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## **A Study of Communism in Paraná (1945-1964): Militancy Between Reason and Feelings. PhD Project \***

The Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCB), founded in 1922 from the impact and repercussions of the Russian revolutionary process, was one of the main agglutinating poles of the Brazilian political Left during the twentieth century, even during the periods of illegality. The years between 1945 and 1964 (the period selected for my PhD research) were a time when the PCB had considerable influence in Brazilian politics – a fact that attracted the attention of the political police investigators looking for evidence of subverting the political and social order. In the State of Paraná, this activity of the political police left behind a big range of captured documents, newspapers, photographs, pamphlets about various activities of communist militants. These materials confiscated by the Department of Political and Social Order of Paraná (DOPS-PR) are currently kept in the historical and public archives of Paraná, and constitute important sources for social and political history.<sup>1</sup>

Based upon these archival materials of the Department of Political and Social Order of the State of Paraná, my research has the objective of building a social history of politics. In other words, my main purpose is to draw *a history from below* of communist militancy, reflecting on the following issues: What did motivate ordinary working men and women to defend the ideal of communism with such passion and dedication? Despite the period of illegality and the repression against the PCB, why did the party did not lack loyal and faithful militants at that time?

In an attempt to provide answers to these questions, my research concentrates on the militants who, for several motivations, acted collectively in favor of a common ideology: communism. Therefore my main focus is not the history of the PCB as an institution, but as an affective unit. Although it is methodologically more convenient to consider the institution as a representative of a whole group, I intend to question that assumption, considering that no political party is a homogeneous unit.

This research is delimited on the State of Paraná despite the fact that this State was not where the PCB had the most supporters in Brazil. It serves as an empirical basis to observe the various strategies of a small group of militants. This delimitation allows to analyze various aspects of communist militancy in the State of Paraná: the growth and popularity of the party during the period of the PCB's legality between 1945 and 1947 (Chapter one of the thesis), the involvement of militants with the local population (Chapter two), the election campaign and activities of the Communist candidates (Chapter three), the influence of Communists on the labor movement and on the countryside (Chapter four), the ban of the party in May 1947 by the Government, the illegal militancy and the impact of the military coup in March 1964 (Chapter five). In this way the history of communist militancy in Paraná

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<sup>1</sup> Collection DOPS, Departamento de Arquivo Público (DEAP), Curitiba/Paraná.

will be presented through the reflection of the role of political passions considering militancy. This is an aspect rarely considered in discussions about political activities in history, predominantly treated in political history under the rational aspect of political ideologies or the conscious manipulation by the speech of leaders and ideologists of the Communist Party.

Due to the belief in the omnipotence of reason as the sole producer of meaning and the difficulty in overcoming the positivist opposition between what is objective and subjective in science, the role of emotions in politics has been ignored for a long time, as if political activity was only managed by people fully aware of their ideas and interests. For this purpose, authors like Pierre Ansart and Eugène Enriquez<sup>2</sup> have made valuable contributions about the theoretical approach of political passions to the subject.

According to Enriquez individuals and social groups 'operate' starting from beliefs and needs for their social actions, in order to discard doubts about it. Therefore, language has the property of seducing and bewitching. Through the formation of an ideology, feelings are governed by the "magical power" of words, images and symbols, providing the "presence of an absence". As a consequence these elements are capable of turning dreams into realities, being fundamental for the process of understanding the motivations of the militants of political parties.

According to Ansart, the communist parties have produced touching messages through symbols and collective practices.<sup>3</sup> From the viewpoint of the communist militants, the party is an affective unit, because in comparison to others political parties, their party is "the chosen one". Being connected to a party means to feel its orders as beneficial, to approve its goals as desirable choices and to judge its leaders as the best rulers. Thus, the party as an affective unit provides comfort and confidence to its members in an uncertain and insecure world, and it operates like "an oasis in the desert" protecting them from a lonely and desolate life.

Based on the reflections about passions in politics, my research aims to consider the motivations of communist militants of the past, trying to overcome a perspective in which motivations are not just based upon the ratio of class interests in Marxist discourse, but also in different feelings like courage, hate, love, happiness, sorrow, resentment and hope.

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<sup>2</sup> Eugène Enriquez: *Da horda ao Estado. Psicanálise do vínculo social*, Rio de Janeiro, Jorge Zahar, 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Ansart: *La gestion des passions politique*, Lausanne, L'Age d'Homme, 1983.