs to? In the case of the FEB comics illustrated figures who are supposed to be “black,” or “non-white,” fall into one or both

<sup>134</sup> Alberto André Paroche, Nico Rosso, e Rogério Geraldês. “Alberta.” *Combate* #25. Editora Taika, 4/3.

<sup>135</sup> Milton Mattos e Edmundo Rodrigues. “Fim-de-semana no ‘Front.’” *Almanaque diário de Guerra*. GEP, 9/5-6, 10/1.

categories that allow to assume Brazilian contemporaries recognized them as of African descent: The first category is composed of images to which the comics explicitly refer as black. Thus, in the story “Weekend at the ‘Front’” Sebastião Alves, known as Tião Prêtinho, is referred to by his Brazilian college as “crioulo” and by a North American soldier as “negro.”<sup>136</sup>



**Figure 18:** Difficulties in signifying African descent by skin shade. The two left images are of the Afro-Brazilian Sebastião Alves. The image on the right is of a Brazilian sergeant illustrated by Hugo Pratt in “17 de Abataia.” In this illustration the shades on the sergeant’s face stand out in comparison to the soldier behind him. Moreover, a comparison to an image of an African soldier drawn by Pratt in “El senegalés” (second from the right) confirms this is Pratt’s style of drawing dark skinned people. From left to right: Milton Mattos e Edmundo Rodrigues. “Fim-de-semana no ‘Front.’” *Almenaque diário de Guerra*. GEP, 3/2, 5/5. Héctor Germán Oesterheld and Hugo Pratt. “El senegalés.” *Nueva Biblioteca Clarin De La Historieta: Sargento Kirk / Ernie Pike*. Buenos Aires: Arte Gráfico Editorial Argentino S.A.. 2006, 222, 2/4

The second category is of illustrated figures whose African descent is recognizable by their phenotypes. The black and white technique and the lack of color in comics created challenges for artists who wanted to draw images of dark skin. Thus, the illustrated image of Sebastião Alves who was identified in the text as “black” is not easily visually identifiable as such by his illustrated skin tone. In another case, Oesterheld and Pratt’s “The 17 of Abataia,” I was puzzled by an image of a Brazilian sergeant whom I was not sure was supposed to be of African descent or not. Only a comparison to the second image in the same frame confirms that the first one is supposed to be dark-

<sup>136</sup> Milton Mattos e dno e Eduardo Rodrigues. “Fim-de-semana no front.” *Almenaque diário de Guerra*, 4/2, 5/2.

skinned, and an additional comparison to another image of an African soldier by the same artist in another comic, “The Senegalese,” confirmed that the dark shade is the artist’s technique for portraying dark skin.<sup>137</sup> Skin tone, then, is not an effective signifier of African descent in the comics, but other racial features are. Artists used physical stereotypes associated with people of African descent, especially shape and size of the nose and lips in addition to hair texture, to mark characters as black.<sup>138</sup>

Using these two categories, only seven stories with Afro-Brazilians protagonists were located, less than seven percent of all stories in the sample. Moreover, in four of these stories the Afro-Brazilians merely serve in the background of the plot with no effect on the narrative. This visual under-representation defers from a textual absence, as seen in the third chapter. The absence of racial markers in a textual corpus does not necessarily mean, nor does it create the impression, of under-representation, because it can also signify a deliberate attempt to call little attention to racial markers. In contrast, the lack of racial markers in a visual medium, like the comics, does not leave a void because it is filled with other characters who are not Afro-Brazilians, and who do not carry “racial markers,” that is, they are white. While the comic narratives textually strive to refute racial prejudice by celebrating “racial democracy” and bravely disprove the inferiority of nonwhites, visually they rebut the discriminatory characterization by eliminating traces of

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<sup>137</sup> Compare “17 de Abataia,” *Coleção de aventuras*, sem numero to Oesterheld and Pratt, *Nueva Biblioteca Clarin de La Historieta: Sargento Kirk / Ernie Pike*, “1 senegalés.” 221-26. The comic was originally published in *Hora Cero Extra* 34, Octubre 1958. Oesterheld and Pratt’s story on the 17 from Abataia was translated into Portuguese. The same story was adapted into a comic book by Gutenberg Monteiro in a very distinct way, and with no Afro-Brazilian characters. See Gutemberg Monteiro. “Os 17 de Abetaia.” *Coleção de Aventuras* #15. Editora Garimar. 1958.

<sup>138</sup> On the association of physical appearance with racial categorization at the time see: Marvin Harris and Conard Kotak, “The Structural Significance of Brazilian Categories,” *Sociologia*, no. 25 (1963).

Afro-Brazilians and replacing the “racial democracy” ideology with its earlier “whitening” one.

**Table 6: Afro-Brazilians in FEB Comics**

Number	Story	Main protagonist?	Role played
1	Paulo Vidal e Flavio Colin. “A mais sangranta batalha da FEB.” <i>Coleção de aventuras</i> #9. Editora Garimar. 1957	No	Neutral
2	Luiz Webster[?]. “Um pracinha dentro um armário.” <i>Coleção de aventuras</i> #12. Editora Garimr. 1958	Yes	Negative. Runs from the enemy.
3	Hélio Porto e Juarez Dilom. “O bravos de Campinas.” <i>Coleção de aventuras</i> #18. Editora Garimar. 1958	No	Neutral
4	Hector Germán Oesterheld e Hugo Pratt. “17 de Abataia.” <i>Coleção de aventuras</i> . unnumbered	Yes, but not alone	Positive
5	Alberto André Paroche. “Um triste canção de Natal.” <i>Combate</i> #23. Editora Taika.	No	Qualifies other soldiers’ longing for home by bringing with him his sad holiday memories
6	[Alberto André Paroche]. “Drama no mar.” <i>Diário de Guerra</i> #1-12. GEP.	No	Somewhat neutral
7	Milton Mattos e Edmundo Rodrigues. “Fim-de-semana no ‘Front.’” <i>Almenaue diário de Guerra</i> . GEP.	Yes, one of two	Positive, but still runs for help in Front of the enemy while his comrade stays and holds them.

In the few cases where Afro-Brazilians are represented in the comics and are assigned a role in the plot, their image is not flattering. In the only story in the sample that has an Afro-Brazilian protagonist, he does not demonstrate much bravery. In this 1958 story, “A *pracinha* in a Wardrobe,” when the soldier finds himself in a village taken by the Germans, he acts in an unusual way—in comparison to many other narratives in the FEB comics—and hides in a cabinet. When the opportunity presents itself, he runs back to the Brazilian lines and saves himself. The same motif exists in the already



mentioned story “Weekend at the ‘Front.’” After discussing the superiority of Brazilian race relations over North American and European ones, and after the soldiers successfully socialize with Italian women and ride back to their camps, they encounter the enemy. At this moment of truth the two soldiers act differently: the white soldier defends his position and fights the enemy, the black one leaves the battlefield and runs to call for help. Together with the white soldier’s patronizing voice at the beginning of the story when he explains the reality to his naïve comrade, the development of the plot stands in contrast to the stated attitudes the characters make. Even in the story “Drama at Sea” the image of the fleeing Afro-Brazilian repeats itself. The story tells of the sinking of a Brazilian ship by a German submarine. In a single frame an Afro-Brazilian tells of those sailors and passengers who tried to save themselves but were trapped in a sinking ship. At first glance, the usage of the Afro-Brazilian to emphasize the tragedy and the vulnerability of the Brazilians in contrast to the aggressiveness and provocativeness of German behavior seems to bear no special meaning. However, several frames earlier another behavior is described when another sailor, a white one, is calming a frightened child and orders him to follow him so he can be saved. Once again the Afro-Brazilian tries to save himself while the “non-Afro-Brazilian” is taking care of the child and shows responsibility.



**Figure 19:** Afro-Brazilians in FEB Comics. In the top two illustrations Afro-Brazilian protagonists run from the enemy and abandon the ship to save themselves. In the bottom two examples Afro-Brazilians are minor protagonists who appear in a neutral way in the plot. Clockwise starting top left: Luiz Webster[?]. “Um pracinha dentro um armário.” *Coleção de aventuras* #12. Editora Garimr. 1958, 5/4; [Alberto André Paroche]. “Drama no mar.” *Diário de Guerra* #1-12. GEP, 6/4; Hélio Porto e Juarez Dilom. “O bravos de Campinas.” *Coleção de aventuras* #18. Editora Garimar. 1958, 5/5; Paulo Vidal e Flavio Colin. “A mais sangranta batalha da FEB.” *Coleção de aventuras* #9. Editora Garimar. 1957, 6/4

In contrast to these two stories, where Afro-Brazilians are assigned cowardly behavior, the Afro-Brazilian sergeant in Osterheld and Pratt’s “17 de Abataia” demonstrates loyalty and bravery when he mocks his German captor and refuses to surrender any information. This positive image of an Afro-Brazilian *pracinha*, however, was created by an Argentinean and an Italian for an Argentinean readership, and only later was it translated into Portuguese.

The visual aspect of the comic medium exposes the dissonance between its textual claims for a functioning racial democracy and the visual whitening of the soldiers. In the few cases where comics do represent Afro-Brazilian characters, they are assigned

negative roles. The only self-reflective and self-critical comment on this reality can be found in Alberto André Paroche's early 1970s story "A Sad Christmas Song." In a single panel three Brazilian soldiers discuss their longing for home on Christmas Eve. While two soldiers talk about the beaches, families, presents, and parties, the third one, illustrated with stereotypical African phenotypes, brings up a socio-economical tension when he says Christmas is for the rich, and it is no reason for a party in his *favela* (slums; see figure 20). Not only does the author associate blackness with poverty, but he also does it in a way that leaves the reader with the bitter taste of inequality and false comradeship in his mouth.



**Figure 20:** The Afro-Brazilian character on the right—note the curly hair, wide nose and broad lips—“In the *favela* where I used to live there is only sadness, misery and ‘cachaça’! Christmas is for the rich!” Source: Alberto André Paroche. “Um triste canção de Natal.” *Combate* #23. Editora Taika, 8/1.

In the context of the memory of the FEB in Brazil, the comics were ahead of their time. With few exceptions, the FEB literature available in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s offered a euphemized official version of great military success. Authors generally ignored social, ethnic and racial questions, as well as the soldier of the rank and file and their hardship during and after the war. Only after the 1985 return of democratic rule, and especially after historians began using oral history to study the FEB, these questions and

subjects moved to the center of the stage, which was more than a decade after FEB comics stopped circulating. The questions they raise, however, are as relevant as ever.

## Chapter 5: Collectable Memories of War: Narratives of Pastime

The continuous usage of the FEB in commercial and mass-distributed popular cultural artifacts demonstrates its appeal as a cultural commodity. Depicted in images drawn on trade cards, printed on stamps and, illustrated in comics, the FEB proved to be a product Brazilians were willing to purchase, use, and collect regardless of gender, age, class and regional differences.

In part, this consumption was created by demands for commemoration. While some memorials—like the war monument—are displayed in the public sphere where hundreds, thousands or more see them daily, other memorials are more private in nature. During the war, families who sent their loved ones to the Italian front decorated their homes with a rectangular flag bearing the FEB's Smoking Cobra emblem in a way similar to North American families who used flags with a golden star.<sup>1</sup>

After the war, veterans and bereaved families reserved special spaces in their homes for war-related artifacts, such as medals, uniforms, documents, occupation money, and photos, to remember their contributions and sacrifices. Such spaces may have been on the wall while others may have been concealed in a drawer. Veteran Raul Kodama, for example, treated his personal memorials as a shrine. During an interview in his apartment in Tucuruvi, São Paulo, Kodama showed me into his meditation room, which included a Buddhist place of worship and several pictures, diplomas, and maps of his FEB experience. Beyond this personal display, Kodama also had pictures of FEB battle

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<sup>1</sup> At least two versions of such a flag existed. Both included the text: “Daqui saiu um expedicionário” or “Daqui partiu um expedicionário,” and the smoking Cobra emblem. In the *Club Militar*'s version the logo was in its Walt Disney popular version. Hand knitted flags existed as well. The different versions were displayed in the veterans' museums in Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, and Belo Horizonte in 2009.

locations, historical narratives written by his friends, and printed material from veterans' conferences in a drawer under his television in his living room.<sup>2</sup>

Collections of war memorabilia—called *militaria*—serve as sources of self-enjoyment, identity, and ego building, and fulfill emotional needs.<sup>3</sup> While for some of the bereaved these shrines commemorate their loved ones, for others they are a source of self-definition. James Mayo observed that “[t]hese personal collections of war memorabilia allow collectors to express selected history by exerting their personal values.”<sup>4</sup> This practice allows people to withdraw from the complexities inherent in commemoration in the public sphere and to create a sense of self in a world of their own design that they mentally control without disconnecting themselves from other people and the real world.<sup>5</sup>

Veterans and their families were not the only ones interested in *militaria*, however.<sup>6</sup> When the returning echelons arrived in Rio de Janeiro in late 1945, not only was the rejoicing population embracing the marching *pracinhas* and cheering them, but also many sought to remember the emotional event by taking souvenirs like soldiers' buttons and insignia. One such description of the citizens' behavior during the victory

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<sup>2</sup> An interview with the author. Tucuruvi, SP, March 2, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York; Estport, Connecticut; London: Praeger, 1988), 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, "The Significance of the Artifact," *Geographical Review* 74, no. 4 (1980): 465-6. cited in Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape*, 18-19.; John Bryant and John E. Findling, "Stamp, Coin, and Postcard Collecting," in *The Greenwood Guide to American Popular Culture*, ed. M. Thomas Inge and Dennis Hall (Westport, Connecticut; London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 1722.

<sup>6</sup> These stamps and trading cards are on display in several of the veterans' museums. The associations' decisions to include them in their collection testify to the fact that veterans considered these artifacts as part of the representation of their experience. FEB stamps were on display in the museum at the ANVFEB main branch in Rio de Janeiro and the *Casa do Expedicionário* in Curitiba (visited on July 2006, May 2007, and April and May 2009) and the museum at Belo Horizonte (visited on May 2007). Eucalol cards were on display in the *Casa do Expedicionário* in Curitiba. Comic books too, which are the focus of the previous chapter, were on display at the association of Moji das Cruzes (visited on April 2009) and in the open library of the *Casa do Expedicionário* in Curitiba.

parade is narrated by veteran Adhemar Rivermar de Almeida who says, “[t]he ‘Smoking Cobra’ emblems disappeared, [and] transformed into souvenirs.”<sup>7</sup> Not everyone could obtain such artifacts and in post-World War II Brazil, distant as it was from the European battlefields and of whose population only a small portion actively participated in the war. As a result, it could be difficult to obtain militaria.<sup>8</sup>

Authentic artifacts and personal memorabilia are rare and expensive. Even sixty years after the FEB’s return, militaria related to their Italian experience—especially medals and pieces of uniform—continue to fetch high prices in antique shops and other markets, such as Internet web sites, which testify to their high demand.<sup>9</sup> Those who did not own an artifact to commemorate the war had to settle for normative, affordable, attainable, serial, and manufactured alternatives as collecting books on the war.<sup>10</sup> As discussed in the previous chapters, hundreds of books on the Second World War and the FEB were available in Portuguese for Brazilian consumers. These included history books, romances, and memoirs of *pracinhas* of all ranks. Other alternatives available to Brazilians interested in owning something that related to the war were popular culture objects that commemorated the campaign. Stamps in particular were marketed as

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<sup>7</sup> Adhemar Rivermar de Almeida, *Montese: Marco Glorioso de uma Trajetória* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército Editora, 1985), 190. The same behavior was observed by other participants and in other returning parades. See: Ferraz, "A Guerra Que Não Acabou", 148.

<sup>8</sup> It seems that a significant portion of the FEB artifacts that are on sale on the different markets in the last few years are sold by family members of deceased *febianos*. This would suggest that the availability of FEB-related artifacts is not linear with time, as a couple of decades ago most of the veterans were still alive and their possessions were not on the market yet. Conversations with sellers in antique fairs around São Paulo confirmed this estimation, and indicated that the same process occurred a decade ago with artifacts related to the 1932 Constitutionalist Revolution.

<sup>9</sup> During my research trip to Brazil in 2008-9 I had seen FEB-related historical documents, medals, patches, and bayonets for sale in several small shops in the center of São Paulo and the Sunday antique fair under the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). On March 8, 2010, several militaria items related to the FEB were on sale on [www.mercadolivre.com.br](http://www.mercadolivre.com.br), among which were a set of the *Medalia de Campanha da FEB* and the *Medalia da Guerra* for R\$420; a set of three FEB medals, shoulder patches and a postcard of the Brazilian Military Graveyard in Pistoia, all in a wooden display box for R\$ 1,690.

<sup>10</sup> Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape*, 20.

memorabilia to the public before their issuance and are one of the most popular collectable objects in general.<sup>11</sup> This chapter focuses on two types of popular culture objects that commemorated the FEB: stamps and collectable trading card.

In addition to their collection by veterans and their families, large segments of society consumed these stamps and trading cards as objects of popular culture. While these consumers did not necessarily buy these products for the sake of the FEB nor as enthusiastic collectors, they were still exposed to the messages on the individual objects and sometimes to the developing narrative of the sequence. Stamps and trade cards collectors with no particular interest in the FEB were exposed to FEB themes through these hobbies. Stamp collectors, who describe their hobby using “scientific” discourse and pay great attention to the technical aspects of a stamp like its shading, print variations, and paper, are also carefully attentive to the stamps’ message, history, and theme. Collectors also classify their collections in many creative and unique ways that require them to study each stamp for its aesthetic value and content.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Brazilian Stamps as an Historical Source***

Stamps are popular cultural artifacts that effectively convey messages to a wide audience of consumers and collectors. Stamps are miniature works of art and propaganda that are distributed in the hundreds of thousands and even millions. In his study of Latin American stamps, Jack Child notes that a narrow definition of popular culture as “culture

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<sup>11</sup> Bryant and Findling, "Stamp, Coin, and Postcard Collecting," 1721. On the publicizing of FEB stamps see below.

<sup>12</sup> Steven M. Gelber, "Free Market Metaphor: The Historical Dynamics of Stamp Collecting" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 4 (1992): 755-6. On collecting and on collecting as an activity of popular culture also see: Susan M. Pearce, ed. *The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2000-2002).; Bryant and Findling, "Stamp, Coin, and Postcard Collecting."



created by and for the people” often excludes stamps, which are issued by governments. However, a broader definition of popular culture, such as Jean Franco’s, would include stamps as part of “all aspects of culture except those institutionalized as ‘high culture.’”<sup>13</sup> People interact with stamps in many ways: they buy, keep, lick, send, and receive them. Before the last decade of the twentieth century, most people would interact with stamps on almost a daily basis as they shuffled through their outgoing and incoming mail, using them to facilitate their personal correspondence.

Not only are they ubiquitous as necessary objects, stamps are, in Donald Reid’s words: “bearers of symbols, as part of a system of communication,” which circulate in the millions. In spite of being seemingly invisible, continues Reid, “[s]uccessful revolutionaries have never doubted the urgency of obliterating a deposed ruler’s portrait on the stamp and of following up quickly with new issues which exploit revolutionary symbols.”<sup>14</sup> Stoetzer argues that it is exactly the subtle and discreet nature of the stamp that, when combined with its wide circulation, enhances its effectiveness in carrying propagandistic messages.<sup>15</sup>

While stamps are objects of popular culture due to their wide circulation, manner of consumption, and collectable quality, they are also official governmental documents

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<sup>13</sup> Jack Child, *Miniature Messages: The Semiotics and Politics of Latin American Postage Stamps* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 20-23. For definitions of popular culture see, for example: Ray B. Browne, "Popular Culture: Notes toward a Definition," in *Popular Culture and Curricula*, ed. Ray B. Browne and Ronald J. Ambrosetti (Bowling Green, Oh: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972).; Chandra Mukerji, *Rethinking Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).; Jean Franco, *Critical Passions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Donald M. Reid, "The Symbolism of Postage Stamps: A Source for the Historian," *Journal of Contemporary History* 19, no. 2 (1984): 224, 25.

<sup>15</sup> Carlos O. Stoetzer, *Postage Stamps as Propaganda* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1953), 1. Cited in Frank Nussel, "Territorial and Boundary Disputes Depicted on Postage Stamps," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 11(1992): 1.

used to convey symbolic messages to their citizens and to the world.<sup>16</sup> Stamps celebrate the nation through representations of its high and popular culture, its economic development, demographic growth, and its citizens' achievements in every imaginable aspect of life like sports, literature, and science. Every commemorative stamp represents an aspect of a country and at the same time stands for the country as a whole, thus symbolizing it.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the notion of the nation is embedded in stamps and in the representations of national life they offer for the viewer.<sup>18</sup>

Governments frequently use stamps for political propaganda; they often represent national identity and at the same time contribute to its construction by displaying themes like national unity, integrity, and the celebration of the nation.<sup>19</sup> Governments, including those in Latin America and Brazil, promote national unity in stamps through the portrayal of important, national historical events and through the inclusion of national symbols like the national seal, flag, colors, patron, poet, bird and flower.<sup>20</sup>

Stamps also represent national integrity by depicting maps—including maps claiming internationally disputed territories. They also presented a picture of integrity through the commemoration of historical events that threatened the national integrity from outside, like wars, and from within, like regional revolts.<sup>21</sup> A Brazilian stamp of

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<sup>16</sup> Reid, "The Symbolism of Postage Stamps: A Source for the Historian," 223.

<sup>17</sup> David Scott, "National Icons: The Semiotics of the French Stamp," *French Cultural Studies* 3(1992): 216.

<sup>18</sup> Not only do nation-states issue stamps, but such territories with independent postal-issuing agencies also stand for their local territory and display its uniqueness in a nativist way.

<sup>19</sup> For more on Latin American postage stamps and nationalism see Child, *Miniature Messages*, ch. 3.

<sup>20</sup> For an example of the analysis of the national iconography in stamps see: Scott, "National Icons: The Semiotics of the French Stamp."

<sup>21</sup> On stamps and boundary disputes in Latin America see: Nussel, "Territorial and Boundary Disputes." A detailed discussion in two such disputes see: Child, *Miniature Messages*, chapters 6 and 7. The Argentinean-British dispute over the Falkland/Malvinas islands in stamps drew philatelists' attention after the war: Sr. Hardie, Robert J., "Mother, Argentina and England Are at It Again!," *The American Philatelist*

1969, for example, shows Brazil's map colored in the national yellow and green and dotted with several principal military posts on its borders with the text: "[the] army [is] a factor of security" (Scott 1133), and several Brazilian stamps commemorated the "pacification" of the Farroupilha (Scott 2021, 2527) and the Canudos (Scott 2647) revolts. A subtle form of demonstrating national integrity in stamps is through the adoption of national symbols that supersede political changes. Thus, Child points to the continuation of green and yellow, Brazil's national colors, in stamps in spite of the political break between the monarchy and the Republic.<sup>22</sup>

Brazilian stamp-issuing authorities paid much attention to the messages their stamps carried. The Brazilian Minister of communications stated in 1975 that:

The postage stamp, in and of itself, is a calling card and a part of the history of the country that issues it. The stamp is an indispensable presence on all the messages and objects sent by mail, traveling throughout all Brazil and the world. The beauty of its colors, the care taken in its preparation and an appropriate selection of themes will serve to positively represent the country and all that is part of it.<sup>23</sup>

This care is used to elevate the national image both internally and externally, for example, by focusing on ecology and preservation since the last decade of the twentieth century. The Brazilian governments issued these depictions in stamps at the same time that Brazil was criticized for a lack of environmental concern by allowing the deforestation of the Amazon.<sup>24</sup>

Stamps were also used in the interest of Brazilian diplomacy to promote the state's intentions. Thus, Vargas gave President Roosevelt—a known stamp collector—an

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98(1984).; Paul B. Goodwin Jr., "Stamps and Sovereignty in the South Atlantic," *The American Philatelist* 102(1988).; Steve Pendelton, "A Falkland War Retrospective," *The American Philatelist* 102(1988).

<sup>22</sup> Child, *Miniature Messages*, 272.

<sup>23</sup> Statement by Brazilian Minister of communication Euclides Quandt de Oliveira, *Selo, pequena janela para o Brasil e o mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Empresa Brasileira de Correios e Telégrafos, 1975). Cited in translation in *ibid.*, 163-4.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-7.

album of ten Brazilian stamps issued between 1890 and 1940 that commemorated the Pan American Union. Roosevelt received a second philatelic gift from Vargas that included twenty-three stamps portraying acts of American friendship, which were autographed by the ministers of the issuing countries in 1942.<sup>25</sup> Both presents carried the diplomatic message of a commitment between the two countries and of hemispheric solidarity.

Three years after Britain's pioneer issue of the first postage stamp, Brazil was the second country in the world, and the first American country, to follow suit. In the following years, Brazil issued thousands of stamps and demonstrated the second highest average of stamps issued per year since stamps were first issued in Latin American countries.<sup>26</sup> Brazil's extensive issuance of postage stamps was and is second only to Cuba and Nicaragua, where revolutionary regimes in both countries made an extensive use of postage stamps for political propaganda, as well as for financial reasons beyond postal needs.<sup>27</sup>

Due to their ubiquity and collectability, throughout the world, stamps became an object for collectors and, as a result, a market for stamps began to flourish. By the 1860s there were already stamp shops and dealers, markets for collectors as well as printed catalogues of all the stamps of the world and their values.<sup>28</sup> The nature of the hobby made it affordable, approachable and convenient to collectors of all classes.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ernest A. Kehr, *The Romance of Stamp Collecting: Notes from the World of Stamp Collecting and Stamp Collectors* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1947), 274-5.

<sup>26</sup> Child, *Miniature Messages*, Table 1 on page 50.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 171. This practice characterized Nicaragua's postal policy even before the Sandinista rule (1979-90) and can be traced to the 1890-98 Seebach stamps, which were produced to allow later issues for collectors rather than for postage. *Ibid.*, 48, 183-6. On the Seebach controversy see: *ibid.*, 45-7.

<sup>28</sup> Kehr, *The Romance of Stamp Collecting*, 39-41.

<sup>29</sup> Bryant and Findling, "Stamp, Coin, and Postcard Collecting," 1723.

Stamp collectors were soon to appear in Brazil as well, and during the 1870s the existence of several philatelist groups was reported. In 1882, the first philatelic magazine in Brazil, *O Brazil Philatelico*, was published and a second magazine appeared the following year. In 1886 the first association of stamp collectors was founded in Rio de Janeiro.

Until World War I, most avid collectors owned a printed album of all the stamps in the world. However, during the first decade after the war, the proliferation of stamps raised the world's inventory to about sixty thousand stamps, and it became obvious to most collectors that even if they possessed the required financial means they would not be able to possess a global collection. During this period of proliferation, special fields of collection replaced the attempt to collect the stamps of the world, and some of these fields were nationally based.<sup>30</sup> Gradually, thematic stamp collections became more common. The first reference to thematic stamp collections in Brazil occurred in 1937 and later, in 1976, the *Federação Brasileira de Filatelia Temática* was founded.<sup>31</sup>

The first catalogue of Brazilian stamps was published in 1932.<sup>32</sup> Not coincidentally, the publishing of the first Brazilian national catalogue overlapped with Getúlio Vargas's nationalistic policy, which began with his entry in 1930 to the Catete Palace, the seat of Brazil's executive power at the time. It was also during the 1930s that stamp expositions gained popularity in Brazil, although they had existed since the end of the nineteenth century. The 1934 national exposition and the 1938 international one

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<sup>30</sup> Kehr, *The Romance of Stamp Collecting*, 46-7.; Bryant and Findling, "Stamp, Coin, and Postcard Collecting," 1724-6.

<sup>31</sup> Cícero Antônio F. de Almeida and Pedro Karp Vasquez, *Selos Postais do Brasil* (São Paulo: Metalivros, 2003), 47.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-28.

(BRAPEX) contributed to the advertising of stamps and the hobby, and during the second half of the twentieth century, there were major philatelic exhibitions in Brazil almost every year.<sup>33</sup>

Within two decades following the appearance of the first postage stamp, teachers found the pedagogical value of stamps to inspire their pupils with curiosity about distant countries and cultures, especially in geography classes.<sup>34</sup> In 1943 Albert Kunze advocated the usage of stamps and the nurturing of stamp collecting among students to foster an understanding of Latin American countries.<sup>35</sup> These arguments served concrete purposes. Gelber argues that the attribution of educational value to stamps was a way to claim a non-economic value, other than the “feminine” aesthetic one, to the growingly male-dominated hobby.<sup>36</sup> In Socialist countries, collectors argued for the hobby’s educational value so the hobby would not be viewed as threatening to the government. In some locales it proved threatening as it was in the Soviet Union where the government saw collectors as speculators and, in consequence, restricted, monitored, and controlled their activities.<sup>37</sup>

The use of stamps as an education tool was also promoted in Brazil. In one of the leading Brazilian philatelic magazines since the late 1970s, *Correio Filatélico* (COFI), several articles discuss spreading the hobby among children.<sup>38</sup> Beginning in the early 1970s, the *Empresa Brasileira de Correios e Telégrafos* (ECT)—the governmental

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 44-47.

<sup>34</sup> Kehr, *The Romance of Stamp Collecting*, 40.; Child, *Miniature Messages*, 32-35.

<sup>35</sup> Albert F. Kunze, "Latin American Postage Stamps and the Teaching of Spanish and Portuguese " *Hispania* 26, no. 1 (1943).

<sup>36</sup> Gelber, "Free Market Metaphor," 751-2.

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately in the Early Soviet Era," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 3 (1995).

<sup>38</sup> For an article advocating the pedagogical usage of stamps in Brazil see, "Uma Agradável Realidade: a Filatelia Chega às Escolas," *Correio Filatélico* (COFI) Ano 1, no. 11 (1978): 8-9.

agency founded in 1969 that was responsible for all stamps and other philatelic products' issuance and distribution—focused on elementary students in the First through Eighth grades as their target for popularizing stamp collecting. To achieve their goal, it organized a national stamp designing contest for Christmas (1976) and a special stamp exposition (EXFIJUBRA, 1977), involving students and schools in stamp-issuing ceremonies. The ECT sponsored dozens of talks in front of students and organized school field trips to postal agencies.<sup>39</sup> Because of their efforts, one could find in a 1979 textbook in *Estudios Sociais* for the First grade illustrations of the 1945 Victory series (see below) in its section on Brazil during World War II.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the ECT's efforts, it is unclear how many stamp collectors were in Brazil during the second half of the twentieth century. In a society where telephones were still rare, telegraph messages were expensive and limited in their capacity to carry messages, the postal service was the main vehicle of textual communication. We do know that the more literate a society is, the bigger its postage volume. This might help us assess how many stamp collectors were in Brazil. During the mid-1940s, one out of every ten North Americans collected stamps; due to lower literacy rates in Brazil, it is probable that there were fewer collectors in the country.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>40</sup> Ricardo de Moura Faria, Gleuso Damasceno Duarte, and Antonio Marum, *Estudios Sociais*, 3 ed., vol. 4 (Belo Horizonte: Livreria la Editora LTDA, 1979), 88.

<sup>41</sup> In 1940 56.6 per cent of Brazilians who were ten years old and above were illiterate. In comparison, during the same year only 2.9 per cent of U.S. residents who were fourteen years old and above were illiterate. Thus, the illiteracy rate in Brazil was 19.51 times higher than in the U.S. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Anuário Estatístico do Brasil: Ano X - 1949*, "Estado da População II – População de fato, na data do recenseamento geral de 1940, D – Instrução", 28.; Claudia Goldin, "Illiteracy Rate, by Race and Nativity: 1870–1979." Table Bc793-797," in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present: Millennial Edition*, ed. Susan B. Carter, et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Another way to gauge the popularity of stamp collecting is the circulation of the *Correio Filatélico*. Beginning in 1977, the ministry of communication freely distributed the monthly magazine *Correio Filatélico*. Fifteen-thousand copies of the first edition were printed, and the distribution grew to 20,000 within a year. At the beginning of the twenty-first century there were 86 philatelic associations in Brazil, with more than 25,000 registered collectors.<sup>42</sup> At the same time Bryant and Findling estimate that in the United States there were twice the number of serious stamp collectors than the number of registered members in the American Philatelic society, and more than twenty times more of “nonprofessional” collectors, such as children or adults who kept a small collection.<sup>43</sup> Applying these rates to Brazil, it is likely that there were about 50,000 serious collectors and at least half a million of nonprofessional collectors. Each of these collectors was in some way exposed to representations of the FEB.

### ***The FEB in Brazilian Stamps***

Between 1945 and 2004, Brazil issued nineteen stamps and two blocks of four stamps commemorating the FEB, its symbols, and the historical events in which the soldiers took part.<sup>44</sup> Most of the stamps were commemorative and thus issued in smaller numbers than definitive stamps, yet they still sold in the millions, usually in a single issue. The post office issued roughly one million copies in 1949 (Scott 689), 1975 (Scott 1394), 1983 (Scott 1891), and the 1995 (Scott 2526) FEB and the 1985 (Scott 2026),

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<sup>42</sup> Almeida and Vasquez, *Selos Postais*, 44-47.

<sup>43</sup> Bryant and Findling, "Stamp, Coin, and Postcard Collecting," 1721.

<sup>44</sup> A block is an unrepeatable group of stamps at least two wide by two deep. However, each stamp does stand by itself and can be used separately. In the Scott catalogue that was used for identification of the stamps and their comparison to other stamps, blocks are considered as a single stamp. For that reason in the following pages I count the twenty-seven stamps as twenty-one only.



2004 (Scott 2944) printings were issued in more than two million copies each.<sup>45</sup>

Everyone who used these stamps for postage or collected them were exposed to messages about the FEB's role in the Second World War.

During this sixty-year period (1945-2004), Brazil issued no less than 2,415 definitive, commemorative, air-mail, and special stamps.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the twenty-five FEB stamps represent slightly over one percent (1.035) of all Brazilian stamps issued during this period. While this evidence might lead one to think the FEB stamps are no more than a drop in a philatelic sea, such an impression is misleading. In fact, the FEB stamps made quite an impact.

One way to get a more accurate gauge on the meaning of the FEB stamps' frequency is to compare it to other commemorated historical events. Few historical events from Brazil's modern political, military, diplomatic and economic history are explicitly commemorated in stamps. Excluding stamps commemorating individuals or celebrating contemporary events at the time of their happening—such as a new constitution at the time it is signed—only three post-1930, non-FEB historical events have been commemorated: the 1932 Constitutional Revolt (Scott: 849, 1805, 1849), the 1964 military coup (Scott: 996, 1341), and the 1988 political Amnesty (Scott: 2719). The FEB is the most commemorated event in the post-1930 period in Brazilian stamps, even

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<sup>45</sup> Emission information was taken from the technical information available in the following journals: Sociedade Filatélica de Curitiba, "Força Aérea Brasileira," *Anuário Filatélico Brasileiro* 2(1950).; *Correio Filatélico (COFI)* 8 (1975): 20; *COFI* 81 (1983): 27; *COFI* 96 (1985): 44; *COFI* 152 (1995): 11; *COFI* 195 (2004): 44.

<sup>46</sup> According to the Scott Catalogue of Stamps, between 1945 and 2004 Brazil issued 2,327 definitive and commemorative stamps (Scott 624-2,950); 4 Semi Postal stamps (Scott B12-B15); 52 Air Post stamps (Scott C61-C112); 2 Postal Due stamps (J91-J92); 29 Postal Tax stamps (Scott RA2-RA30); 1 Postal Tax Semi Postal stamp (Scott RAB1), a Total of 2,415 stamps. "2008 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. United States and Affiliated Territories, United Nations, Countries of the World a-B," (Sidney, OH: Scott Publishing Co., 2007), 985-1060.

when omitting the two five-stamp series that were issued in 1945. Why did the FEB gain such philatelic prominence in commemorating contemporary history?

To answer that question it is necessary to examine Brazilian philatelic commemorations. The scarcity of modern history on Brazilian stamps can be explained by the convoluted political history of twentieth-century Brazil. Marson noted that the First Republic stamps rejected earlier Imperial themes in favor of European and classically-inspired allegories of so-called “Republican Themes” like Justice and Freedom. In turn, the Vargas regime rejected this Republican symbolism and repeated in its stamps the Imperial themes of the great man and military strength, as well as searching for legitimacy in the colonial past for ongoing colonization and state formation.<sup>47</sup> On the same hand, the democratic Third Republic (1946-64), the Military Regime (1964-85) and the current democratic regime (1985 to the present) did not find their political predecessors and recent national history appropriate for articulating their own values. Thus, in general, earlier events were less politically disputed and better suited for stamps. The FEB, on the other hand, proved to be a theme with which several political regimes could identify, and they found it effective to promote particular values.

Compared with earlier subjects in the national consciousness, the FEB stands out as frequently commemorated. During the sixty years after the end of World War II, the sixteenth-century “discovery” of Brazil was commemorated six times on a total of twenty-eight individual stamps, all post-1996.<sup>48</sup> The first Catholic Mass on Brazilian soil is celebrated twice in stamps, the Abolition of slavery six times, the proclamation of the

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<sup>47</sup> Izabel Andrede Marson, *Selos Comemorativos: Fragmentos da Memória do Brasil* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 1989), 83-7.

<sup>48</sup> Scott: 2576, 2670, 2671, 2711, 2738 (a block of 4 stamps), and 2740 (a sheet of 20 stamps).

Republic once, and Brazilian Independence is commemorated in stamps nine times.<sup>49</sup> As an historical event, then, the participation of the FEB in World War II is one of the most philatelically commemorated events in Brazilian history.

Another way to understand the impact of the FEB stamps is to consider them as military-related stamps. Between 1945 and 2004 sixty-six stamps explicitly commemorated the armed forces, their various military campaigns, specific battles, military vehicles, ships, airplanes, and institutions such as the Military Archives and the Military Geographical Institution. These stamps also celebrated events in the national calendar, such as Soldier's Day, Reservist Day, Navy Day, Armed Forces' Day, and the Week of the Wing. This count excludes stamps exclusively commemorating military-personnel, unless they also commemorated additional themes. For example, the 1945 and the 1995 stamps that show the Duke de Caxias were counted since they commemorate the "Pacification of Rio Grande do Sul" (Scott 625, 2527), but the 1980 stamp of the Duke, which commemorates the centennial of his death (Scott 1690) was not. The twenty-one FEB-related stamps represent thirty one percent of this total, thus making the FEB one of the most common visualizations of the armed forces. Four of the twenty one stamps that show soldiers (nineteen percent), excluding generals, are FEB-related. Eighteen of the twenty-five stamps commemorating military conflicts memorialize the FEB and World War II (seventy two percent); the other seven commemorate the seventeenth-century conflict between the Portuguese and the Dutch over Pernambuco (Scott 776), and the battle of Guararapes (Scott 686). These other stamps depict the nineteenth-century Farroupilha revolt (Scott 625, 2021, 2527), the battles of Tuiuti (Scott 1019) and

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<sup>49</sup> The Mass is commemorated in Scott 709 and 1875; the abolition appears in Scott: 1198, 1902, 1903, 2132, 2133, 2595); the proclamation of the Republic in Scott 2225; Independence is commemorated in Scott: 943, 1233, 1625, 1818, 1878, 1949, 4950, 1951, 1952.

Riachuelho (Scott 808, 103) in the Paraguayan War, and the Canudos revolt (Scott 2647). Finally, one stamp depicts the twentieth-century São Paulo revolt (Scott 849, 1805). By breaking these numbers down, we can see how commonly the FEB is figured as a representation of the armed forces and of Brazil's military history.

As a theme in itself, the twenty-one FEB-related stamps are neither among the most common of themes, nor are they among the least commonly depicted. One of the most popular motifs in Brazilian stamps is the postal service itself. No less than 131 stamps on this theme include stamps showing other stamps, post offices, and postmen, in addition to events in the national and international philatelic history; the majority of this count comprises stamps that celebrate philatelic exhibitions. Another common theme, which also drew attention from young collectors, is aviation.<sup>50</sup> No less than eighty-three aviation-related stamps portray military and civilian airplanes and zeppelins, the national airline company Varig, and the airmail service. These aviation related stamps commemorate one of Brazil's national heroes—the aviation pioneer Alberto Santos Dumont (1873-1932) considered to be the inventor and pilot of the first successful heavier-than-air flying machine.<sup>51</sup> Other themes are slightly more commonly depicted than the FEB, such as twenty-eight of the stamps thematically representing medicine including hospitals, health campaigns, the Red Cross, nurse week, and important medical advances.

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<sup>50</sup> A COFI article reporting philatelic activities in the Rio de Janeiro School system in 1977 reported that together with the history of Brazil and Brazilian flora and fauna, it was the aviation theme that captured the imagination of young students. "Uma Agradável Realidade," 9.

<sup>51</sup> Santos-Dumont was born and died in Brazil but was engaged in aviation and gained his fame while living in France for most of his adult life. The basis for the Brazilian claim is the fact that unlike earlier attempts—including the Wright brothers—Santos-Dumont's machine, the *14-bis* that he flew on October 26, 1906, did not use any external aids like a rail or a catapult. On Santos Dumont see, for example: Nancy Winters, *Man Flies: The Story of Alberto Santos-Dumont, Master of the Balloon, Conqueror of the Air* (Hopewell, N.J.: Ecco Press, 1998).; Paul Hoffman, *Wings of Madness: Alberto Santos-Dumont and the Invention of Flight*, 1st ed. (New York: Hyperion, 2003).

Finally, other important nationalistic themes are less represented than the FEB in stamps. Thus, Brazil's patron saint, Nossa Senhora Aparecida, and the oil industry, which stood at the center of a heated debate on nationalism in the 1950s and commemorates the national company Petrobras, were commemorated merely five times each. The judicial system, including representations of courts, celebrations of laws and constitutions, and allegories of justice, appears only seventeen times.

FEB stamps were of interest to collectors of other themes.. For example, collectors of the 131 mail-related stamps might also possess two FEB stamps, and collections of aviation-related stamps would include five FEB-related stamps among its eighty-three stamps. Another collectable theme might have been monuments, despite their not being a common theme in Brazilian stamps. In the period under consideration, fourteen stamps showed a monument or a statue, six of which showed the Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) statue on the Corcovado, the famous icon of Rio de Janeiro. Of the remaining eight stamps, three showed the National Monument for the World War II Fallen in Rio de Janeiro (thirty-seven percent) – the most represented monument after Christ the Redeemer.

Unlike these other depictions, the FEB stamps portray themes and artifacts that could make them amenable to other thematic collections from aviation to monuments, from the postal service to maps, and from ships to industry. As a result, the messages embedded in the FEB stamps were available to collectors who were not necessarily interested in the FEB at all.

**Table 7: FEB-related Stamps, 1945 - 2004**

Issue Date	Scott Number	Name / Description	Value
May 8, 1945	632	Victória dos Aliados: Cooperação	Cr\$ 5.00
May 8, 1945	631	Victória dos Aliados: Paz	Cr\$ 2.00
May 8, 1945	630	Victória dos Aliados: Vitória	Cr\$ 1.00
May 8, 1945	629	Victória dos Aliados: Glória	Cr\$ 0.40
May 8, 1945	628	Victória dos Aliados: Saudade	Cr\$ 0.20
July 18, 1945	639	Homenagem à FEB	Cr\$ 5.00
July 18, 1945	638	Homenagem à FEB	Cr\$ 2.00
July 18, 1945	637	Homenagem à FEB	Cr\$ 1.00
July 18, 1945	636	Homenagem à FEB	Cr\$ 0.40
July 18, 1945	635	Homenagem à FEB	Cr \$0.20
June 18, 1949	689	Brazilian Air Force	60 cts
Dec. 22, 1960	C104	Retorno à pátria dos restos mortais dos heróis brasileiros da II Guerra Mundial (airmail)	3.30
Dec. 16, 1968	1113	Dia do reservista	5 cts
Sept. 8, 1970	1172	Jubileu de prata da vitória	20 cts
Dec. 28, 1972	1273	Homenagem às Forças Armadas: Marinha	30 cts
Dec. 28, 1972	1272	Homenagem às Forças Armadas: Monumento	30 cts
Dec. 28, 1972	1275	Homenagem às Forças Armadas: Aeronautica	30 cts
Dec. 28, 1972	1274	Homenagem às Forças Armadas: Exército	10 cts
May 8, 1975	1394	1945/1975 – Homenagem aos ex-combatentes	0.50
Nov. 13, 1983	1891	Centenário do nascimento do Marechal Mascarenhas de Moraes	Cr\$ 45.00
Oct. 10, 1985	2026	Serviço postal da FEB	Cr\$ 500
Dec. 18, 1993	2438	50 anos do primeiro grupo de aviação de caça	Cr\$ 42.00
Feb. 21, 1995	2526	50 anos da tomada de Monte Castello	R\$ 0.12
Feb. 21, 1995	2527	150 anos da pacificação da revolução Farroupilha	R\$ 0.12
2004	2944 a	FAB Campanha da Itália: II Guerra Mundial	R\$ 0.50
2004	2944 b	Campanha do Atlântico Sul: II Guerra Mundial	R\$ 0.50
2004	2944 c	FEB Campanha da Itália – II Guerra Mundial	R\$ 0.50
2004	2944 d	Os Correios em ação – II Guerra Mundial	R\$ 0.50

**Source:** “2008 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. United States and Affiliated Territories, United Nations, Countries of the World A-B.” Sidney, OH: Scott Publishing Co., 2007.

What messages did the FEB stamps convey? On May 8, 1945, the day the war in Europe ended and even before Brazilian soldiers returned to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil issued a five-stamp series titled “Allies’ Victory.” It was the first of the Allied victory stamps in the world.<sup>52</sup> The first stamp, which was of lowest value, was entitled “saudade.” The stamp portrayed a female angel in a rural landscape putting flower leaves on a tomb of a Christian soldier with a stream, trees and a church in the background. Employing

<sup>52</sup> James A. Mackay, *Encyclopedia of World Stamps, 1945-1975* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 35.

romantic and religious icons, the stamp honored the fallen *pracinhas* left behind in Italy. It expressed the collective longing of the nation for its sons.



**Figure 21:** Victória dos Aliados: Cooperação, Paz, Vitória, Glória, Saudade. May 8, 1945 (Scott 628 – 632)

The second stamp, “Glory,” portrayed a soldier marching with an allegorical female figure in the background being lauded by two smaller human figures. The soldier wears the Brazilian Army uniform, known as the “Zé Carioca,” instead of depicting the American uniforms the *febianos* were soon to use in Italy. Although he wears a side arm in its case, his weapon is concealed, and the weapon is not foregrounded. Thus, glory is associated with the whole military institution and not specifically with the FEB, whose soldiers became known to the public as visually different in their uniforms and assault rifles.

The third stamp is dedicated to “Victory” and shows allegorical figures playing trumpets against a background of the Allies’ flags. The flags are grouped together in a manner that makes it difficult to recognize most of them, and since the stamp, like the rest of the series, was printed in only one color, it became even more difficult to recognize the flag’s pattern. Only the US and the Brazilian flags are easily recognizable, and to a lesser extent the British Union Jack. This configuration causes the Brazilian and

US contribution to the war effort to receive emphasis over the rest of the Allies. At the two bottom corners of the stamp reside collected objects representing industry on one side and knowledge on the other. Thus, the stamp attributes victory to two of the areas in which Vargas's New State wished to excel, and indeed advanced Brazil, rather than pointing to the actual Brazilian contributions to the Allied war effort of minerals and rubber. The fourth stamp, "Peace," shows another allegoric female. The background is dominated by a rainbow over cloudy sky, a biblical symbol of peace, and a promise for future prosperity after hardship and danger. Both plantations and factories are sketched into the background, which represent economic growth as a result of the desired peace. The final stamp in the series, titled "Cooperation," shows a map of the Atlantic with its surrounding continents. The map shows the "Trampoline for Victory" in a dotted line. It depicts the major cities where airfields enabled the supply chain of the Allies starting with Miami, via the Caribbean Port au Prince, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Georgetown, to the Brazilian cities of Belem, Fortaleza and Natal, to the Atlantic island of Concepcion and the African cities of Accra, Khartoum, and finally Cairo. All the airfields are marked with the same icon and with the same font size in a manner that figures the cities as having the same metaphorical/ideological weight. In the middle of the North Atlantic floats the FEB emblem, in its original version. This functions to emphasize how Brazil enabled the supply route.

The series as a whole emphasizes Brazil's military contributions over other Brazilian war efforts. Indeed, Brazil's part in the Allied victory is over stated. The iconography of the soldier and the FEB emblem suggest the artist had little knowledge of the Italian campaign; as a result, the whole military institution is honored for what only



one fighting division actually accomplished. Finally, the date of issue, which celebrated victory while the war in the Far East was still going on, demonstrates the narrow and local prism through which Brazilian authorities perceived the war, and in a sense predates the Brazilian refusal to participate in the Allies' occupation army in Europe.



**Figure 22:** Homenagem à FEB, July 15, 1945 (Scott 635 – 639)

About two months later, on July 18, 1945—one year after the first Brazilian echelon arrived in Italy and on the day the first returning echelon arrived in Rio de Janeiro—a second series of five stamps, titled “FEB,” depicted combinations of the United States and Brazil’s national flags along with the insignias of the American 5<sup>th</sup> Army and the FEB. The stamps were prepared beforehand, two and a half weeks in advance of the journal *Boletim da L.B.A.*, published by the *Legião Brasileira de Assistência*. (*Brazilian Legion of Assistance*)—An organization presided over by First Lady Darcy Vargas, that dedicated itself to the welfare of the soldiers and their families, the L.B.A. informed its readers to expect the stamps to be issued on the day of the soldiers’ return.<sup>53</sup> North American philatelists also received notice of the forthcoming

<sup>53</sup> “A Cobra está fumando.” *Boletim da L.B.A.* 31 de maio de 1945.

series in advance.<sup>54</sup> The issuing was reported in the national newspapers and the stamps were sold by philatelic agencies in the United States as well.<sup>55</sup>

What does the series celebrate? Jack Child suggests reading this series as a sign of the successful U.S. propaganda of hemispheric cordial relations.<sup>56</sup> However, a closer look at the values of the stamps might reveal a less cordial message. As Child himself suggests elsewhere, one way to read the stamps is to compare their values as an indication of the importance assigned to their themes.<sup>57</sup> When applied to the “FEB”

series, this reading shows how greater value is assigned to things Brazilian over things North American. While the 5<sup>th</sup> Army insignia stamp was sold for Cr\$ 0.20, the Brazilian Smoking Cobra emblem was

CR\$0.40. Accordingly, the Brazilian Flag stamp was worth Cr\$ 2, twice the value of

the North American Flag stamp, which was worth Cr\$ 1. The fifth stamp, with the value of Cr\$ 5, showed “V” for victory and both national flags are equal in size.



**Figure 23:** Retorno à pátria dos restos mortais dos heróis brasileiros da II Guerra Mundial, December 22, 1960, airmail (Scott C104)

In the years that followed, additional stamps about the FEB were issued (for a full list see Appendix B). In December 22, 1960, an air-mail stamp named “The Return to the Homeland of the Remains of the Brazilian Heroes of the Second World War”

<sup>54</sup> “Stamp Notes.” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 5, 1945

<sup>55</sup> “Cilulam hoje os selos da Vitoria.” *A Gazeta*, 18 de julho de 1945; an advertisement for Gimbels stamp dealership appearing at *The New York Times*, March 17, 1946.

<sup>56</sup> Child, *Miniature Messages*, 165.

<sup>57</sup> Child shows how Guatemalan dictator General Jorge Ubico put himself forward in two stamp series by assigning his own stamp the highest value among other of the regime’s achievements and among other Central American Presidents. Jack Child, “The Politics and Semiotics of the Smallest Icons of Popular Culture: Latin American Postage Stamps,” *Latin American Research Review* 40, no. 1 (2005): 116.

commemorated the inauguration of the National Monument to the Second World War Dead in Rio and the re-burial of the soldiers' corps (Scott C104). The stamp showed the monument with the U.S., French, British and Brazilian flags in the center of the stamp. The equation among the major Allied combatants with Brazil, and the exclusion of the Soviet Union, represent the claim on Brazil's part in the conflict as well as its cold-war alliance with the "Free World." Beginning in 1927 mail carried by air was subject to special prices and required distinct stamps. In 1941 regular mail was carried by air as well, and the practice of issuing special stamps continued until 1966.<sup>58</sup> Thus, when

used within the country, the FEB message was carried via the airmail stamp on the most urgent letters and sent by those who could afford it. When sent abroad, it served as nationalistic propaganda for outsiders as well.

Under the military dictatorship, the FEB appeared on stamps five times, and was used to symbolize the unity of the armed forces. In four of the cases the FEB representation was strongly linked to the unity of the three branches and their role in unifying the nation. In 1968, the FEB appeared on a stamp that commemorated the "Reservist's Day"

(Scott 1113). The stamp showed the National Monument, with the shape of the Brazilian



**Figure 24:** Dia do reservista, december 16, 1968 (Scott 1113)



**Figure 25:** Jubileu de prata da vitória, September 8, 1970 (Scott 1172)

<sup>58</sup> Almeida and Vasquez, *Selos Postais*, 109.

territory and a symbol of the Southern Cross and what seems to be twenty-two stars representing Brazilian states and territories in the background, thus representing the FEB and the armed forces national unifying role. Two years later the stamp “Silver Jubilee of the Allies’ Victory” commemorated 25<sup>th</sup>-year anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II (Scott 1172). This stamp showed the insignia of the FEB, the FAB in World War II and the Navy together with the letter V on its side in Brazilian colors and on its territory. In this stamp the FEB itself represents the Army alone but as part of the joint effort of the three armed forces.



**Figure 26:** Homenagem às Forças Armadas: Monumento, Marinha, Exército, Aeronautica, December 28, 1972 (Scott 1272 - 1275)

In 1972 a sheet with four stamps was issued as “Homage to the Armed Forces” (Scott 1272-5). Each branch was represented by one stamp, and the fourth one showed a detail from the National Monument in Rio de Janeiro: the statue of the three soldiers. Thus, the representation of the armed forces’ participation in World War II functions as the unifying element of the three branches. Finally, in 1975 another stamp concerning the FEB appeared under the title “1945/75 – Homage to the Ex-Combatants.” The stamp,

however, did not portray veterans or even the FEB, but showed three soldiers, each in the colors of the Brazilian flag, with a rifle, boat, and an airplane intertwined in the background. The ex-combatants' stamp paid homage to the armed forces and yet again showed their unity. The fifth and last stamp was issued in 1983 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup>-anniversary of the birth of Marechal João Batista Mascarenhas de Moraes, the FEB's commander (Scott 1891). It showed Moraes during the FEB campaign in Italy. The route of the FEB, which was a recurring representation of the campaign beginning in the late 1940s, emphasizes the Brazilians' part and downplays the role played by the other Allies.



**Figure 27:** Homenagem aos ex-combatentes, May 8, 1975 (Scott 1394)

After the end of the military dictatorship and the return to democratic rule, the ordinary soldier emerged as the new icon in the FEB stamps. In 1995 a stamp commemorating 50 years since the conquest of Monte Castelo (Scott 2526) was issued. The stamp was paired with another commemorative stamp that was dedicated to the 150<sup>th</sup>-year anniversary of the repression of the Farroupilha revolt in Rio Grande do Sul by the Duke de Caxias (Scott 2527). The two were issued jointly under the title “Série acontecimentos históricos” and shared the cancellation seal and envelope. On the one hand, the pairing of the two military events links the army's role in maintaining national integrity with its defense of the fatherland against foreign threat and emphasizes its competency and prestige. On the other hand, the similar layout, colors and composition of the two stamps equate Caxias with the anonymous *pracinha* and tell a progressive story from the prestigious single military leader to the undecorated civilian-soldier. This

interpretation is reinforced by the soldiers' American helmets as one can see in the 1945 stamp (Scott 629) as well as by the partial portrayal of the Brazilian flag behind him, which omitted the "ordem" part of the national motto and left only the "progresso." Unlike the usage of the FEB for military propaganda about unity of the three military branches, the 1983 Mascarenhas de Moraes stamp, and the Caxias stamp, the 1995 FEB stamp honored the simple Brazilian soldier and contrasted him with the high commander and the symbol of the army.



**Figure 28:** Centenário do nascimento do Marchal Mascarenhas de Moraes, November 13, 1983 (Scott 1891)



**Figure 29:** Série acontecimentos históricos: 50 anos da tomada de Monte Castello; 150 anos da pacificação da revolução Farroupilha, February 21, 1995 (Scott 2526, 2527)

The most recent FEB stamps are a block of four 2004 stamps commemorating Brazil's participation in World War II. Each branch, the Navy, Army and Air Force, received their own stamps, portraying a destroyer, an airplane, and charging soldiers raising a flag on the top of a mountain at dawn. Each stamp also showed the branch's World War II medals. The fourth stamp, "Os correios em ação," pays respect both to the

artillery and the postal service by showing an artillery sergeant reading a letter. Here too, while the three branches are still apparent, the NCOs and soldiers are the heroes of two of the stamps.

The above discussion of iconography shows that stamp users and collectors who consumed the FEB stamps were exposed to messages that changed over time. During the second half of the 1940s, the general message was of sacrifice, military achievement through international cooperation, and national valor. The Brazilian contribution to the Allied war effort, however, was portrayed in a very generous way. By the 1970s the emphasis was on the FEB as a symbol of the armed forces, especially the unity of the three branches, and their contribution to Brazilian integrity and commitment to the defense of the nation. Finally, beginning in the 1990s, a new tendency of elevating the rank and file emerged, a trend that corresponds with the new approaches to the FEB in the historiography and public history starting in the mid-1980s.



**Figure 30:** II Guerra Mundial: FAB Campanha da Itália; Campanha do Atlântico Sul; FEB Campanha da Itália; Os Correios em ação, 2004, Scott 2944a – 2944d)

Despite these shifting emphases, the FEB has remained a national icon and symbol of national integrity. Like the Brazilian flag's colors, which continuously represent national continuity in the midst of Brazil's many political changes, the FEB too was used to express stability by various political regimes: the New State, the Democratic phase, the military dictatorship, and the current democratic regime. It served as a constant index of unity and integrity across social classes; an index of the nation as a geographical entity, of the armed forces and their connection to the general population..





**Figure 31:** Other FEB-related stamps: Brazilian Air Force, June 18, 1949 (Scott 689); Serviço postal da FEB, October 10, 1985 (Scott 2026); 50 anos do primeiro grupo de aviação de caça, December 18, 1993 (Scott 2438)

### ***The FEB for Clean Consumers***

Collecting and arranging advertising trade cards in the nineteenth-century U.S. was an activity associated with girls.<sup>59</sup> The middle class was differentiated from the lower classes by its ability to shop for brand-name commodities, and by its size, which enabled it to shape mass institutions, thus separating it from the upper classes. Thus, “learning to shop as middle-class women...expressed both gender and class position.”<sup>60</sup> The education of the shopper started at girlhood and included the consumption of new forms of advertising. Among these new forms of consumption in the 1880s were trade cards. These dominated the national market until they were supplanted by national magazine advertisements during the 1890s.<sup>61</sup> In spite of the fact they were not considered important consumers, advertisements specifically targeted children based on two assumptions: the child could influence its parents’ choices and that children were

<sup>59</sup> Ellen Gruber Gravey, "Dreaming in Commerce: Advertising Trade Card Scrapbooks," in *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*, ed. Leah Dilworth (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 66.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

more open to influence than adults, which would help make them permanent future customers.<sup>62</sup>

Trade cards were also used in Brazil. In 1917, Paulo Stern, a German-Jewish immigrant, established an industry and a commerce house in the center of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>63</sup> During the following decade the company changed names and addresses, and evolved into a family business. The Stern brothers produced personal hygiene products such as soap, talc, toothpaste, shaving soap, and other commodities to satisfy Rio de Janeiro's demographic growth, urban development, and expanding cultural scene.<sup>64</sup> In 1926 the company, now called "Perfumaria Myrta," launched a line of products based on eucalyptus that was called "Eucalol."<sup>65</sup>

From the beginning Eucalol was advertised in diverse and creative ways. Beyond advertisements in magazines like *Fon-Fon* and *O Cruzeiro*, the makers of Eucalol also ran prize-winning contests for the consumer, for example, who wrote the best slogan. In June 1930 the company ran a new campaign for "Um Novo Sport!" by putting collecting cards (*estampas*) in soaps. The soap was sold in packets of three and included three cards. Each carton card was 6X9 cm (2.36X3.54 inches). On one side of the card was a picture of a specific theme and on the reverse an explanatory text. The cards were issued by themes (fifty-four themes over thirty years), and each theme was divided into one or

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>63</sup> Stern's immigration predated the majority of the German-Jewish immigrants to Brazil, which increased during the second half of the 1930s. On German-Jewish immigration to Brazil see: Jeffrey Lesser, "In Search of Home Abroad: German Jews in Brazil, 1933-45," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, ed. Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005).

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Teresa A. Meade, *"Civilizing" Rio: Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

<sup>65</sup> Samuel Gorberg, *Estampas Eucalol* (Rio de Janeiro: S. Gorberg, 2000), 1-5.

more series of six or, more rarely, twelve cards. Some series were issued only once while others were issued multiple times.

The promotion of their products was successful, children and adults alike collected the trade cards, and sales went up.<sup>66</sup> The company also began to offer albums to collectors. These albums offered collectors a convenient place to organize, preserve, and display their collection. While in the nineteenth-century United States one of the attractions of trade cards was the ability to organize an individual collection in a unique and creative manner, the Eucalol albums enforced an organizational order and logic on the collector and about the collections being unified.

Facing competition during the 1930s from *Beija Flor*, a Eucalyptus product as well, Eucalol invested in aggressive advertisements in magazines and radio programs, such as *Rádio Tupy* and *Rádio Nacional*. In the 1940s the company, already the leader in Brazil in producing personal hygiene products, consolidated, and the second generation of the Stern family ran the business. During the 1950s, the Eucalol line was promoted in color ads with national celebrities like Tonia Carrero, Ilka Soares, Bibi Ferreira, Madelenie Rosay, Dulcina de Moraes, and others, while another company, *Lever*, used Hollywood stars. At the same time Eucalol began to be advertised in *Editora-EBAL's* magazines for children and adolescents in comics-style ads.<sup>67</sup> The ad that was published in *Edição Maravilhosa* of January 1957 invited the readers to collect the cards using these words: “seja você também um colecionador das lindas e instrutivas estampas eucalol.”<sup>68</sup> The ad was meant to seduce young adults, teenagers and children into

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 6-12.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 14-37.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 37.

becoming collectors of the “beautiful” cards and at the same time to calm their parents that the cards were “instructive.”<sup>69</sup> In 1960 Eucalol stopped publishing its cards, and two decades later the company was sold.<sup>70</sup>

The Eucalol cards were not entirely an original invention. It seems that Stern got the idea for the cards from the *Liebig* cards that were very successful in Europe and the US since the end of the nineteenth century. Both had six cards in each series, their albums are identical in their size and organization, and Gorberg speculates that Stern knew the *Liebig* cards since themes 19 (“A conquista do México”) and 20 (“O descobrimento do caminho marítimo para a Índia”) are copies of the 1897 *Liebig* cards and the 21<sup>st</sup> theme (“Como se faz uma estampa,” series 48) is the same theme as the *Liebig* one from 1906.<sup>71</sup>

The first theme Eucalol cards offered its collectors was a very Brazilian one: “A vida de Santos Dumont.” It included one series of six cards that was issued four times. It showed the evolution of aviation through a hot balloon, a Zeppelin, Santos Dumont’s plane “The 14 biz,” a plane, a monument for Dumont, and the man himself.<sup>72</sup> Eucalol cards portrayed many national themes on Brazilian economy, popular culture, history, symbols, flora and fauna. Political changes influenced themes as well. For example, one of the early themes “Brazilian States’ flags” was repeated in theme 35, “Unique Flag,” which celebrated the *Queima das bandeiras* in December 4, 1937, and showed all the national states with one national flag above them.<sup>73</sup> Other themes included children’s

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<sup>69</sup> On *Edição Maravilhosa* and the debate on the morality of the comics in Brazil see below.

<sup>70</sup> Gorberg, *Estampas Eucalol*, 39, 50.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 57, 61-2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-77.

stories, world history, wonders of the world, composers, TV stars, and Greek mythology (See appendix B for the complete list).

Theme 48, “The History of the FEB,” was launched on an unknown date between 1946 and 1950, as its last card (255/6) indicates that it was drawn after Dutra’s elections and before his term ended. According to Gorberg, the theme included 12 series (series 244 to 255) with the total of 72 cards in a single issue.<sup>74</sup> However, the first five series (244 to 247) carry the title “The History of Brazil,” and show episodes from and presidents of the Brazilian Old Republic (1889 – 1930). Series 248 is about the Vargas era: the 1930 revolution shows horseback riders accepted by the civilian population who greet them with Vargas above, Vargas’s portrait, and the new currency (cruzeiro) introduced by the regime. The last three cards can be seen as an introduction to the Brazilian involvement in World War II. One card shows the “Torpedoing of Brazilian Ships” with a submarine and drowning ship; another portrays a mass demonstration of civilians carrying signs of “War!” and “War Now!” and the last one presents Vargas signing Brazil’s recognition of a state of war with the Axis power Germany on August 22, 1942 and in the background a newspaper with article on drowned ships.

The narrative in these three cards is straightforward: Axis provocation and aggressive actions resulted in the Brazilian people’s demand for a war, and Vargas followed the popular will. Series 249 to 255 narrate the story of the FEB and the first card of the 249 series carries the title “Historia da F.E.B. na Italia.” While Gorberg is mainly invested in the aesthetic value of the cards, and thus includes only the main face of the each, texts for the 249 to the 255 series are available on collectors’ web sites, and allow

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 235-38.

for further analysis of the text appearing on their reverse.<sup>75</sup> Each theme does not follow a clear chronological order of events nor is there internal coherence in each series. Thus, the first nine cards (249/1 – 250/3) narrate chronologically the creation of the FEB, its voyage to Italy, and several events in late 1944.<sup>76</sup> The following cards situate the *febianos* in diverse situations (Catholic Mass, skiing, eating, fighting, and participating in ceremonies), show different branches of the army (communications, anti-air defense, medical service, combat engineers, Emergency Medical Technicians, and the air force), and portray weapons (mines, machine guns).



**Figure 32:** Estampas Eucalol. From left to right: The arrival of the first echelon in Italy and its incorporation into the 5<sup>th</sup> Army (249/5); General Dutra’s visit (250/3); an active Patrol (253/5); Homecoming (255/3).

The majority (63.2%) of the nineteen cards representing actual events are of a ceremonious or political nature, such as parades, visits by Brazilian and Allied commanders, and political events in Brazil. They show greater concern with tributes and symbolic gestures than with military achievements. On the other hand, the texts praise the armed forces for supplying the soldiers with their needs, such as the Catholic religious services for the majority of the Brazilians who are Catholics (250/5), meals received

<sup>75</sup> The texts were taken from Raimundo Pereira and Paulo Bodmer’s online collection. Raimundo Pereira and Paulo Bodmer, "História da FEB," <http://www.brasilcult.pro.br/historia/feb/hist01.htm>.

<sup>76</sup> The reference method for the Eucalol cards is of the series number/card number within the series. Both numbers are indicated on the cards’ face.

“with pleasure ...[and] satisfaction ” (252/1), organizing an excellent support/maintenance service, “in spite of the fact that it was the first time that our forces fought away from the continent” so that “a FEB nada deixou a desejar” (251/4) and even making the effort in care of individual soldiers in advanced positions via airborne supply (251/2). The medical service is praised for being deployed throughout the front (251/6), a eulogy that not only suggests the soldiers were taken care of but also that the Brazilians did so by themselves.<sup>77</sup> Finally, the cards even mention the FEB special services’ magazine “Zé Carioca,” and describe it as being the “the most diverse news bulletin as possible,” (250/4).

The soldiers and army personnel are praised for their “enthusiasm that always characterized our military men” for their coping with the harsh winter in the Apennines (252/2), the “outstanding performance” of the combat engineers (253/2), for the “courage of our soldiers” (254/3), and the special attention given to the “unsurpassable heroism” of its members (255/1). Like most of the FEB stamps—and the comics analyzed in the previous chapter—this heroism, however, is collective, and there is no identifiable individual as an icon. In fact, very few people are identifiable in the history of the FEB cards. These include the non-Brazilians, Britain’s Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the American generals Clark and Alexander, and the Brazilian leaders Dutra, Vargas, and Mascarenhas de Moraes. The only person who is mentioned and who is not a high military commander or a head of state is the company commander Captain Alberto Tavares da Silva, who commanded the first Brazilian unit that liberated an Italian locality (250/2). The attribution of heroism to the nameless masses functions both to elevate the

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<sup>77</sup> On the Brazilian logistical dependence on the U.S. Army and its reasons see chapter 1.

rank and file and, paradoxically, to associate the campaign with high-ranking military and political individuals (see discussion in the previous chapter on heroism in the comics).

Their military achievements are described in such a language and context that over emphasizes their importance. The conquest of Monte Castelo is described as “a victory that was transformed into one of the major deeds of the Italian campaign and, as well, of the Brazilian armed forces” (253/4). The ambiguous language in the phrase: “campanha da Itália” can be understood both as the “Brazilians’ campaign” in Italy as well as the “Allies’ campaign” in the peninsula, thus assigning importance to the achievement. The surrender of the 148 German Infantry Division is also explained as a result of the German commander’s “[to] assess [it to be] useless to resist the overwhelming impetus of our forces.” (254/2) – not because the war in Italy was only three days from its end and the German Army was defeated on all fronts.

The cards also downplay Vargas’s part in the history of the FEB and emphasize Dutra’s part. Vargas is mentioned when visiting the troops before their departure (249/2) and when he is overthrown by the military (255/5). Dutra, on the other hand, is credited with the organization of the FEB (249/1), mentioned for his visit of the troops in Italy, for approving the FEB’s emblem (250/3), and for being a presidential candidate (255/5) and the president of Brazil (255/6). The text of the card showing his visit also notes that as homage to Brazil, the United Nations’ generals gave Dutra the general command of the operations during his visit.

The sides fighting in the conflict are represented selectively in a way that emphasizes the Brazilians and Americans fighting the Germans and downplays other nations’ part in the conflict. Thus, the North Americans are mentioned for transporting



the troops to Europe (249/2), and the North American General Clark is mentioned and portrayed in two other cards in ceremonies where the Brazilian and North American flags are raised one next to the other (249/5, 252/4). The next card (249/6) celebrates the incorporation of the FEB in the North American 5<sup>th</sup> Army and the text says that the two emblems “joined in brotherhood two nations.” The British are mentioned twice and in a ceremonial way only: the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s visit (250/1) and the visit of the 15<sup>th</sup> Army Group Commander, the English Sir General Alexander (252/3). This is in spite of the fact that the Allied forces in Italy were multinational. Together with the Brazilian and US troops, the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps included a South African armored division; the 5<sup>th</sup> Army was also composed of British, Indian, Palestinian, and Canadian troops.<sup>78</sup>

As a mirror image of the selective representation of the troops, the cards mostly refer solely to the Germans as the enemy. Thus, one of the first cards in the theme states that the FEB arrived in Naples “to fight against the Germans” (249/3). The 148 German division that surrendered to the Brazilians and its commander General Otto Fretter Pico is mentioned three times (250/6, 254/2, 254/4), German bombardments and aerial attacks (252/3, 253/2, 253/6), and a captured German patrol (253/5). The Italians are mentioned once only, when the text tells of the reminiscences of the Italian infantry division who surrendered to the Brazilians together with the Germans (254/2). This misrepresentation and simplification of a more complex reality serves, first, to create a more easily comprehensible, dichotomous narrative. Secondly, the omission of “lesser important” details helps to glorify the Brazilian FEB through the creation of the image of the

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<sup>78</sup> Allied Forces. Mediterranean Theatre., *Report by the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean, Field-Marshal the Viscount Alexander of Tunis, to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Italian Campaign, 12th December 1944 to 2nd May 1945* (London,: H. M. Stationery Off., 1951), Appendices A and C.

Brazilians as almost the sole allies of the US in the Italian campaign, and its glorification through the reduction of the defeated enemy by the more fearful combatant.

The last series (255) in the history of the FEB theme narrates the results of the conflict: the wounded and dead, the returning soldiers parading in Brazil, and the end of the New State and Dutra's election. Thus, the visual sequence portrays democratization as a direct result of the FEB. The texts reinforce the argument as it tells the reader that the soldiers indeed avenged their co-patriots death in the sunken ships, but also "fought and died so that Liberty—more than men—will be able to continue among the nations of good will" (255/2). Thus, the great celebrations of the *pracinhas*' return offered an opportunity, and "[i]n order to avoid the continuation of the situation, the armed forces, brotherly, in October 29, 1945, deposed the President Getúlio Vargas ..." (255/4).

The story of the FEB in the Eucalol cards as it was offered to occasional readers and collectors eulogized the armed forces for their brilliant campaign and their good care of their soldiers. The soldiers are praised as a collective entity assigned with democratic and national values. Dutra is portrayed as the military initiator of the FEB, its patron, and the political leader that fulfilled the FEB's historic destiny of a democratizing Brazil. This portrayal of Dutra echoes his election campaign, and during the imprisonment of the young communist and FEB veteran Salomão Malina between January 1948 and March 1950—and especially in light of the amnesty granted to wartime traitors like Melo Mourão and Margarida Hirschman at the same time—pamphlets in Rio de Janeiro bitterly mocked this narrative and Dutra's appropriation of the FEB.<sup>79</sup> These pamphlets were

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<sup>79</sup> "Salomão Molina Heroi de Montese," APERJ, Fondo DPS, Serie Panfletos, 881.

also the precursors of another representation of the FEB in the popular culture – the comics.



**Figure 33:** Detail from “Salomão Malina Herói de Montese,” APERJ, Fondo DPS, Serie Panfletos, 881. The upper part narrates the armament of the people who were eager to avenge Brazil her sunken ships, the end of the war and Dutra’s political campaign, which took credit for the FEB, the price paid by the soldiers, and the amnesty given to the “traitors.” The political and social internal implications of the FEB are the focus of this political pamphlet.

Steven Gelber convincingly argues that stamp collecting followed and reinforced the logic of the capitalist market, and therefore appealed to men as well as training young boys for their future gendered economic role. Conversely, the aesthetically oriented collection of trade cards appealed to women and young girls. Females, argues Gleber, were socially encouraged to express creativity in an aesthetic way. Moreover, the increasingly industrialized society constructed women as consumers. Thus, the distribution of trade cards through consumption applied to them as well.<sup>80</sup> While Gleber analyzes European and North American materials, his argument is applicable to capitalistic Brazil and to the popular cultural images of the FEB that were available to

<sup>80</sup> Gelber, "Free Market Metaphor," esp. 745-51.

both sexes. The Brazilian war comics analyzed in the previous chapter targeted a young, male audience, but it also appealed to adults of both sexes. Stamps are also used—both for carrying postage and as collectable items—by people of all ages. Philatelists frequently mention the hobby is accessible to people of all classes and that anyone could develop a modest collection.

FEB stamps were offered throughout the national territory, and several of them were issued in multiple locations throughout Brazil. For example, collectors of first-day envelopes and of commemorative cancelations could have gotten their items for the 1975 FEB stamp in six cities; the 1983 stamp was issued in nine cities and the 1949 stamp was issued simultaneously in no less than eleven cities nationwide.<sup>81</sup> As letters to the editors suggest, FEB comics were nationally distributed and even reached Brazilian readers abroad.

The FEB turned to be an enduring and useful image in national popular iconography. In contrast to the abandonment of previous political themes in stamps after a political change, all post-World War II Brazilian political regimes used the FEB in their own popular culture artifacts. While philatelic political propaganda highlights the regime's achievements and the ruler's greatness, David Bushnell has theorized about another political use of the postage stamp:

[W]hat we have seen in recent years... is an exaltation of the lowest common denominator of national patriotism, directing people's attention to historical 'icons' of the widest popular acceptance in the hope that they will thereby be weaned away from divisive cults and ideologies.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *COFI* 8 (1975):15; *COFI* 83 (1984): 22; Sociedade Filatélica de Curitiba, "Força Aérea Brasileira."

<sup>82</sup> David Bushnell, "Postal Images of Argentine Processes: A Look at Selective Myth-Making," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 1(1982): 101.

Examined from this approach, the persistence of the FEB on stamps can be understood as a governmental attempt to prevent—or at least weaken—the symbolic usage of the FEB by specific groups in a more radical way. Thus, the democratic republic opposed the FEB as a communist legitimating tool and favored its association with democracy; the military government was against its usage as a symbol of democracy and against the military establishment and promoted it as a symbol of the united armed forces; and the newly democratic regime was against using the FEB as a military symbol that elevated the armed forces but privileged the FEB as a project accomplished by the rank and file, not the high military command.

According to the three corpuses of collectable popular culture artifacts analyzed in this chapter and the previous one—trade cards, stamps and comics—the FEB's Italian campaign failed to produce even a single recognizable hero who is associated with the FEB. While the political leaders of the time, like Vargas and Dutra, are represented in the early trade cards, their legacy soon became controversial under the ideological schisms of the Cold War, their post-war political careers, and the changes in the Brazilian political arena. The Italian campaign did not provide the Brazilian high military leaders the opportunity to gain fame by commanding large operations or even by leading large units in battle. On the contrary, the nature of the front during the majority of the time that the FEB waged war on the Axis powers emphasized the military role of lieutenants and sergeants—and more rarely company and battalion commanders, the more dominant and influential military commanders—rather than higher officers. Moreover, the breach between the army that stayed in Brazil and the unique experience of the *febianos* of all ranks prevented the transformation of FEB officers into strong military symbols. This

real or imagined threat on the prestige of the military establishment also explains why lower ranking *febianos*—and dozens of them demonstrated extreme bravery—did not enter the national, or even the military, pantheon. The only exception is Frei Orlando, who became the official patron of the Military Religious Service.<sup>83</sup> This is because Silva was not a combatant, did not die like a hero, and, thus was not a symbolic threat.

The visitor to the Brazilian national pantheon (*Panteão da Pátria*) in Brasília, located in the heart of the triangle of the seats of the legislative, executive and judicial branches, will find no traces of the FEB. In fact, none of the few national heroes Brazil has was born in the twentieth century, and only two lived after 1900. Most of them are military commanders or warriors who engaged in battle. The only twentieth-century person in this exclusive club is Alberto Santos Dumont. As a civilian, inventor, and highly Europeanized Brazilian he is one of Brazil's most celebrated figures and is an example of Brazil's faith in its great future.

The popular culture artifacts celebrate multiple anonymous heroes, and thus transform individual heroism into a collective—and national—one. During the first decade after the war, this positive image was disputed between political powers who tried to harness the FEB to support the interpretation of Brazil's recent history in a way that supported their worldview. With the dramatic political changes in the mid-1960s, when the armed forces took control of the country, the debate turned from a mere interpretation of the war and its causes to another level of symbolic power used in a violent struggle in the social and political world. Comic authors—most notably Alberto André Paroche—used the FEB's prestige to expose the evil side of war that transcended political context

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<sup>83</sup> On Frei Orlando see: Palhares, *Frei Orlando: O Capelão Que Não Voltou*.

and national propaganda. They manipulated the war comics to question war—any war—and to reveal its price. By criticizing war itself, the military institution and its commanders, in a time that all these controlled Brazilian politics and society, these authors and artists questioned Brazil's military regime itself.

Meanwhile, the military used the FEB as a unifying symbol. In the short run, the authoritarian state's oppressive institutions were successful in hushing the critical interpretation by intimidating pop culture artists who depicted the FEB. Post-1985 stamps reveal, however, that the understanding of the FEB as a people's project—and not as the military's—outlived the censorship. The absence of the FEB from the national pantheon can also be seen as a governmental failure to appropriate a popular symbol and neutralizing it. It is not that the FEB as a national symbol lacked vitality, recognition and importance, nor that it failed to produce a singular celebrated hero that prevented it from entering the national pantheon. Rather, it is the failure of the state to transform it into a national symbol or to reduce it to an individual that testifies to its vitality and subversive nature and allowed the diversity of interpretations to continue.

## Conclusion

In May 1<sup>st</sup> 1944, two months before the Brazilian Expeditionary Force left Brazil to fight on European soil, the people of the *paulista* town of Boituva gathered to inaugurate a monument to their soldiers' future victory. When four of the town's sons returned from the battlefield in 1945—a fifth soldier fell in the war—a brickwork obelisk with a metal plaque with their names awaited them.<sup>1</sup> Other communities too started raising funds to build their monuments to pay tribute to their fighting sons. Before 1945 ended, no fewer than fifty monuments decorated municipal plazas. The messages that were engraved on the monuments extolled their veterans' contribution to the promotion of democracy and liberty in Brazil, and celebrated the soldier as the bearer of a civic spirit and as restorer of the nation's honor, damaged when the Axis submarines terrorized Brazilian coastal navigation. By honoring the soldiers as sons of their native town, the community also congratulated itself as participating in the nation.

Within few years a relatively homogenous image of the FEB as a brilliant military Achievement and a great patriotic, democratic and civic Accomplishment took hold. In addition to the monuments, stamps and trade cards conveyed ideas similar to the commemorating plaques and monuments, and offered a eulogized perspective of the military achievements during the campaign. Already in 1945, enthusiastic and patriotic parents could read their children a bedtime story on the adventures of the *pracinha* José. The book glorified the army and its patron, the Duque of Caxias, and narrated José's deeds in Italy with a didactic tone preaching patriotism and pride.<sup>2</sup> Adults did not have to wait much longer. An influx of books about the war started to satisfy the public's thirst to

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<sup>1</sup> Mattos, *Os Monumentos Nacionais*, 103-4. The Plaque was added to the monument in July 20, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Buarque, *O Pracinha José* (São Paulo: Editora do Brasil S/A, 1945).



know about their compatriots' experiences in Europe. Among the first to answer the call were the war correspondents who covered the war in Italy published collections of their reports and their notes.<sup>3</sup> In 1946 a novel appealed to those who preferred this genre over the journalistic writing.<sup>4</sup> Soon after the first memoirs saw light, and in 1947 several authoritative histories offered the public the official story of the FEB, the most important of which was Mascarenhas de Moraes's *A FEB pelo seu comandante*.<sup>5</sup>

The Communist Party was quick to appropriate the FEB's prestige to enforce its newly gained legitimacy, and to support its anti-war and anti-American causes. In 1945 cells of the communist party were named after battles fought in Italy such as "Monte Castelo" and "Montese," and when the party celebrated in 1946 one year of legal activity, the booklet it published included images of the party's leadership cheering the FEB.<sup>6</sup> Calling for the release of imprisoned communist ex-combatants, an article in the communist newspaper *Imprensa Popular* stated in 1950 that the U.S. government tried to sabotage the deployment of the FEB and that it hates the *pracinhas* and ex-combatants because they symbolized Democracy's victory over Nazism and Fascism.<sup>7</sup>

Another focus of political dispute was the newly created *Associação dos ex-combatentes do Brasil*. Prominent members of the organization's national leadership were communists who—in the eyes of their opponents—"politicized" the association.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Braga, *Com a F. E. B. na Itália, Crônicas.*; Silveira, *Histórias de Pracinha; Oito Mês Com a Força Expedicionária Brasileira*.

<sup>4</sup> Mario Calleri, *O Filho do Expedicionário* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Editora Zelio Valverde S. A., 1946).

<sup>5</sup> Moraes, *A F. E. B. pelo seu Comandante*.

<sup>6</sup> "Um ano de legalidade," (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Horizonte LTDA. e Editorial Vitoria LTDA., 8 a 23 de Maio de 1946). APERJ, Fondo DPS, Series Folhetos, 14. On the communist cells see: APERJ, Fondo DPS, Series Dossiês, Notações 1004 e 105.

<sup>7</sup> "Com heróis da FEB no Carcere," *Imprensa Popular*, 21 de 2 de 1948

<sup>8</sup> On the political struggles in the association and for the assertion that the accusation of "politicization" see: Ferraz, "A Guerra Que Não Acabou", 295-306.

The association's leadership drew fire after rallying the association behind an anti-war political cause that was associated with the communists.

Right-wing Brazilians (and veterans), parts of the armed forces, and the state secret organs in charge of monitoring the social and political sphere identified the subversive potential of the memory of the FEB. The press followed the political disputes among the veterans with great interest, offering articles that denounced the association's leadership and the communists and giving voice to local branches of the association that opposed the "politicization" of the organization.<sup>9</sup> The secret police gathered information on veterans' meetings and individual ex-combatants. For example, in January 1946 the *Departamento de Ordem Política e Social* (DOPS) of the state of Paraná was concerned when Carlos Scliar, a communist and the president of the ex-combatants' association in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, arrived in Curitiba to help establish the local branch. The DOPS communicated with their peers in Porto Alegre about the nature of this organization, and were answered that the association is governed by the national council in Rio de Janeiro, which is dominated by a leftist political agenda and is most probably controlled by the Communist Party. They continued to watch closely using veterans as their agents, until the Curitiba branch decided to break with the national association and establish an "apolitical" state organization: *A legião paranaense do expedicionário*.<sup>10</sup> A second example is when the association's São Paulo branch elected a new directory in 1948, the local DOPS automatically opened a file to each elected official. Most of the

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example: "Não Interessam Aos Ex-Pracinhas Explorações Político-Partidarias" *Diário Carioca*, 29 de 3 de 1949; "Tendências Demagógicas na associação de Ex-Combatentes", *Diário de Notícias*, 31 de 3 de 1949; "Traição às democracias!", *O Globo*, 5 de 4 de 1949; "Os Comunistas preparam um golpe para retomar a direção da Sociedade," *Diário da Noite*, 7 de fevereiro de 1952.

<sup>10</sup> APP, DOPS, Dossier "Associação doe ex-combatentes da FEB" No. 0072, Top 10, Período: 1946.

files were left empty, but the suspicion was clear.<sup>11</sup> A right-wing organization expressed the concern in political terms: the communists' political agenda is unpatriotic and subversive, and it undermines the Brazilian family and God. It is the exact opposite to the ideals for which the *pracinhas* fought for.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of the 1940s, all principal interpretations of the FEB emphasized its military merit and its commitment to democracy and liberty. They differed in how they understood the meaning of democracy and liberty. In that sense, they did not really evaluate the FEB differently, but used it to legitimize their differing contemporary political positions and focused on the kind of Brazil they wanted to see. The FEB, then, became an instrument in the creation of a political agenda that sometimes articulated a vision of the nature and characteristics of the Brazilian people—their national identity. Trade cards, comic books and memoirs depicted Brazilians as generous, resourceful, brave, and as lacking any racial prejudice. The claim of lack of racism was often juxtaposed with the harsh racial tension in the U.S. Army, and it was a source for national pride and sense of superiority.

A few isolated critics questioned this consensus. The first notable critique appeared in an edited volume by reserve infantry officers in 1949, who criticized the FEB's military performance. The low-ranking officers' professional evaluation was rejected by the military. Veterans and journalists offered a second type of criticism that focused on the state's poor treatment of the returning veterans. Very slowly, municipal, governmental and military authorities tried to provide some solutions. Veterans also

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<sup>11</sup> For example: AESP, DEOPS, Pontoarios Abilo de Cunha Fonseca (No. 93562); Dionisio Vecchi (No. 93563); Abrao Abait (No. 93564); Americo Chirichella (No. 93565); Attilio Camperoni (No. 93566); Anibal de Andrede (93567). Notice the consecutive numbers of the files.

<sup>12</sup> APERJ, Fondo DPS, Serie Folhetos, 267.

helped each other when they could. But for many, if not most of those who urgently needed it, help arrived late and even not at all.

During subsequent decades—and especially after the military coup of 1964—the armed forces began imposing their own version of the right-wing interpretation of the meaning of the FEB. While monuments honored the soldiers, military ceremonies gradually focused on paying tribute to the armed forces as the defenders of the country from both external and internal threats. These images were captured and disseminated in newsreels that preceded movie shows in theatres nationwide. The growing association between the FEB and the armed forces was also apparent in stamps the state issues periodically.

Despite the armed forces' oppressive control over the social and political public spheres, several individuals offered a new interpretation of the FEB as a mean to criticize the military institution itself. Comic books started to portray the soldiers' heroism as separate, and even in contrast, to the army's lack of professionalism. A censored theatre play portrayed the army as abusing the memory of the soldiers and their sacrifice in order to advance its own political ends. Some readers saw episodes in veterans' memoirs in a new light that criticized the military establishment and the high bras. Few groups and individuals tried to reclaim the monuments and denounced the military in public. The armed forces were aware of these attempts and tried to silence them using different means, from threats through censorship to stripping of political rights.

The new anti-military interpretation re-invented the soldier as victim of the military institution itself. In the mid-1980s, with the end of the military dictatorship, this approach became the mainstream. The two most evident manifestations of this critique

were journalist William Waack's book, which claimed the FEB's contribution to the campaign was minor and insignificant, and Silvio Back's movie *Rádio Auriverde*, which claimed the United States used Brazilian soldiers as cannon fodder and that the Brazilian commanders were incompetent.<sup>13</sup> A new wave of memoirs included more criticism on the campaign than before, and professional historians and journalists alike adopted oral history to narrate the history of the FEB from a personal and narrow perspective that focused on mundane hardships and challenges.

A cynical comment on the meaning of the FEB that captures the evolution of its memory can be illustrated by the following images. For decades they decorated the small dining area of the *Associação dos ex-combatentes do Brasil – São Paulo* building. Drawn by one of its veterans, Robespierre Baffini, the humoristic drawings reminded the veterans who looked for a quiet place to enjoy their *cafezinho* that *sic transit gloria mundi*. A recurring theme in these drawings is the constant—and aggressive—reminders by wives and strangers of a soldier's mortality.

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<sup>13</sup> William Waack, *As Duas Faces da Glória: A FEB Vista Pelos Seus Aliados e Inimigos* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1985); Silvio Back, "Rádio Auriverde," (Brazil 1990).

Images removed in compliance with copy rights requierments

**Figure 34:** Robespierre Baffini, selected images from the *Associação doe ex-combatentes do Brasil – São Paulo*.

The first image (A) vividly addresses the physical change that comes with age, the deteriorating personal relations between spouses, and with them the transformation of pride, respect, and affection into shame, abuse, and conflict. The second image (B) demonstrates how later experiences shed new light on the past. In this image where a veteran flees his wife, who is encouraged by her mother, the caption explains, “in comparison, the war was tremendously easy.” The war, of course, was not easy, but it is now seen in a new perspective. The third image (C) mocks the realization of the war’s achievements in soldiers’ personal lives as the drunken veteran bossed by his angry wife ponders: “and to think that we fought for freedom!!!” In the fourth image (D) a spectator

looks at the elderly veterans who are marching in the street—probably on September 7, Brazil’s Independence day—and tells his neighbor: “these clowns won the war? I swear this is hard to believe!!!” In light of this fourth illustration, the domestic scenes in the first three take on a different meaning. In their new public sphere, earlier innocent, limited, personal comments—like on the reevaluation of the war, the lack of respect to the past, and the poor condition of the veterans articulated in the previous three images—assume a role in the ongoing sixty-year old process of assigning meaning to the FEB.

Three interpretations dominate the debate over the meaning of the FEB to Brazil’s national identity and—more importantly—to its political and social reality. The first interpretation of Brazilian participation in the Second World War focused on the democracy that resulted from the dual fight for freedom and liberty that saved the world from Fascist and Nazi oppression and from Getúlio Vargas’s domestic dictatorship of the New State. This interpretation was strongly inflected with localism and with Brazilians’ enthusiasm for participation in the civic life of their renewed democracy. A second interpretation emphasized the military achievement of the armed forces during the war. This reading of the FEB assigned new meanings to the concepts of democracy and freedom, and asserted that just as liberation was achieved from European and Brazilian dictatorships, it was also achieved from foreign and domestic communist threats. Under the military dictatorship the FEB also functioned as a symbol of the unification of the armed forces’ three branches. Finally, the third interpretation of the FEB highlights the role of the rank and file, their bravery and sacrifice, and their victimization by the military and state establishments.

The three interpretations co-existed throughout the sixty-six years that have passed from the end of the war to the present, but the balance between them shifted constantly in reaction to changes in the political arena. Each time one of these three dominant interpretations gained dominance, the other two did not disappear. Those who believed in the now-less-favorable interpretation would claim that the memory of the FEB—that is its social remembrance according to their interpretation—is forgot. It is exactly here where the widely accepted terminology of “memory,” “remembrance,” and “forgetfulness” losses its effectiveness and clouds our understanding of what happened.

People remember their experiences through chemical processes in their brain, and their inner world is influenced by mechanisms such as repression and amnesia. While often social “forgetfulness” is described using these metaphors, social memory is governed by forces outside of one’s psyche. The social construction of forgetting happens through active repression by people and institutions and reflects their changing priorities. The FEB was not forgotten, but it was remembered in a manner that one might equate with forgetting.

When asked what is the opposite of forgetting, most people answer: “remembering.” Another answer—that I heard from a fellow officer in the Israeli Army more than fifteen years ago—is “documenting.” This half-joke sheds light on the constructed nature of collective memory, but the other side of the coin is that collective forgetting is socially constructed as well.

The genealogy of the forgetting of the FEB reveals that the battlegrounds of the past are only the pretext for the battlegrounds of the present. It demonstrates how instead of asking why an event was forgotten, it is more useful to inquire when, how, and by



whom its social memory was changed and concealed. These questions shift the focus from the “forgetting society” and put the spotlight on the subjects and institutions who construct the oblivion. We may now better understand Gustavo Barroso’s agony over Brazilians’ lack of collective memory. More than just a complaint on how little the past mattered to his fellow compatriots, Barroso was actually criticizing the active construction of the non-existence of the past to avoid its usage to examine the present. Equipped with this insight on how even a “positive” event such as the FEB was used by different speakers, we can now turn and re-examine more contested events in recent history whose construction as oblivion is sometimes concealed by scholarly explanations about social amnesia and posttraumatic collective repression. These are exciting times to be an historian, an Israeli, and a Brazilianist.

## Appendices

### **Appendix A: Personal Narratives of the FEB (By Date of First Publication)**

1. Cidade, Francisco de Paula, *Nápoles e... Pouco Mais: Ligeiras observações de um expedicionário*, Biblioteca Militar, 1946
2. Furtado, Celso, *De Nápoles a Paris: Contas da Vida Expedicionária*, Livraria Editora Zelio Valverde S.A., 1946
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9. Albriker, Jarbas, *Memórias de um Pracinha*, 1965, 2000
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20. Faria, Walter Bello, *E A Cobra Fumou: Sonetos e crônicas sobre a Campanha da Itália, inéditos*, Saquarema, 1991.
21. Alencar, Joaquim Urias de Carvalho, *Com um Pelotão na FEB*, Não Consta, 1993
22. Ferraz, Braulio, *Com a FEB na 2ª Guerra Mundial*, [1993?]
23. Dequech, José, *Nós Estivemos Lá*, Legião Paranaense do expedicionário, 1994
24. Viotti, Cássio Abranches, *Crônicas de Guerra*, Gráfica O Lutador, 1998
25. Miranda, Antônio Batista de, *Guerra: Memórias...Destimo...*, Evolution, 1998
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27. Moreira, João Batista, *Um Mineiro na Itália: Fatos Marcantes Que Aconteceram Comigo Na Segunda Guerra Mundial*, RMP, 1999
28. Weiss, Walter, *Como a Cobra Fumou!!!*, Editora Gráfica Nossa Senhora Aparecida LTDA, 1999
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30. Picanço, Alexandre Prata, *RoBerTo Contra o Mundo*, 2001
31. Silva, José Alves da, *A Saga de um Catarina na FEB*, Florianópolis, 2001
32. Klas, Alfredo Bertoldo, *A Verdade Sobre Guanella: Um Drama da FEB*, 2002
33. Linhares, Manoel Antônio, *A Cobra Vai Fumar: Memórias de um soldado da Força Expedicionária Brasileira*, Florianópolis, 2004
34. Cruz, Vicente Pedroso da, *Os Caminhos de um Pracinha*, 2008
35. Costa, Nilson, *Vida e Luta de um "Pracinha,"* Campina Grande, [?]
36. Fernandes, Mário, *Xavantes na Itália: Ana...Crônicas de Pracinhas da FEB*, [?]

**Appendix B: Estampas Eucalol**

<b>Theme #</b>	<b>Series #</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Emissions</b>	<b># of cards in one emission</b>
1	1	A vida de Santos Dumont	4	6
2	2	Episódios nacionais	4	6
3	3	Produtos do Brasil	4	6
4	4	Cachoeiras do Brasil	4	6
5	5	Desenvolvimento da navegação	4	6
6	6	Dom Quixote	4	6
7	7	Esportes	4	6
8	8	Compositores célebres	4	6
9	9 – 19	Bandeiras da Europa	5	66
10	20	Cobras venenosas do Brasil	3	6
11	21	Fauna brasileira	3	6
12	22	Aves do Brasil	3	6
13	23 – 24	Modas	3	12
14	25 – 27	Bandeiras estaduais do Brasil	2	18
15	28 – 29	Bandeiras do Brasil de 1500 a 1889	2	12
16	30 – 31	Animais pré-históricos	4	12
17	32 – 34	Os índios do Brasil	3	18
18	35 – 45	Celebridades da tela	1	66
19	46	A conquista do México	3	6
20	47	O descobrimento do caminho marítimo para a Índia	2	6
21	48	Como se faz uma estampa	2	6
22	49 – 53	Bandeiras	3	30
23	54	Granjas	4	6
24	55 – 57	Cães de raça	3	18
25	58 – 63	Celebridades da tela	1	36
26	58 – 63	Artistas de cinema	1	36
27	64 – 71	Jogos olímpicos	1	48
28	72	Brasões do Brasil colonial	2	6
29	73	Brasões do Brasil holandês	2	6
30	74	Brasões do Rio de Janeiro	2	6
31	75 – 77	Brasões estaduais	2	18
32	78 – 125	Uniformes do Brasil	2	288

33	126 – 127	Peixes das profundas oceânicas	2	12
34	128 – 130	Precursos do automobiliismo	2	18
35	131 – 134	Bandeira única	1	24
36	135 – 137	No tempo de nossos bisavós	1	18
37	138 – 143	Histórias infantis	1	72
38	144 – 147	Brasil antigo	1	24
39	148	A vida de Oswaldo Cruz	1	12
40	149 – 160	Fatos decisivos na história do mundo	1	72
41	161 – 163	Progresso do Brasil	1	18
42	164 – 175	História do Brasil “Amarela”	1	72
43	179 – 193	Curiosidades mundiais	2	108
44	194 – 200	Lendas do Brasil	1	84
45	201 – 210	Lendas da antiguidade	1	84
46	211 – 217	Histórias em versos	1	84
47	218 – 243	Incrível porém verdadeiro	1	156
48	244 – 255	História do Brasil “FEB”	1	72
49	256 – 279	Viajando pelo Brasil	1	144
50	280 – 291	História das habitações	1	72
51	292 – 303	As danças através do mundo	1	72
52	304 – 305	A conquista do Pólo Norte	1	12
53	306 – 329	Viagem pit. Através dos continentes	2	144
53	330 – 339	Viagem pit. Através dos continentes	1	84
54	1 – 12	Escotismo	1	84
<b>Total:</b>				<b>2,400</b>

**Source:** Samuel Gorberg, Estampas Eucalol (Rio de Janeiro: S. Gorberg, 2000), ”Tabela Resumo das Estampas Eucalol (Sem Variantes), p. 57-8.

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 Arquivo Público do Paraná (Curitiba)  
 Arquivo Público Mineiro (Belo Horizonte)  
 Associação Nacional dos Veteranos da Força Expedicionária Brasileira (Belo Horizonte)  
 Associação Nacional dos Veteranos da Força Expedicionária Brasileira (Casa da FEB)  
 (Rio de Janeiro)  
 Associação dos ex-combatentes do Brasil (São Paulo)  
 Legião Paranaense do expedicionário (Museu do expedicionário) (Curitiba)  
 Museu Histórico da Faculdade de Medicina da USP  
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 Personal Archive of Oli Antonio Coimbra, Curitiba, Paraná  
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*New York Times*  
*Nossa História*  
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*O Estado de S. Paulo*  
*O Globo*

*O Momento (Rio Grande do Sul)*  
*O Mundo*

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