

PRESENTATION

History and Historians in Times of Pandemic

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In the last two years, the pandemic generated by COVID-19, caused by the new corona virus (SARS-COV-2), has been at the center of academic discussions in different areas of knowledge. It should be noted that the concern with discussions involving the pandemic first reached areas such as Health, Biological Sciences, Psychology and Engineering. These were areas that carried out, and still carry out, a series of immediate actions in the search for the manufacture of equipment that would assist in the treatments, prevention and production of medicines and vaccines that make it possible to contain the disease. As well as mental health policies for professionals on the front lines, as well as for the general population that since mid-March 2020 has its daily life marked by social isolation as the main policy to contain contamination.

The pandemic also brought implications to other areas of knowledge, such as the Humanities and Social Sciences, which have also produced a series of reflections on the impacts of the pandemic on health, education, work and daily life. As Silva points out “[...] these areas are of fundamental importance to analyze the processes and contradictions that caused the pandemic” as well as having problematized the “[...] effects of this on society” (SILVA, 2020, p. 02 -03, our translation).

Thus, starting from the Human and Social contribution to the discussions about the impacts of the pandemic on society, the proposal for the elaboration of this dossier aimed to group investigations that problematized traditional themes of studies in History, such as: health, diseases, pandemics and their implications in institutions and in everyday life, health policies and contemporary socio-political and educational contexts.

The studies throughout this dossier are concentrated on concerns with the present time, that is, as the current moment, they bring to the debate issues related to their respective social contexts, which, nowadays, are still marked by social isolation, public policies for prevention and containment. The global pandemic ended up generating concern and the need to discuss,

re-discuss and revisit traditional themes of history. The role of researchers in the humanities is linked to their current context, their experience.

The first article, *Research, panic and pandemic: the internet as the exclusive foundation of the current state of the art*, by Gabriel Marques Fernandes, highlights, at first, the difficulties that researchers in History have been facing due to the pandemic context. Mainly because as a result of the necessary policies of social isolation, the archives and libraries were close. The author highlights that considering that research activities could not stop, he makes an important contribution on the possible paths for the continuity of research through digital platforms based on the themes: overproduction, digitization and search engines (highlighting Google Scholar), and concludes that: yes, it is possible to research in pandemic times, however, “new” spaces, “new” problems.

The article by Vítor Lins Oliveira, *High school history teachers in times of coronavirus pandemic*, problematizes the situation experienced by high school history teachers in the state of Paraíba, Brazil, in the second year of the coronavirus pandemic (2021), highlighting the demands for remote and/or hybrid teaching arising from it. At first, his study focuses on presenting the problems, in the teaching of history, arising from the pandemic and the legislative measures taken to circumvent them. It then discusses the struggle for survival in 2021, with the demands of returning to classroom classes in the private network, despite the increase in the number of cases and deaths resulting from COVID-19. In his final remarks, the author shares an experience of active methodology and reflects on the impacts and reactions of the working class.

Pablo de Oliveira Lopes in his text *Scientific journalism and pandemics in the Brazilian context: AIDS and Covid-19*, conducts an interesting study about the journalistic productions of the AIDS pandemics, widely reflected in the US and Brazilian context of the 1980s and 1990s; and Covid-19 over the past two years. His study observes the similarities and particularities between the journalistic coverage of these two epidemics and how both are discussed by the press, which, as he highlights, uses professionals, academics from different areas, to produce materials (reports) and inform the population about these two epidemics.

The fourth study in this dossier, *Covid-19: the pandemic as an inscription of a social trauma?*, by Mariana Silveira Stinieski, contextualizes and reflects on the social impacts in Brazil, due to the pandemic promoted by Covid-19 and if these have become a social trauma. The researcher noted that authorities, experts and the population diverged in relation to health

care, protective measures and treatment of those affected by the disease. In addition to highlighting, through a historical analysis, the repetition of behaviors in the face of past epidemics and pandemics, such as yellow fever and the Spanish flu. Her study, from a psychoanalytic perspective, identified what could be behind these attitudes. Finally, in her final remarks, she argues that it is not possible to draw conclusions about the possible social trauma, but stresses that it is important to observe how society has behaved, considering the cultural moment that values individualism, narcissistic satisfaction and fantasies of the subject that less and less stimulate collective living.

Regarding the last article in this dossier, *Mental health of nursing professionals during the Coronavirus pandemic: an integrative review*, authored by Paula Ritter Fagundes & Graciela de Brum Palmeiras, aims to analyze published scientific productions that discuss the mental health of professionals who work in fighting COVID-19, especially nurses. The studies analyzed by the researchers indicate the workload of health professionals who work on the front lines and the prevalence of some mental disorders such as anxiety, depression and insomnia. In their final considerations, they point out that the mental health care of health professionals is extremely important and necessary, especially in the field of Nursing.

In addition to the studies published in the dossier, this issue also has four free articles. The first, *A research experience with digitized sources from the newspaper library of the National Center for Folklore and Popular Culture – (CNFCP)*, by Filipe Arnaldo Cezarinho, reflected on the methodological aspects of a research experience with digitized newspapers in the newspaper library of the National Folklore Center and Popular Culture – CNFCP, which resulted in the book *In the rhythm of fire: tales and memories of the War of Swords in Bahia*. In dialogue with a basic bibliography on the History of the Present Time, the author presents us with the difficulties and possibilities in researching digital sources in History. It was concluded in his article that it is essential that historians act with theoretical-methodological rigor when using this documentation that is publicly available, thus avoiding purely utilitarian uses of historical sources.

The second free article, *The heritage with crossed arms: the collective memory of a scarecrow who by becoming a roadside attraction became Napoleon of Tamandaré Plaza*, by Marlon Borges Pestana & Celso Pires Braga, is configured as a brief contribution on the story of the statue of Napoleon Bonaparte that stands in Tamandaré Plaza. The work, authored by the Italian Matteo Toniatti, represents, according to the authors, one of the most complex works of

art by this artist, not only for its complexity, but for its historical trajectory and current position in the Rio Grande do Sul scene. His study extended to the understanding of the symbolic universe of sculpture, its sculptor and the bourgeois who commissioned the piece and uses the concept of collective memory as its theoretical basis, to understand how the trajectory of a wealthy family gets rid of possession of a unique work, the result of the political period of the time in which the families and patriarchs who commissioned them lived.

Lauren Cavichioli Quissini's article, *Antecedents of divorce law: the content published in the pages of Manchete magazine in 1975*, aims to analyze how Manchete magazine (1952-2000) presented the debates that preceded the divorce law (1977) in Brazil. Considering the popularity and intensity of the magazine's circulation, the author uses the Content Analysis methodology and investigates 12 issues covering the period from January 4, 1975 (edition 1185) to May 24, 1975 (edition 1205). The results indicate that the contents conveyed in the reports were directly related (through anti-divorce and pro-divorce political debates) and indirectly (through the questions raised by the world about women's rights).

In *Blacksmith's House, Macaw's Wooden: repression within the army and the narratives of dictatorship*, by Bruno Almeida Silva, conducts an instigating investigation into the discourse elaborated by the tortured, persecuted and purged soldiers from the Brazilian Army during the military dictatorship (1964- 1985). Using a statement collected by the National Truth Commission (CNV) in 2013, the study seeks to understand that the narrative of an ex-military man meets questions about the existence or not of a two-decade dictatorship in the Brazil and its consequences.

Last but not least, this issue also features the interview *History, historians and pandemic in the contemporary world* with José D'Assunção Barros, historian and professor at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ). The interview conducted by Filipe Cezarinho, Natália Vial de Oliveira & Robeilton Gomes, through the Google Meet platform, sought to highlight a little of the academic trajectory, the experience of living the social isolation imposed by the pandemic and the activities as a researcher and teacher of Barros. The interviewers also explore a little of the interviewee's experience regarding their insertion in the virtual world using tools from the world wide web, both for participation in academic dialogues and for research in digital collections.

The pandemic and its consequences at the national and international level ended up generating a concern on the part of historians, sociologists, political scientists, journalists and

other researchers to produce investigations that put traditional themes of history into reflection. Throughout this dossier and other sections, researchers have endeavored to highlight and analyze this sad period of Brazilian and international history from different perspectives, whether from education, research, journalistic and scientific dissemination, its impacts on society, economy and society policy. Likewise, part of these reflections, in addition to discussing the pandemic as an object of study, has highlighted new forms of research, especially based on the use of digital sources and platforms. It is noteworthy that scientific productions, whether Human and Social, have been reinventing themselves through new technologies to carry out their respective studies (PEREIRA; VAZ, 2021).

As Lena (2020, p. 15) discusses, epidemics and pandemics correspond to biological and social phenomena that accompany human experience throughout its history, these should be observed as phenomena that have consequences in different spheres of society, whether in politics, economic and/or cultural. Based on this conception, and on the articles in this dossier, it is observed that such phenomena are likely to become objects of study in the humanities.

At the time of writing this presentation, more than four million subjects have lost their lives as a result of the pandemic, in Brazil alone, this number exceeds more than half a million. We believe that many investigations are still to come. There are countless open dossiers between 2020-2021, books, master and doctoral research that have been dedicated to discussing and problematizing the pandemic and its effects. Writing, analyzing, discussing and problematizing this historic moment is of paramount importance, the pandemic is not over yet, we continue to fight for vaccines and efficient public policies, fighting a denial that has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths in our country, and in the world. As proposed by Marques, Silveira & Pimenta (2020, p. 242, our translation), “[...] in the present time, the pandemic continues, and it will be up to History to tell the scenes of the next acts...”

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