

côté notamment des usages esthétiques, symboliques ou thaumaturges) n'en sont que quelques exemples.

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MCCANN, Frank D. — *Soldiers of the Pátria: A History of the Brazilian Army, 1889–1937*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. Pp. xxvi, 593.

Frank McCann's long-awaited book — it has been 22 years since the 1982 publication of *A Nação Armada* — fills an important gap in the literature on the Brazilian army. Its principal distinction is that it affords a broad view of the army during the first five decades of the Brazilian republic, while the lion's share of available literature has been devoted to shorter periods or more limited subjects. This feature of McCann's book allows him to trace long-term continuities and transformations that would otherwise have been less noticeable.

The book is more than a mere political history of the army and is not limited to high-ranking officers. The author has included information on junior officers and common soldiers, although further research on these groups is still necessary. The book also contains detailed descriptions of the army's principal military campaigns during the period, particularly those of Canudos (1897) and the Contestado (1912), in which millenarian popular movements were repressed by force of arms.

Chronologically, the book moves from the founding of the Republic by means of a military coup in 1889 to the establishment of the Estado Novo dictatorship in 1937, under the leadership of Getúlio Vargas, with support from the military. This period saw the simultaneous consolidation of a unified, authoritarian nation-state and the army's national unification, albeit at the cost of much internal conflict and many purges. McCann successfully criticizes Alfred Stepan's extension of the concept of the "moderating power" held by the army during the 1960s to earlier decades. Another of the book's strong points is the author's refusal to reduce the history of the 1920s to a cycle of *tenentista* rebellions, according to the teleological perspective traditionally adopted by academic historiography and military tradition since the Revolution of 1930. However, I fear that McCann may have gone to the opposite extreme, particularly in limiting his analysis of the Prestes Column (covered in a single page), despite stating that "the roster of combatants on both sides includes many of the major actors in Brazilian military and civilian politics of the next decades" (p. 275).

The book owes a great deal to pioneer works on the military and Brazilian political history of the period. This debt is appropriately acknowledged by the author in his emphasis, for example, on the work of Edmundo Campos Coelho and José Murilo de Carvalho published in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Those authors pointed out how important it was to understand the organizational aspects of the military institution, rather than to regard it as a mere instrument of the oligarchy or the armed faction of the "middle class".

McCann has drawn upon a wide variety of sources, a fact that undoubtedly

enriches his work. He consulted an impressive array of published books, articles, and periodicals, in addition to archival research. He made ample use of the CPDOC's *Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro* [Brazilian Historical-Biographical Dictionary]. Indeed, one of the book's strong points is precisely that it is not a macro-history of the army and that it devotes attention to the biographies and actions of individuals. The sources also include the official correspondence of the U.S. military attaché to Brazil. Despite the value of such a source, however, it might be something of an exaggeration to consider these reports as "mostly accurate" (p. 238), given the high degree of racism and ethnocentrism that they manifest. In fact, one should be mindful of reproducing contemporary images of the "regrettable" state of soldiers prior to the introduction of compulsory military service. Since most of the troops were made up of blacks and *mestiços* (people of mixed race), these images were certainly influenced by racial prejudices then common not only in Brazilian social theory but also worldwide. In Brazil, the pseudo-scientific idea of the population's "whitening" as a "solution" to national progress remained in force until the 1930s, when it yielded to the ideas of Gilberto Freyre, under the direct influence of the anthropologist Franz Boas.

Inevitably, a book as encompassing as this one will contain internal lacunae and irregularities. In some cases, the author has failed to incorporate a more recent scholarship, particularly books and dissertations produced in Brazil during the 1990s. It is no longer justifiable, for instance, to speak of a "historiographical gap surrounding 1889" (p. 2) nor to base a discussion of military higher-education institutions fundamentally on Coronel Jehovah Motta's old book. The brief reference to Cândido Rondon's role in the Commission of Strategic Telegraph Lines from Cuiabá to Acre (pp. 85–86) and in the Service for the Protection of Indians — about which the author says only, without further explanation, that it "ended sadly" (p. 87) — reveals ignorance of certain important documents. And, while it may be true that Portuguese is a difficult language, there are various spelling inaccuracies of Portuguese words such as, for example, *casacas*, not *casacos* (p. 3), *Catarinense*, not *Catarense* (p. 127), and president Delfim Ribeiro, not Ribeira (p. 192).

Among the book's less convincing points are those in which McCann attempts to link — without effectively demonstrating it — the military regime of 1964–1985 to the period ending with the Estado Novo, as if 1964 had been the "logical outcome" (p. 110) of this process. It is reasonable to imagine that the professional experience of the generals of 1964, during the period leading up to the 1937 establishment of the Estado Novo, should have later influenced their world view or future political actions. But there were 27 years between those two dates, including a number of national and international changes; during this time, a whole new generation of officers moved through the ranks. Indeed, we still lack a comprehensive book covering the period from the Second World War to 1964.

Nonetheless, these are minor criticisms of a book that accomplishes its main task and will certainly remain a landmark in studies on the Brazilian Army.

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