

The Sailors' Revolution

A Revolução dos Marinheiros

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RESUMO

Este artigo discute o movimento dos marinheiros de 1910, procurando caracterizá-lo como um momento da Revolução Republicana no Brasil. Trata-se de compreender os significados e sentidos que se apresentam no documento de reivindicações apresentado pelos Marinheiros ao governo Hermes da Fonseca, reconstruindo a sua historicidade no contexto do início da República. De fato, é neste momento que termos como “cidadãos” e “republicanos” estão adquirindo um sentido contemporâneo, em suas implicações sociais e políticas, assim como a idéia de direitos. Dois aspectos caracterizam este movimento revolucionário: a) a constituição do grupo que se autodenomina *cidadãos portadores de direitos* e b) a própria idéia do *direito de ter direitos* que fundamenta o movimento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Política. Representações. Militares. Marinheiros. Revolução. República.

ABSTRACT

Herewith it is exposed the 1910 sailors movement as part of the Republican Revolution in Brazil. It should be understood the significance and sense presented in their claiming document presented to Fonseca's Government rebuilding its historicity by the beginning of the Republic. In fact, during this period words like citizens and republicans got the contemporary meaning with their social and political rights. Two aspects characterize the revolutionary movement: a) the making of the self-named group citizens with rights and b) the right of having rights idea that fundamentals the movement.

KEY-WORDS: Politics. Representations. Army. Sailor. Revolution. Republic.

Was the 1910 sailor movement a revolt? The people of the time thought so, especially because, amidst the happenings, they would have been convinced the movement was not *political*. This understanding largely resulted from the emphasis that the Hermes da Fonseca administration, the civilist opposition, and the press gave to the uprising as if it were a protest against the corporal punishments which took place in the Navy. In other words, what seemed to be the main claim by the sailors – the end of corporal punishments – would prove the *non-political* character of the movement. The understanding of the term *revolt* was synonymous of insubordination or rebellion. This is how, for instance, the monarchist authors named the movement which

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ultimately did away with the imperial regime: Insubordination, Revolt, or Military Coup. On the other hand, the supporters of the republic named themselves revolutionaries. The Navy movements against presidents Deodoro da Fonseca and Floriano Peixoto also went down in history as *revolts*. However, Custódio de Melo, for instance, leader of both movements, referred to them as revolutions. Certainly, both the supporters of the republic in 1889 and the opposition and Navy officers, in 1891 and 1893, while they planned the *revolution*, thought of it as a transformation of political regime, State model, or government change. It is understandable, in this sense, that the contemporaries and military authors perceived the 1910 movement as mutiny, insubordination, or revolt. There was nothing that could characterize the movement as a *revolution*. The sailors themselves signed their communications to the government as *revolted* or *revoltists*, always expressing their loyalty to the President and to the Republic.

On the other hand, it is predominant among the Marxist authors who dealt with the revolt the concept of revolution as a process of *transformation of a means of production or change in society's manners*. In this case, the paradigmatic models are the French and Russian revolutions. For them, the 1910 movement would also represent a non-political uprising, which would have been defeated because the seamen did not have a *class conscience*. The latter should have led the sailors to join forces with the proletariat in their fight against the bourgeoisie and the capitalist exploration. If these concepts are taken as a reference, there would be no doubt: The 1910 movements were indeed a revolt, *non-political* and *against lashings*, a version that Marxist, non-Marxist, military, and civil authors contributed to build and establish.

In order to answer the question at hand, it is necessary to revisit an event, an apparently minor happening which might, nevertheless, contribute to a better understanding of the meaning of the 1910 movement. In the morning of 23rd November, as he was on his way to parleying with the mutineers, Deputy José Carlos de Carvalho intercepted a boat coming from battleship *São Paulo* which carried a manifest addressed at President Hermes da Fonseca. The document read:

Rio de Janeiro, 22nd November 1910. Dear Hon. Mr. President of the Brazilian Republic, It is our duty to inform you as Chief of the Brazilian Nation: We, sailors, Brazilian citizens and supporters of the republic, not able to withstand anymore the slavery in the Brazilian Navy, the lack of shelter the fatherland provides us; and has so far not reached us; tear the black veil which had us covered in the eyes of the patriotic and misled people. Being all warships under our control, having on board as prisoners all Officers, who have been the ones to keep the Brazilian Navy from being grand, since for the twenty years of the Republic they have failed at treating us as citizens in uniform in defense of the Nation, we send you this honored

message so that you make us Brazilian Sailors fulfill the holly rights which the laws of the Republic grant us, putting an end to the turmoil and conceding us other benefits which shall further dignify the Brazilian Navy, as well as: keeping the incompetent and unworthy officers from serving the Brazilian Nation. Reforming the Imoral and Shameful Code which commands us, as to do away with the lash, the ferule, and other punishments alike; raising the wages according to the last plans by the honorable Senator José Carlos de Carvalho, educating the seamen who lack the competence to wear our proud uniform, ordering the immediate effect of the daily work schedule, which follow this letter. Your Excellency has a 12-hour deadline to send us a satisfactory reply, under the penalty of seeing the Nation annihilated. (On board of the battleship São Paulo, on 22nd November 1910. Note: The journey of the messenger from and to the ship must not be interrupted. Sailors.).²

This document is a true challenge to historians. Although it is mentioned by most authors dealing with the revolt, it has not been fully analyzed by any of them (UM OFICIAL DA ARMADA, 1911; PAULO, 1943; CUNHA, 1953; MOREL, 1958; MAESTRI, 1982; SILVA, 1982; MARTINS, 1988; NASCIMENTO, 1992). Captain Pereira da Cunha was the first to publish it in 1949 as proof of the *ignorance* of the sailors (CUNHA, 1953, p. 78). Edmar Morel, however, considers the manifest the result of great preparation, a sign that the revolt had been planned (MOREL, 1958, p.85). Marcos Antonio da Silva understands from the document that the sailors defined themselves “*as a group capable of taking action towards their own interests, dialoguing with the authorities in a bargaining level which the force under their control allowed*” (SILVA, 1982, p.45). Hélio Leôncio Martins, by his turn, mentions the manifest with two goals: To prove that the revolt had been planned by the group of specialized sailors – the document was written by telegraph operator Ricardo de Freitas – and that the demands were vague (MARTINS, 1988, p. 75). Álvaro Pereira do Nascimento, analysing 1910 as part of a process of uprisings which had already been taking place against corporal punishments, feels that “*the discourse of these sailors reveal a level of awareness not previously reached by their comrades*” (NASCIMENTO, 1992, p.109). It is utterly important to understand why this document has not been analyzed by the revolt commentators. Perhaps history itself, or the unfolding of facts, can contribute to clarifying this aspect. What did José Carlos de Carvalho do with the document?

It is known that the congressman received it from the sailors' hands. In his report in Congress, however, he did not even mention this fact, let alone the contents of the document. Quite the contrary, Carvalho described it as a revolt of the insane. It is possible to suppose, then, that after the government got to know the manifest, they

² *Manifesto dos Marinheiros*. 22/11/1910. Serviço de Documentação da Marinha, 97/5134, Arquivo 159.

decided not to reveal it to the Congress and the public. After José Carlos de Carvalho's report and after eliminating the suspicion that the opposition had plotted a coup, the discussion among the congressmen focused on *how to demobilize* the sailors: If through amnesty or through a military intervention. While the Executive planned the military intervention, Congress apparently only negotiated.

After an *honourable* means was found – the submission of the sailors – the *appeal by the sailors* for amnesty was quickly approved in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies and ratified by the President on the 25th. The next day, Saturday, the ships were handed back by the rebels. On Monday, President Marshal Hermes da Fonseca put into effect the act 8,400, which allowed the exclusion of sailors from the Navy ranks with no legal trial, and Rui Barbosa proposed in the Senate the extinction of corporal punishments in the Navy and the Army.

In this process, the legislative was more despised than the executive since it was widely accepted that the amnesty had been the result of the congressmen's pusillanimity, to which President Hermes da Fonseca ended up submitting. It was this sequence of events that came to be described as *the November revolt*. There was, thus, the *hiding of the manifest* written by the mutineers, which resulted in the exclusion of their demands from the political debates in 1910. Historiography and the memory of the revolt, later following the same *sequence of the facts*, ended up considering the manifest as a secondary, marginal document. This cover up can and must, however, be seen as a political act thought by the government and, therefore, as a *historical and political event*, a part of the happenings of the 1910 revolt. Perhaps by analyzing the terms in the manifest it will be possible to raise a few hypothesis which might clear up this event. In first place, the document as a *communication*, an *honorable message*, an *ultimatum*. The author of the message is a collective that defines itself as *sailors, Brazilian citizens and supporters of the republic*. This phrase is highly significative since it expresses a condition and a political belief which had to be made clear. The writers considered, then, that the citizen status of the sailors was not acknowledged, which becomes evident throughout the manifest. On the other hand, the enunciation of the republican belief was not trivial as could be at first imagined. Indeed, the monarchy restoring movement represented to many a powerful political force, a threat to the stability of the new regime. Even if it were more of just an image, it was strong enough to mobilize the guardians of the Republic (JANOTTI, 1986). In 1910, few would argue against the idea that the restorers were responsible for, or were involved in, the largest movements that had shaken the new regime: The Federalist Revolution,

the Armada Revolt against President Floriano Peixoto, the Canudos movement, and even the Vaccine Revolt.

The Armada Revolt against Floriano had been defeated seventeen years before, because part of the population, the Army, and even foreign governments – specially after the publishing of Saldanha da Gama's manifest – were convinced it was a *restoring movement*. In other words, enunciating the republican belief in the document that would express *class* demands had the goal of making clear the political adhesion to the regime by the rebels, which would not be immediately evident. Secondly, the statement “*being all warships under our control, having on board as prisoners all Officers*” gives the dimension of the plan devised by the mutineers: It would be a rebellion of all troops of the Armada. In 1911, Minister Marques de Leão, explaining in his report why a military reaction had not been possible, observed: “*It were [...] needed about 48 hours so that we could have fewer than a dozen torpedoes available, not all previously set [...] this small number could not be raised enough to simply munition the destroyer division, for motives about which sad but powerful reasons oblige us to silence.*” (BRASIL, 1911, p. 9).

In this apparently enigmatic passage, the Minister seems to admit that *all* the hierarchy structure of the Navy had been dissolved during the revolt: Except for the field officers, who were willing to take on an armed reaction, the remaining ranks of the Armada had become suspicious to the government. Besides finding the indifference of sergeants and engineers regarding the fate of the officers, the research of Hélio Leôncio Martins revealed that the telegraph operators and stokers were widely in favor of the rebels and, also, that the President of the Brazilian Lloyd offered the stokers of the Merchant Navy to the government to man the destroyers. (MARTINS, 1988, p. 61-62) It was the whole Navy, as a State organism, that simply vanished. The State lost control over an essential part of the mechanism that would guarantee the monopoly of the homeland violence and the main element of the foreign defense in a troubled moment of the nation's political life. From 10:30 PM of 22nd November 1910, there was only the *rebel fleet* and the sailors possessed what then were the most powerful and destructive war machines ever made by mankind. One must also highlight another aspect regarding this passage. The information that the officers were imprisoned on board indicates a sense of *non violence* in the revolt. At first, it might seem odd to talk about non-violence while the cannons of the rebel battleships threatened Rio de Janeiro. However, as Engels and Hannah Arendt have showed, violence is instrumental, that is, it needs *implements* (ENGELS, 1981, p. 151-160; ARENDT, 1994, p. 13) and rarely appears in its pure state since “*as all means, it always depends on the orientation and*

the justification by the end it seeks" (ARENDT, 1994, p. 41). It is propped and restricted by power – *human ability to act in concert* or, in other words, "*Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert*" (apud HABERMAS, 1984, p. 110-118).

This is, maybe, the most spectacular fact of the revolt – *the manifestation of a power* – which appear in the words and deeds of the sailors, a *new* event, unprecedented in the Navy's history. Unforeseen and unexpected. A fact prior to the possession of the ships, based on the *experience* of the making. Based on the daily association, it became the decision to undertake a movement for a common cause, the formation of organization committees – a republic where men meet, recognize each other as *free and equal* and build themselves and their political space. A fact that, possibly, derives from the abolitionist experience and the seamen associations. A heritage of the traditional repugnance to the military service and the resistance to the recruiting and draft, of the practice of *habeas-corpus*, new right created by the Republic. It is this power that, *enabled by the vigor* (ARENDT, 1994, p. 37) *of the battleships*, enunciates the rupture of governing power, exerted in its derivative form by the Navy officer. The exclusion which started to be performed after the revolt shows that the disarmament of the ships was not enough – *exactly because they were just tools* – to neutralize the sailors' power. This explains why in the days following the amnesty the situation was considered unbearable by the officers: They found themselves stripped of power. From this came the trauma and sorrow of Navy officers that echo through time: 1910 appears as a symbol of the novel, since the sailors showed that obedience is nothing but "*the external manifestation of support and consent*" (ARENDT, 1994, p. 39) and that the officers should rebuild on other basis the principle of authority, which is, certainly, more laborious and difficult than rebuilding a destroyed fleet. The *December movement* had a connection with November's in that it served to *justify the violence* which was committed against the pardoned: The massacre of the prisoners at Ilha das Cobras (Snake Island) and aboard the *Satélite*, the firing squad executions (SILVA; CÂNDIDO, 1968, p. 14), which the government sought to cover up, the investigation council, and the endless trial of the indicted. These events seem to make up an attempt to annihilate the last physical traces, the last living repositories of the memory of the *sailors' power* and, consequently, of the *strength* which was released by it through the revolt. The officers' version about 1910 has, in these two events, its pivot: It is a narrative of the resentment caused by the *impotency* to which the higher ranks were reduced and of the justification of violence, the means by which the revolt was destroyed. It is also, as it has been said, a clash of memories,

since the strength released by the movement appears as *power* whenever this story is told. Forgetting what had taken place was the first reaction of the officers, who went back to the subject from time to time to defend *the pride of the offended class*. Two ideas interweave in the Navy officers' reports: the *inevitability of the revolt* and *the inability of João Cândido* to lead the movement. As it was inevitable and lacked a capable leader, the movement could be, as it was, characterized as a primitive, instinctive, barbarian revolt. This representation – based on the scientific racism that is joined by a conception of a linear evolution of history – seeks to disguise the rupture that ensued with the revolt.

To the ones that praised the revolt, or, better yet, the ones that praised João Cândido, it is due to his traits – poor and black – that the fact becomes even more extraordinary. It is a sort of reverse admiration of the one who considers himself superior and takes on a condescending posture, a kind of inside out racism of the men who are baffled in face of what was, up until then, unthinkable³. This happens because, even during the revolt, the name “João Cândido” became a symbol of rupture. Little does it matter that he was not actually its leader or only named so. The symbol is impersonal, it is intangible because it is just a *sign of the power and of the strength* released by the revolt. João Cândido himself, in the account he gave to Hélio Silva in 1968, lets this fact show:

I had the power in organizing the conspiracy and had the power determined by the committees to take over the leadership of the revolution with all powers. I had all powers at hand [...]. However, the organization of the revolt, we... I had all powers, as I had in the revolt all powers of Brazil. I stopped Brazil. For six days, I stopped Brazil, I commanded the... they were the ships Minas Gerais and São Paulo. I was the one to give orders. So much so... we had a conspiracy committee on Rui Barbosa neighborhood, right in the face of the police. There, we rented some shelter there, we rented a whole floor [...]. We conspired there. We had another committee on São Jorge street, that was where I lived. There was another committee on João da Bola street, up the hills. [...] It was the officers of the time who doubted the sailors were capable of undertaking any movement against... against... against the officers [...]. I had my life exposed that I had always been against violence. I took over the command of the revolution in such conditions to spare lives, spare... (CÂNDIDO; SILVA, 1968, p.7).

The conflict between *I* and *we* in the account is quite clear. The committees had assigned or delegated the power to João Cândido, however, he took over it as if the power was *something in itself* and not a relation. In his narrative, we can find the same

³ It is, for instance, the case of Edmar Morel, João Bosco, and Aldir Blanc, among others.

leadership traits that, for example, Edmar Morel imputed him: João Cândido relates to the revolt and see himself as the man, the black who *raped history*. On the other hand, this oscillation in his account between *I* and *we* seems to be the result of the conflict of someone who knows that all that has been attributed to him derives from an option of his partners that chose him as a leader or as a representative. It seems, therefore, that the controversy about the revolt is centered on João Cândido and tends, on the one hand, to repeat indefinitely and, on the other, shadows what he himself represents: *the power and the strength of the revolt*, generated by a collective player – the sailors.

If it is possible to suppose an experience of those men, prior to their joining the Navy, it makes sense also to imagine that their military experience had allowed them the *knowledge* of new strategies, learned along with the republican discourse. The taking over of the ships and the use of them as a tool and representation of power can be seen as the result of the experience of a determined historical moment, since for several times officers and sailors used those war machines in trying to promote political changes: In Brazil in 1891 and 1893, in Chile in 1892, in Russia in 1905, to mention only the most famous ones. In this sense, the analogy with the experiences of Custódio de Melo seem appropriate. During the Armada revolt against Deodoro, simply the mobilization of the ships seem to have caused the resignation of the Marshal and the change in government. It is know, nevertheless, that the first government of the Republic was undermined by the opposition in Congress, by the disagreements among the Ministries, by the scandals, that is, the governing power ceased to exist, its legitimacy had been lost and the simple mobilization of troops and ships revealed its vulnerability. The desintegration of the government and its fall was dubbed, in the version of the military, *national redemption* promoted by the Army and the Armada. Two years later, in 1893, the fleet was defeated because the government *seemed vulnerable*, harassed by all the political problems that troubled the time. The circumstances, however, were quite different of those in 1891. The government had built a foundation for its power bred in a *revolution* seen as legit. The same strategy seems to have been employed in 1910. The *committees* apparently chose a moment they deemed favorable to launch the revolt: They awaited the arrival of the ships; the government seemed fragile, be it because the outcome of the elections had showed the country's oligarchies were dismembered, or at least *seemed so*; the intervention of men of the Armada and the Army in Manaus and the duality of assemblies in the capital Rio de Janeiro disturbed the nation's political scenario. Apparently, the new government was inaugurated in a fragile situation. This way, the deflagration of the revolted movement seemed to have resulted from the *strategic* choice of a movement in which

the *possibility of victory* was portrayed as real. In other words, it is not possible to explain the revolt as an unbridled burst of “insane sailors”, as some of its interpreters claim. On the contrary, later research showed it had been prepared for, at least, a year.

It does not seem, however, the sailors incorporated only the military experience of their superiors into their own experience. The manifest seems to be, also regarding that, very enlightening. The sailors demanded the State treated them as *citizens in uniform in defense of the Nation*, providing them protection, granting them the holly rights promised by the Republic, doing away with the chaos, and acknowledging their ample citizenship, that is, the right to protest: The exclusion of the incompetent officers, the reform of the immoral and shameful code doing away with the lash, the ferule, and other punishments alike, the raise in wages, the education of their poorer partners, and the reform of the work schedule.

None of these demands founded, in themselves, a *new right*. What they sought were *reforms* which *would invigorate the Armada*, of which the sailors thought themselves part. These *reforms*, ultimately, would augment the power of the State, making more *efficient* its tool to exercise violence and foreign defense. Nothing would, thus, be farther from the proletary demands than this *reformist* movement in which there is no trace of revolution, be it in the sense of changing the regime or of transforming the society. It would be, then, a *redeeming intervention*: The document also shows the seamen, or at least the committees responsible for the terms in the manifest, shared with the officers the same view of the Armada as the mirror of the republican nation.

In a report handed to the Minister of the Navy in May 1911⁴ (BRASIL, 1912), Rear Admiral Raymundo de Mello Furtado de Mendonça – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armada – stated that one of the reasons of the sailors’ revolt had been the “officers’ indiscipline.” This explanation allows us to better understand the meaning and the sense of the “political experience of officers and soldiers” in the *Armada Nacional*: “*The political movements started in the last two years of the Monarchy involved the armed classes; and the Navy then let itself be led to the first most violent act of indiscipline. [...] It was at that time that the burst happened. The impatient ones parted with the traditions of discipline, laying them on the lawn of Largo do Rocio, where officers and sailors conversed about the common cause. The links of discipline were broken [...]*” (BRASIL, 1912, p. 5-7). The Chairman of the Joint

⁴ This document is not mentioned in any work dealing with the 1910 revolt since it only recently came to light through captain Lauro Nogueira Furtado de Mendonça, who kindly handed me a copy of it, besides his paper called “As revoltas de 1910 na visão do Chefe do Estado Maior da Armada,” presented at the V Ibero-American Naval and Maritime History Symposium, in 1998 in Rio de Janeiro.

Chiefs of Staff goes on to report that, after the revolt in the Armada, the hatred and distrust generated in the conflict remained for years, to the loss of the service. On the other hand, the lack of troops would have caused a breach which allowed “mischievous” boys and illiterates to join the ranks of sailors: “*Thrown among the troops made up by, almost entirely, men coming from a defective organization and witnessing the indiscipline deeds committed by those who were supposed to maintain the zeal of discipline, these children specialized in the practices of vice and crime, excelling in showing the value of their teachers [...]. The soldiers’ indiscipline was the corollary of the officers’. This is the truth that must be told [...].*” (BRASIL, 1912, p. 8-9). This document allows us to verify the complexity of the 1910 revolt. According to the report, it can be seen that towards the end of the Empire, some officers and soldiers conspired for the installment of the Republic and that, during the Armada revolts, conspired to overthrow the governments. The internal conflicts, originated from those movements, supposedly split the corporation into two groups for years. From this situation came the permanent disorganization of the hierarchy and discipline chains, as well as the abandonment of the ships and new troops, handed to the older sailors or to the experts graduated in England. Indiscipline and impunity supposedly spread throughout the corporation and, amidst this chaotic scenario, the sailors insurrected. What sets Mendonça’s analysis apart from the other authors is the relation he established between the rupture of hierarchy links, the disorganization of the service, and the sailors’ insurgency. It was, as far as it seems, in the breach created by the rupture in hierarchy and discipline links that the soldiers ended up incorporating into their experience certain strategies and values that were later part of the basis of the 1910 revolt. In this sense, Mendonça’s report allows for a better understanding of some of the demands made, such as the restoration of the order, the exclusion of incompetent officers, and the training of soldiers that lacked the competence to wear the proud uniform.

The manifest of the mutineers reveals the “class” division: The authors of the document acknowledged the existence of a group of soldiers that needed to be educated and trained in order to better perform their military duties. In this sense, it does not seem possible to characterize the uprising as a *popular movement against the lash*. However, the breakdown in military hierarchy took place in parallel with a contrary movement of *reinforcing it*. This movement represented an attempt of “solving” the problem of the troops’ composition, which resulted from the implementation of free labor: At the same time the State had no way to compete in the labor market for economic and cultural reasons – the traditional aversion to military service –, outcasts

and former slaves began joining the Armada. This process started in the mid-70's of the nineteenth century, when part of the dominant classes got ready to replace slave labor. The new recruiting law was followed by the regulation of Article 80, which reinforced the *captains' power of punishing*.

This movement went on in the Republic with the creation of the new discipline code, which eventually did away with any correspondence between offense and sentence, turning the captains into judges and enforcers of punishments in the whole military system. In other words, over the thirty six years that separated the recruiting law from the 1910 revolt, the changes in the discipline system in the Armada resulted into the *increase of the captains' discretion*. If the soldiers incorporated into their experience – and everything indicates they did – strategies, tactics and values from the officers, this process took place inside a system where the discretion of those in higher ranks emphasized the relations of personal *dependence*. This wound up loosening the hierarchy and discipline links, increasingly atomizing the relations between commanders and subordinates. These atomizations reflected the political universe through the formation of the clientele.

After the first recade of the Republic, the process of “national regeneration” also implied the *modernization* of the Armed Forces. The “restoration” of the Navy happened amidst this regenerating movement. The naval programs of 1904 and 1906 did not follow the technological imperatives regarding a *defensive* strategy, but rather an *offensive* by the republican State, seeking a realignment in the “concert of civilized nations”, or in other words, defining an hegemonic position in South America, in the new imperialist context.

This renewal of the fleet implied in a reformulation of the policies on soldier origins in a scant labor market: For the first twelve years following the proclamation of the Republic, the staff was very low in numbers, not only in the military schools but also in the sailor ranks. Since the need for specialists in the new fleet – whether from the 1904 or 1906 programs – was great, the State began developing mechanisms which would provide relatively cheap labor to the Navy. It is from this period the regulation of the military draft, which stirred so much reaction.

The State also took up the task of forming new personnel through the opening of professionalizing schools, whose project dated back from 1905. On the one hand, it sought to stimulate people to join the Armada, guaranteeing formation and better wages for the future specialists. On the other, they were supposed to stay for *the longest time possible* in the ranks, up to twenty or twenty-five years, according to the 1908

rules. However, these men entered a structure defined by criteria of *personal dependence*, kept by means of a system of torments.

This way, the fulfilling of the sailors' demands – rebuilding the hierarchy structures, reforming the discipline codes with the extinction of corporal punishment and abuse, widespread education, leisure allowed for by the regulation of workload, and removal of incompetent officers – would represent the first step in the creation of a *professional career for the seamen*.

The reports by Furtado de Mendonça and Minister Marques de Leão showed how much the naval administration understood the *meaning of the sailors' movement*. Based on the revolt, both proposed reforms in the Armada. In the second part of his report, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented a proposal of a *widespread reform of the Navy*, which would start from the Ministry itself and would reach the rearrangement of the inner layout of the ships, aiming at making them more inhabitable to officers and soldiers without losing their combat power. Military command, officer and soldier schools, health assistance, everything should be changed, everything should be reformulated according to a homeland and foreign defense policy, developed in agreement with the federative republican regime and the economic interests of the country (BRASIL, 1912, p. 24-25). Minister Marques de Leão, by his turn, seemed to agree with the terms of the sailors' manifest, establishing a rather peculiar "dialogue" with them. The mutineers had "*torn the black veil*" which covered the eyes of the people and the Minister concluded that the "*nation had been fooled by a mirage*" (*Mensagem Presidencial*, BRASIL, 1910) by supposing the formation of a respectable *fleet* would suffice to a good naval organization.

The facts had undone this illusion, exposing the need for a "regeneration" of the Armada. In his way of seeing things, it was key to conduct a complete reform of the organizational structure – the Ministry, the schools, and the career of officers and soldiers, which should be based on merit and not on time on duty (BRASIL, 1911, p. 22-75). Marques de Leão also wrote to Clóvis Beviláqua asking him to elaborate drafts of new codes, and discipline and penal trials that not only did away with "*the corporal sentences where slander combined with torture*" and the "*discretion of the commanders over their commanded*", but also established "*the republican guarantees we have solemnly adopted*" (LEÃO, 1911, p. 5-31). To Minister Marques de Leão, these reforms would represent only the starting point of the "regeneration" of the Armada. Its implementation would depend on a change in mentality and customs: "*Convinced that our troubles originate on unacceptable prejudices, artificially maintaining habits which are antagonistic to the status of our time, I propose measures that, effecting a*

transformation in customs, demand mainly the good will and effort of all for the regeneration of the Navy” (BRASIL, 1911, p. 74).

Minister Leão sent to Congress a proposal of reform of the Navy which, though approved, was revoked by Alexandrino de Alencar who, in 1913, again took over the head of the Navy. It can be seen, therefore, that the 1910 revolt can be understood as a movement aiming at implementing modern labor relations and hierarchy in the Armada, turning the seamanship art into a *profession*, that is, *a career open to talent*. It must also be highlighted that, besides its visibly military aspects, be it regarding certain demands, its ways or its discourse, the 1910 revolt also has other traits that cannot be ignored.

While they came forth as *citizens*, the sailors talked about a place that was being built through the freedom of movement, of thinking and of creating associations, i.e., through an *exercise of building their own freedom and citizenship*, in other words, the sailors were presented as *individuals of rights*. This announcement shows, then, a different concept of citizenship and freedom from the one founded on the right to property, but rather on *political equality*, that is, it is since *they saw themselves as citizens* that they granted themselves the *right of protesting*.

The demands were made with guns in hand, through a revolt, because *“the slavery in the Navy was unbearable.”* The term *slavery* – often seen as an element that characterizes the *heritage of the Empire* – can be understood as the *denial* of the condition of equality and freedom the sailors considered a *right*. In this movement where they present themselves *as free and equal* to denounce and transform a situation of *inequality*, the sailors demand their citizenship be acknowledged *by the others*, in this case, the whole society. In other words, the first step towards the victory of the movement would be imposing this acknowledgement by the State, the main interlocutor of the mutineers. That is why the revolt started being *destroyed* when *the manifest was hidden*; actually, its exhibition to Congress and the the public opinion could have caused *another set of events*. At the same time, it must be highlighted that the State kept a coherent position throughout the revolt: It hid the manifest, diverted the debate to the amnesty issue, promoted the exlusions and massacres, hiding them from public opinion and from history.

Why, it is exactly the power and strength of the revolt and the novelty it enunciates – the fulfillment of the Republic – that are hidden by the analysts who tried to *justify the violence and repression brought about by the State*, and by those who saw the revolt under the pre-political category of *compassion for the underdog*.

It is relevant, however, to recall Hanna Arendt's terms when she claims that "only where this pathos of novelty is present and where novelty is connected with the idea of freedom are we entailed to speak of revolution" (ARENDR, 1990, p. 28). The revolution would consolidate itself, according to the writer, with the creation of a Constitution. What can be said of a movement that expressed *the wish for a consolidation of the Constitution*? We can suppose, therefore, that the 1910 movement is a moment in the long and incomplete Brazilian republican revolution.

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