
Tracking a conflict in the printed pages of Paraná: journalistic discourse and the 1957 Leaseholders' Revolt

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Abstract

This article presents a brief analysis of the journalistic discourse expressed by two newspapers of Paraná, a state of the south region of Brazil, on one of the main agrarian uprisings that took place in the 1950s, the Leaseholders' Revolt of 1957. The imagistic and textual discourses that circulate through the media either construct or corroborate perceptions, concepts and values of an epoch, as they are reflexes and actions by agents inserted in a particular historical context. In the contemporary societies, it is mainly through these operations that the meaning of social transformation is produced. It is pointed that the voices of settlers and leaseholders could not be heard, that is, they did not have a right to the freedom of expressing themselves in the above-mentioned newspapers. They were left aside as players of a secondary role in a plot in which the political quarrels were more suitable to the interests of the press. Such entanglements of interests and ideological positions are intrinsic to the development of the regional media, and inevitably interfere in the structuring of the historical narratives about the conflict mediated by the journalistic discourse.

Keywords: Journalistic discourse, Memory, Agrarian Movement.

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1. Introduction

The press presents itself as a producer of references to the world and to its transformations, characterized mainly by immediate events, yet conscious that its records provide the future with a way to remember the present (which will be read as the past). Newspapers are a type of written memory that retains the exceptional events of a given society. They capture, describe, analyze and record the daily information that they consider worthy of becoming public information. Thus, they produce concepts, based on discourses, while construing and deconstructing identities, notions and images.

The journalistic discourse can be understood as the symbolic power to construct versions of reality, interpreting, privileging and giving visibility to subjects and situations, in the attempt to grant legitimacy to its discourse before the society through its function of a medium.

This article presents a brief analysis of the journalistic discourse manifested by two daily newspapers of Paraná, a state of the South-region of Brazil, on one of the main agrarian uprisings that took place in the country in the 1950s, the Leaseholders' Revolt of 1957. One of the central questions that permeate the analysis is how the press mediates and collaborates for the historical construction of a land-conflict. Through the brief comparison presented here, it is possible to perceive, among other things, the way in which the conflict was portrayed, who gained a voice and who was silenced in the journalistic articles.

The 1957 Leaseholders' Revolt took place in the southwest of Paraná as a result of a land-conflict that had been unfolding for many years among leaseholders, settlers, land companies and the federal and state governments. In October 1957, settlers and leaseholders took their cities and expelled the squatting companies¹ and the "jagunços" hired by these companies², demanding that new municipal authorities should take office. The acts of violence ceased, but the legalization of the lands was only effected a

¹ The land companies that acted in southwest Paraná were called squatters because they illegally sold areas to settlers, especially to those coming from the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

² "Jagunço" is the expression used for the individual with a doubtful character hired in order to maintain the order imposed by the companies. Cf. BARROS, Luitgarde. "Jagunço". In: MOTTA, Márcia (org.). *Dicionário da Terra*. Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2005, p. 267.

few years later. It is worth highlighting that it is not the main objective of this article to go deeper into the theme of the 1957 Leaseholders' Revolt and its further implications³, but, instead, to show the participation of the press in the episode.

The two presented media outlets had followed the conflict from the capital city – a position that has necessarily influenced their interpretation and representation. Only at the peak of the revolt did the newspaper *O Estado do Paraná* send a pair of reporters to cover the events at the site, and this reason redirected the discursive strategies of the journalistic articles, as will be shown further ahead.

2. The Press, Memory and Power

Before presenting the analysis properly speaking, this section brings forward some theoretical assumptions that guide its reflection. The aim here is to point out that the press, memory and power are three essential elements interconnected in the construction of the contemporary historical narrative.

By constituting itself as a document of an epoch, the newspaper is a foundational place of memory. As the press chooses its events, it acts as a selective constructor of memory and as the holder of a power, which manifests itself by sorting through what ought to be remembered, and, automatically, by excluding many other events and characters that remain in the shadow and silence. Therefore, the agents of such selective operation are power holders, and lords of memory and forgetfulness (Barbosa, 2007a).

The discourse of the media imbues social events and facts with a meaning, producing a type of knowledge that signifies and organizes the modes of reading influenced by the perception of the present. In the process of articulating the media discourse, voices and contents become enmeshed, and are at all times in struggle to provide legitimacy in the social field.

³ For more information on the 1957 Leaseholders' Revolt, some suggestions are: MARTINS, Rubens da Silva. *Entre jagunços e posseiros*. Curitiba: Studio GMP, 1986; WACHOWICZ, Ruy Christovam. *Paraná, Sudoeste: ocupação e colonização*. Curitiba: Lítero-Técnica, 1985; VOLTOLINI, Sittilo. *Retorno 2. Pato Branco na Revolta dos Posseiros de 1957*. 2 ed. Pato Branco: Fatex, 2003.

As the means of communication are constituted as a document, we can think about them as one of the contemporary mechanisms that transform absence into presence, and, therefore, as a place for the contemporary memory. On the other hand, as they have a text-status, they become a sort of an epoch-document, ruled by the convention of truthfulness that is necessary to the documents as memory-monuments (Barbosa, 2007a, p. 51).

As newspapers express opinions, formulate concepts and transform accounts into unquestionable truths immortalized by the printed word, they formalize a consensus around these ideas. Thus, deconstructing journalistic discourses and confronting them are ways to de-legitimize a past that has also been construed by these consensus-forms. After all, "...contrary to memory, history seeks a critical representation of the past" (Motta, 1998, p. 76), in which conflict is as important as the consensus.

In order to grasp what is the news of a particular newspaper, and, automatically, to grasp its position in the society, it is necessary to reflect on the meaning of that topic for its group of producers and readers. And, proceeding from this type of analysis, it is possible to identify who gains voice and who is silenced in this media-universe, how and by which media outlet one is related with several social groups, in short, questions that are directly related to development, to freedom of action, to the dependencies and the implications of the media practices in different regions.

To think about how the journalistic discourse has construed itself around particular news is to reflect on its role of representing reality as created by the subjectivity of the historical subjects and as received by other historical subjects. "The journalistic craft is 'context-based'; it is neither a mere reflex, nor an explanation of social structures, and it interferes in actions and in the production of meanings" (Buitoni, 1990, p. 177).

The media circulates discourses that allow several understanding-universes. Retaking the *bakhtinian* idea of a discourse as an arena, Ana Paula Goulart Ribeiro (2005, p.125) describes the media-discourses as privileged spaces through which social clashes take place, and where several voices fight over the hegemony of the representations.

Image- and text-discourses circulating around the media construct and/or corroborate

the perceptions, concepts and values of a particular epoch, as they are reflexes and actions of agents inserted in a particular historical context. In contemporary societies, it is mainly through such operations that the meaning of social transformations is guaranteed. “Nowadays, the means of communication are increasingly the main *locus* in which the social representations are worked out. The media constitutes the main *place of memory and/or history* of the contemporary societies” (Ribeiro, 2005, p. 115).

3. Decisions of an analysis-path

The objective of this article is precisely to point out to characteristics of discursive positioning by the newspapers *Gazeta do Povo* and *O Estado do Paraná*, through the analysis of their journalistic texts on the 1957 Leaseholders’ Revolt. The newspapers *Gazeta do Povo* and *O Estado do Paraná* had distinct editorial positions that represented distinct political groups. The proposal here is to follow the movement of ideas that circulated at the time on the topic, the set of ideals and the political practice of the representatives of both media outlets, and of who they represented; and to point out how their objectives either come closer or apart according to the conveniences of the moment (Capelato, 1994). Grasping the discourse-operations by which journalism grants meaning to the ongoing facts is essential in order to see how the means of communication produce an idea of history, and how, in the same process, they construe and establish themselves as a social place. Such social place, especially in the case of the two studied newspapers, maintains itself as a solid history and insertion in the region where they are located, i.e. such social place is the fruit of a historical construction and of several symbolic struggles for legitimacy-spaces.

The analyses of the journalistic discourse of the two newspapers are based on the theoretical assumptions of Eliseo Verón (2005). Verón argues that each printed medium contains several structures of expression that grant it an identity and embody a reading-contract that the medium offers to the reader, which is essentially fulfilled in the plan of the modalities of discourse, and not of the contents. Thus, a *linkage* establishes itself between the medium and its reader. Through such contract, the enunciator of discourses can, for instance, propose a place for the addressee of the discourse: a participant of the

message, a passive spectator, a better or less informed reader, or a more or less educated reader, or a reader more or less capable of perceiving possible allusions.

The analysis included the editions of September, October and November 1957 of both newspapers. The two first months represent the most intense and violent period of the conflict, culminating in the Leaseholders' Revolt on October 10, 11 and 12, 1957. And the month of November was chosen as a way of seeing how the follow-up of the press on the uprising was after its peak. This article analyzes the representations that both newspapers made of the settlers and leaseholders involved in the conflict. It seeks to show, through this analysis, who gained a voice and who was silenced in the articles, and how the main characters were described and presented to the recipient public.

4. Presenting the newspapers

The *Gazeta do Povo* was founded on January 20, 1919, and emerged as a media outlet that represented the industrial and commercial class of Paraná. "The print shop is an association of gentlemen, traders and industrialists, free men in spirit and feeling, and it seemed to them that it was not about to be only another publicity outlet", in the words of the first editorial of the newspaper (Carnasciali, 2000. p. 59).

In 1957, the *Gazeta do Povo* reached its 38th year of uninterrupted publishing activities. This factor strengthened its image along with the elite-sectors that it represented. After all, the tradition of being one of the most long-standing newspapers of Paraná favored its credibility and was used as a constant justification in its editorials. Most of its articles were dedicated to themes related to the capital of the state, Curitiba.

In that year, the *Gazeta do Povo* was considered as a situationist press, i.e. as an outlet favorable to the state government; and it couldn't be different, as one of its shareholders was the governor of the state of Paraná himself, Moysés Lupion, whereas its director was also chief of the police (similar to a State Secretary of Public Security), known as Pinheiro Junior. Such situation reflected in the way how the periodical construed its discourse on the agrarian problem of the southwestern state, on its characters and on the issue of the right to the land. The 1950s in Paraná was marked by fierce land-disputes.

O Estado do Paraná, on its turn, was known as a polemic and ironic oppositionist newspaper with professedly political objectives. In 1951, the governor of the state of Paraná Bento Munhoz da Rocha Neto did not count with the support of the press. Thus, supporters of the governor encouraged the creation of a press outlet that could back the state government, supporting the creation of the newspaper on July 17, 1951. It was the only periodical of Paraná to send a pair of reporters to cover the agrarian uprising at the site, a factor that had a direct influence in the way how the newspaper presented the leaseholders and settlers involved in the episode.

One of the differences that the newspaper sought to keep in relation to its competitors was to offer a regional coverage of the events, encompassing the several regions of the state. This took place through correspondents or observers, who were sent to several cities of Paraná, and who then sent back their news through the post or by telegram. One entire page was daily dedicated to the news of the countryside.

Such concern, reflected in the editorial line and in the circulation of the new newspaper, kept a relation with the political proposal of Bento Munhoz. The current government was making the efforts to integrate the nascent cities of Paraná that emerged in the route of an increasing coffee-production, as a large part of the handling and shipping of the new source of wealth took place through the Port of Santos (Oliveira Filha, 2005, *on line*).

In 1957, *O Estado do Paraná* was voicing a virulent discourse against the government of the state, and especially against Lupion. Countering the will of the direction, which saw the initiative as too dangerous, Percival Charquetti and Osvaldo Jansen went to the southwestern state to cover the land conflicts in the region. The news of correspondents awakened the interest of the two journalists in personally checking on the events. Thus, they flew “in an airplane especially chartered by *O Estado do Paraná*” (*O Estado Do Paraná*, 15 out. 1957, p. 7), to the southwest and wrote a series of articles that composed the special report entitled “The bloody events that troubled the southwest” [“Os sangrentos acontecimentos que conturbaram o sudoeste”].

The following lines present some considerations by the two newspapers on the 1957

Leaseholders' Revolt, especially regarding the forms of representation of the settlers and leaseholders. The analyses purposefully seek to consider the discourse as a body, including the journalistic articles, the editorial pieces, the cover news and, in some cases, even the subtitles of the pictures, assuming that the journalistic discourse manifests itself through the manifold text-structures, and that that taking them as a whole guarantees a better examination of their meaning.

5. The words of a conflict in the pages of *Gazeta do Povo*

A mass of political maneuver, easily adjustable to the personal and electoral interests of a few. Settlers and leaseholders were seen as a peaceful group interested in its work, yet a group that was easily influenced by unscrupulous politicians, precisely due to their lack of critical consciousness. After all, what else could be expected from people without formal education or culture, who worked the land and lived in a “wilderness” far from the state capital, where the intellectual elite of the society was located? Such was the spirit of many of the articles presented by *Gazeta do Povo*.

When one thinks about the disagreements that emerged and were aggravated between the leaseholders and the territorial companies in the municipalities of the western state, a little dose of reason is enough to see that these companies should be the first and foremost parties interested in a smooth solution reached in the best possible way and without difficulties. The leaseholders, on their turn, are a laborious, peaceful and honest population, which for no reason in this world would be willing to take up arms without being insuflated by someone else (*Gazeta do Povo*, 18 set. 1957, p. 3).

The *Gazeta do Povo* insisted in saying that the settlers acted as instruments of political intrigues and that “the movement in truth had no deeper roots in the consciousness of the peasant population”. The fact that they were in the cities along with their “weapons of hunt and personal defense” was not because they believed that they were defending their ideas; rather, they had been “dragged by the counseling, lies and mystifications of

the individuals who in the previous days and weeks had roamed the region, sowing the seeds of discord and disquiet” (Gazeta do Povo, 18 Oct. 1957, p. 3).

In none of the analyzed articles have the settlers and leaseholders been the key characters with a right to speak and to present the reasons of their fight. The *Gazeta do Povo* followed up on the revolt from the distance, i.e. from the state capital, and for this precise reason it was not able to hear the group, which found itself at the center of the problem. Thus, its discourse on the settlers and leaseholders was superficial and bore the stamp of the perspective of those who did not defend the possession of the lands for this group (Pegoraro, 2008).

The *Gazeta do Povo* interpreted the silence of the settlers as a sign of tranquility, of the calm after the storm, and not as the fear of manifesting themselves and suffering retaliations. The newspaper also affirmed that they only felt themselves at ease to communicate with those who speak their same language and who did not interpret them differently from what they were. “People are taking care of their lives; the settler minds about earning his bread and is not interested in other things; the killing does not thrill him, nor does the paralysis of his service” (Gazeta do Povo, 3 Oct. 1957, p.3).

The newspaper ferociously criticized those who saw the seriousness of the situation in the southwest only as a chance for electoral and personal interests. “It is urged that the problem may step beyond the political passions” (Gazeta do Povo, 17 Sep. 1957, p. 3). In an editorial article, the newspaper affirmed that people “come here in the capital, far away from the scene of the facts, to take up ridiculous airs of defenders of a popular cause, while in truth they are but taking advantage of this moment, as they have taken in the past and will go on taking advantage of all who offer themselves to the benefit of their electoral pretensions” (Gazeta do Povo, 18 Sep. 1957, p.3). The PTB and the bodies of the federal government linked to this party were the main targets of the insinuations of the *Gazeta do Povo*.

The land problem in the southwest was so serious, and the inefficiency of the governor of the state was so explicit, that the political opposition got to the point of requesting a federal intervention in Paraná. The request was made by the “old, tired and frustrated UDN senator” Othon Mader (Gazeta do Povo, 25 Sep. 1957, p. 3). He was the target of

an indignant editorial by the *Gazeta do Povo*. For the newspaper, this was the culminating point of a campaign undertaken by “individuals undeniably interested in producing tumult and scandal”. It was a previously established plan and the events in the southwest conveniently served the purpose of political agitation.

The general attention of the nation was called to the land of Paraná, and it was sought to present us in its eyes as if we were incapable of solving our problems by ourselves. (...) One cannot hide or ignore an evident purpose of creating an environment of political agitation and unrest in the state. Certain members of the opposition – naturally, of the worst type of opposition – caused, as always, confusion, combating the government through the mistakes that they make in the continuous attempt to topple it (Gazeta do Povo, 28 Sep. 1957, p. 3).

The fears of the *Gazeta do Povo* were that the conflict could reach gigantic proportions and become “a total disaster for our land” (Gazeta do Povo, 26 Sep. 1957, p. 3), staining the image of a modern state. After all, “we are not a no-man’s land here, where fates can be decided by half a dozen exalted individuals who are too suspect to express their opinions on issues of such seriousness” (Gazeta do Povo, 28 Sep. 1957, p. 3).

But the opposition’s objective of preparing a frame of mind against the authorities had a contrary effect, as mentioned the article entitled “Blinded by hate” [“Cegos pelo ódio”]. Once again, the stirring up of hate among employees of the land companies and leaseholders had been instigated by politicians connected to the UDN and the PTB.

These are poor devils unable to extinguish the defects of our political customs, holding on to primitive political methods. They do not know, or pretend not to know, that this is not only about a government repudiating a revolutionary process of domination, but rather, that the entire people of our nation is sufficiently mature so as not to accept rulers who do not have the representative credentials (Gazeta do Povo, 29 Sep. 1957, cover).

One of the most shocking events leading to the 1957 Leaseholders’ Revolt was the Ambush of Capanema, which culminated in the death of several settlers and workers of

the squatter companies. The newspaper affirmed that in the municipality of Capanema, where the “Center of Agitation of the Leaseholders” had established itself, the bloody episode was caused by an armed “band”. Through the adjectives, it is not difficult to deduce the tone attributed to the group.

It is expected that conversations will take further steps towards calming down the spirits in the city of Capanema, where one finds the key individuals of the groups of leaseholders that have agitated that zone, including the episode on the 14th (...). [In Santo Antonio], even though the reflexes of the latest events are still felt, and in spite of the unrest that reigns in Capanema, there is order and a normal state of affairs (Gazeta do Povo, 18 Sep. 1957, p.8).

For the *Gazeta do Povo*, the Ambush of Capanema was a significant example of what could take place “when second intentions against the orientation and the demands of the public good inspire a disaggregating action by individuals engaged in disturbing the social order” (Gazeta do Povo, 17 Sep. 1957, p. 3). Such ‘social order’, it must be said, had been already absent for a long time.

For the newspaper, the episode was manipulated by second intentions of the political opposition to the state government and harmed the “higher interests of the population of Paraná”. It is interesting to notice how the crises of settlers and leaseholders were never approached by the newspaper. Neither murders, rapes, battering acts nor looting, in short, no violation of the rights of these people seemed to be enough to bring about a more drastic attitude by the group. Waiting for a decision of the Judiciary on the matter, as the newspaper suggested in one editorial (Gazeta do Povo, 17 Sep. 1957, p. 3), is something that could take many years, or even worse, could be favorable to the land companies. Which would be, then, the higher interests of the population of Paraná?

On October 13 (right after the armed uprising of the settlers and leaseholders in the cities of Pato Branco and Francisco Beltrão), an editorial by the *Gazeta do Povo* heavily criticized those who attempted to destroy the honor of Lupion, obstructing in Paraná a pacific atmosphere of work. Basically, the newspaper divided them into two groups: politicians with low interests and bandits with hidden interests. It compared them from

politicians to agitators, “using the tribune or the handgun” to advance electoral interests or financial demands; it affirmed that they belonged to some political parties and were organized in bands outside the law and the society.

The fact is that the moment in which we live – doubtlessly, a historical moment in the political evolution of the state – will be an example of what people can do against a land and against those who live in it; these are some combined men who are identified and marked by a sick political passion, by a cursed personal hate. These men are doing everything, as they have done and, it seems, will keep doing, in order to convince Brazil that Paraná is going through a civil war, that there is nobody here who can either live or produce in peace, and that only the outside helping hand will be able to save us (Gazeta do Povo, 12 Oct. 1957, p. 3).

The newspaper insisted that these political interests no longer aimed at defending the settlers, but only to tear the state government apart through a federal intervention. For the newspaper, the uprising was a failed conspiracy, as it primarily had the goal of toppling the state government – which, at the end, did not take place. Soon after the uprising, it never analyzed if the possible intentions of the settlers and leaseholders had succeeded, in other words, if they had conquered the right to remain in the lands on which they were, and if this would not be beneficial for Paraná.

The approach of the *Gazeta do Povo* on the 1957 Leaseholders’ Revolt was much more concise than that of the other periodicals that had also brought up the theme. One of the reasons for justifying this is that it did not send reporters to the southwest. Its focus privileged the political aspect of the situation, and it practically did not go after alternative sources for the interviews. The fact that the Chief of Police was one of its directors was obviously another aspect that influenced the journalistic coverage made by the *Gazeta do Povo*.

6. The words of a conflict in the pages of *O Estado do Paraná*

O Estado do Paraná followed a different path. The southwestern state was described as

a no-man's land ruled by a "blunderbuss-regime", where lands were disputed by fire and sword. According to the newspaper, such was the environment where the settlers and leaseholders of the southwest lived. The newspaper described them as frightened people who preferred to flee and abandon their families than to fight. "Hundreds of leaseholders left their wives and children to flee the persecution, taking refuge in the riparian woods of the Capanema River, living from hunt and wild fruit, so that the long arm of the settling companies – which is longer than the arm of the justice of men – will not reach them..." (O Estado do Paraná, 26 Sep. 1957, p. 4). A much different portrait from the one observed at the peak of the Leaseholders' Revolt in October, when the same "frightened" people raised their arms and expelled the land companies.

The suffering of the "oppressed" settlers and leaseholders also appeared in the descriptions of cruelties: "... it is usual to see the dreadful scene of dirty corpses along the roads, with their faces writhed in an atrocious sight of agony, with mutilated limbs due to the acts of violence, and perforations in several points by precise shots that did not miss their targets" (O Estado do Paraná, 26 Sep. 1957, p. 4).

The first news on a possible armed uprising was published in late September 1957 in *O Estado do Paraná*. The newspaper explains that, with the goal of exerting reprisals, more than two thousand settlers have gathered to coordinate an armed movement, but that this movement had not been successful. "The thought of the settlers, after seeing themselves oppressed, was to make justice with their own hands, as the judiciary authority had no guarantees to secure the respect to the rights of these farm laborers" (O Estado do Paraná, 26 Sep. 1957, p. 9).

In spite of the fact that the periodical spoke of reprisal, in the sense of revenge for all that the settlers and leaseholders had been experiencing, it does not seem that this was their main objective; instead, it seemed to be the search for a solution for injustices of all kinds, and not simply the will to seek revenge on account of atrocities. The periodical affirmed that they were "blinded by fear and despair" and that for this reason their attitudes were not the product of thought, but mere reflexes of "humble and rustic" settlers (O Estado do Paraná, 27 Sep. 1957, p. 4).

When settlers and leaseholders were not described as frightened individuals 'fleeing to

the woods', they appeared as organized into "bands" [were they bandits?] seeking revenge by spilling blood. Expressions such as "almost absolute primitiveness", living from "hunt and fishing", and the necessity of "cultural evolution" were common in *O Estado do Paraná*, and provided a meaning to how the settlers and leaseholders of the region were seen: as culturally backward individuals, with an inferior education yet willing to work honestly.

The first report in which *O Estado do Paraná* granted a voice to the main victims of the conflict in the southwest was issued on October 2. The newspaper itself admitted that only when it was possible to have a first-hand experience of the situation, by hearing the settlers, leaseholders and fugitives amidst the tragedy in which they lived, it became possible to have a more concrete notion of their drama.

Contrary to the entire first stage of the coverage, which was based on news by trustworthy sources, later confirmed, today's narrative contains impressions that have been collected in the live contact with the participants of those events (...). Only a report by someone who has been at the site can portray the panorama of the region with the distinct and precise colors (*O Estado do Paraná*, 2 Oct. 1957, p. 4).

The article resulted in cover news about two refugees in the territory of Misiones, in Argentina. These were two armed individuals, probably father and son, emphasizing that even the children were involved in the violence. The fugitives "have not yet eased their spirits from the tragedy of which they have been characters". Even in a foreign territory, they feared new ambushes, and, for this reason, they did not venture without their arms in roads such as *Carretera Ciento y Uno*, as shown in the photograph. The subtitles say: "The man of today, a participant of bloody events, and the other, a boy: the man of tomorrow, who has already been victim of the tragedy of the conquest of the southwestern countryside, imitating the elder and also holding his gun" (*O Estado do Paraná*, 2 Oct. 1957, subtitles of the cover image).

The reporter sent by *O Estado do Paraná* described his impressions as he spoke to the inhabitants, which led him to conclude that their reasons were deeper than the reasonings presented at the capital. He affirms that he covered the area of the conflict, both on the Brazilian and on the Argentine side, where the refugees – the main focus of

his first article – had fled to. It is from this point on that the articles become more “human”, in other words, it is from the direct experience of the journalist with the settlers, leaseholders and fugitives that the journalistic accounts presented detailed descriptions of the dramas of this people. It was the reporter himself who admitted this.

Our contact with the individuals who took part in these events, which are still in debate, has also left a profound impression. Along the frontier with Argentina, in the territory of this neighbor country, from Casablanca to Tres Hermanos, one finds Brazilian families. Not all of these families are complete, as at the time of the escape, there were settlers who did not have time to take their wives and children along with them. Whatever the case, what one observes is that these families are living in a heart-breaking situation of paucity. Brazilians are shocked to see men who yesterday had their estates and created animals in their little worlds, and who now are living in a foreign land without any resources, in true misery, and surviving solely thanks to the charity of the inhabitants of the small Argentine villages (O Estado do Paraná, 2 Oct. 1957, p. 16).

Pedro Santín – the man who claimed to be one of the chiefs of the leaseholders – is the only character who appears with his name in this journalistic narrative, even though no declaration by him or by any other interviewed person has been used. He was a fugitive of the Argentine justice “imported” to act as a leader in the fight against the jagunços. He appears in more than one article, and also along with his wife and children. As it was reported, in Argentina he was known as Pedro Capeleti (O Estado do Paraná, 4 Oct. 1957, p. 16). The newspaper boasts of having been the only periodical to interview him.

In the other cases, the reporter produced his articles based on accounts and impressions, but, contrary to the other articles written in the capital along with individuals who had some public position, such as the Chief of Police, representatives or senators, the transcripts of the interviewees were not presented *ipsis litteris*.

Did these people not know how to express themselves “properly”? Did they not have a special ability that granted authority to them in their field of activities? Or were they not important in their individuality so as not to appear as characters? Whether intentional or not, these are a few questionings on such attitude. In the journalistic construction, it is

more adequate to speak with the “authorized” representative than to seek several voices without an acknowledged legitimacy on the topic. What grants them legitimacy, in these cases, is generally the position that they occupy in the society.

A family of fugitives became the main issue in one of the articles of the series entitled “The bloody events that troubled the southwest”. In the subtitles of the cover photo that follows with the article, it is revealed that the household head was spanked by the jagunços. Some children, “aided by chance”, were able to flee. “This man, with his wife and baby, crossed the Santo Antônio River by swimming in the hush of the night, as the waters were high, due to the rains. The girls hid in the brushwood, and one of them (...) was taken by the jagunços, who later set her free after brutalizing her” (*O Estado do Paraná*, 3 Oct. 1957, subtitles of the cover photo).

An “old settler” who fled to Casablanca, Argentina, also described his situation to the reporter and became a photo-highlight in the article of October 5. He was expelled and beaten with a handgun in his estate, fleeing by canoe across the Iguaçu River.

These are some of the characters who became represented through the newspaper. The interest of *O Estado do Paraná* on the “human” side of the conflict lasted little. Soon after the October events, settlers, leaseholders and fugitives disappeared from the pages of the newspapers. There were only some sparse news, such as the fear of the revolted of reprisals by the police – which did not stop sending men to the region – and the escape of a few more settlers and leaseholders from the southwest, and then nothing else was mentioned about them. There were no reports that gave a voice to those who, such as the newspaper itself reported, “raised arms” in order to defend their rights.

7. Final considerations

Rustic, simple, riotous, sufferers, workers, silent, courageous and even bandits. These were a few of the adjectives used to describe the settlers and leaseholders involved in the conflict of 1957. In each fragment of discourse, there was a legacy of the newspaper for the memory of a revolt that left deep marks in the southwest region of Paraná, in the south of Brazil, and a clue of the discursive positioning of the periodical according to its

interests at that moment. The voice of the main involved in the problem, that is, of the settlers and leaseholders, could not be heard. Most of the time, they were pictured as the secondary characters of a plot in which the political quarrels were more suitable to the interest of the press (Pegoraro, 2008).

The *Gazeta do Povo* did not dedicate much space in its pages to the 1957 Leaseholders' Revolt, in spite of the fact that the uprising did awaken the interest of the larger Brazilian press through publications such as *O Cruzeiro*, *Manchete* and *Última Hora*. The striking characteristic of the texts was their adherence to the official discourses. The main focus was also aimed at the political aspect of the conflict. The newspaper showed the revolt as a politically planned event in order to produce a polemic and to disrupt the state government, and not as the result of a situation that had aggravated itself for many years. Nor were their texts concerned with a contextualization of the land-issue in the southwest – not least as this would considerably aggravate the situation of the state governor, who was also a shareholder of the periodical.

It can be noticed that the coverage of *O Estado do Paraná* underwent a progressive increase in the comprehension of the seriousness of the conflict. The newspaper was more directly involved with the situation of the settlers and leaseholders after sending its reporters to the location. Yet, this was still a temporary change of focus, as the narrative and the interpretation of the political aspect of the theme remained central. It does not mean that this is a negative feature, but the criticism rests on the fact that the newspaper did not grant a direct voice to the main involved, namely the settlers and leaseholders, while it “granted too much voice” to those who – in the repeated words of its competitor *Gazeta do Povo* – were only using the uprising as a stage for their political maneuvers.

It is known that in a society there are many memories, and that some of them are under dispute. As much as there are antagonistic discourses, there are antagonistic memories about the past. The memories recorded by the journalistic speeches on the 1957 Revolt can be an example of this. Journalism plays a crucial role in the production of a common idea of historical truthfulness, not only because it points out to those persons who, among all the facts of reality, may become memorable in the future (that is, those

who might have a historical relevance), but also because journalism itself is one of the main allegedly “objective” records of its time. Understanding the discourse-operations through which journalism attributes a meaning to the current facts is essential in order to account for the way how the means of communication produce an idea of history, and how, in the same process, these facts are construed and legitimated as social places.

While reflecting on the relations between Communication and History, Marialva Barbosa (2007b, p. 19) reminds: “to consider the plurality of interpretations means to visualize the human diversity and to perceive that the distinctions among the individuals and social groups are constructed by the representations that are produced on the social world”. The dissonant discourses between the journalism of Paraná, the settlers and leaseholders, and the state as analyzed in this article point out to some of the intricate webs that involve the communication-processes mediated by the press and its relations with the power. Such entanglements of interests and ideological positions are intrinsic to the development of the regional media and inevitably interfere in the structuring of the historical narratives and of the memorable practices mediated by the journalistic discourse.

8. References

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