

Nursing throughout war times: political propaganda and professional valorization (1942-1945)

A enfermagem em tempos de guerra: propaganda política e valorização profissional (1942-1945)

Enfermería en tiempos de guerra: la propaganda política y la apreciación profesional (1942-1945)

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to discuss the symbolic effects of the publication on written press of institutional rites related to the courses promoted by the Brazilian Federal District's Schools of Nursing during the Second World War. **Method:** exploratory and documentary study, whose sources were treated by historical method. **Results:** one noticed, in the news reports analyzed, that the Brazilian *Estado Novo* has used nurses images to divulge within the society the woman's acting altruistic model in service to the country, through the systematic diffusion by the press of her honorable acting during the war, what assured the amplification of the visibility and acknowledgment of the Nursing profession in that context. **Conclusion:** the diffusion by press of emergency nurses graduations magnified their apparition in public spaces, occasion on which the institutional rite was strategically used to transmit to the society the urgency of the new profession, in order to support the political causes in vigor in the country.

Descriptors: Nursing; Nursing History; Education; Disasters; Red Cross.

RESUMO

Objetivo: discutir os efeitos simbólicos da veiculação na imprensa escrita de ritos institucionais relacionados aos cursos de esforço de guerra, promovidos pelas Escolas de Enfermagem do Distrito Federal brasileiro durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial. **Método:** estudo exploratório e documental, cujas fontes foram tratadas pelo método histórico. **Resultados:** nas reportagens jornalísticas analisadas, evidenciou-se que o Estado Novo brasileiro utilizou a imagem de enfermeiras para divulgar socialmente o modelo altruístico de atuação da mulher no serviço à pátria, por meio da sistemática difusão pela imprensa de sua honrosa atuação na guerra, o que garantiu a ampliação da visibilidade e reconhecimento da profissão de Enfermagem naquele contexto. **Conclusão:** a divulgação pela imprensa de formaturas de enfermeiras socorristas consagrou sua aparição em espaços públicos, ocasião em que o rito institucional foi estrategicamente utilizado para transmitir à sociedade a emergência da nova profissão, com o intuito de apoiar as causas políticas vigentes no país.

Descritores: Enfermagem; História da Enfermagem; Educação; Desastres; Cruz Vermelha.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: discutir los efectos simbólicos de la divulgación en la prensa escrita de los ritos institucionales relacionados con los cursos del esfuerzo de guerra promovidos por las Escuelas de Enfermería del Distrito Federal de Brasil durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. **Método:** estudio exploratorio y documental, cuyas fuentes fueron tratadas por el método histórico. **Resultados:** en los informes de noticias analizados se ha revelado que el Estado Novo brasileño utilizó la imagen de las enfermeras para difundir socialmente el modelo altruista del papel de la mujer en servir al país a través de la difusión sistemática por la prensa de

su papel de honor en la guerra, lo que garantizó la expansión de la visibilidad y el reconocimiento de la profesión de enfermería en ese contexto. **Conclusión:** la divulgación por la prensa de las graduaciones de enfermeras socorristas consagró su aparición en los espacios públicos, en los que se utilizó estratégicamente el rito institucional para transmitir a la sociedad el surgimiento de una nueva profesión, con el fin de apoyar las causas de la fuerza política en el país.

Descriptores: Enfermería; Historia de la Enfermería; Educación; Desastres; Cruz Roja.

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INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, within the interwar period (1918 a 1939), there was high demand for nurses, what determined the creation of new Schools of Nursing. In August 1942, with Brazil's disruption of diplomatic relations with the Nazi-fascist powers of the Axis (Germany, Italy and Japan) due to the Second World War, the concern about the availability and qualification of nurses, specially due to the possibility of engaging them in the war effort⁽¹⁾ got greater.

During the conflict, the Brazilian government adopted several strategies for the constitution of an internal front. It occurred to prepare the voluntary citizens for possible attacks to the national territory, what led to nurses mobilization so that they could take care of the war-stricken people⁽¹⁻²⁾.

In this context, the Schools of Nursing of the Federal District (at the time, the city of Rio de Janeiro) engaged to prepare emergency volunteers, through the creation and organization of a number of intensive courses. Brazilian Red Cross Practical School of Nursing, Anna Nery School of Nursing, Alfredo Pinto Professional School of Nursing and Luiza de Marillac School of Nursing are among the institutions that participated in this preparation.

The participation of these education institutions aimed at qualifying volunteers for assistance in war scenes, which was divulged on media advertisings, such as newspapers and magazines, in order to amplify the visibility of the nurse image and empower the demand of the search for the profession. In this context, the press worked as an important element of diffusion and propagation of the Nurse profession throughout the country, and this is the key point of the discussion of this study.

It is worth mentioning that researches on the effects of the press are fundamental for better understanding of the processes that produce, explain and influence the social, political and cultural facts⁽³⁾. In fact, the press tends to assume the strategic role of (re) producer of discourses developed by dominant classes, in order to make it feasible to reach the interests which aim the social control. In summary, the media discourse, when relating events, producing senses and trying to influence its audience, puts in evidence the symbolic power of certain agents and social groups⁽⁴⁾.

In the light of the above, one investigated how and which strategies were used for the advertising and professional valorization of Brazilian nurses through Federal District's newspapers, in Second World War context.

Thus, the follow objective was established: to discuss the symbolic effects of the publication on written press of institutional rites related to the courses promoted by the Brazilian Federal District's Schools of Nursing during the Second World War.

METHOD

Ethic aspects

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Anna Nery School of Nursing/São Francisco de Assis Hospital.

Methodological and theoretical referential

It is a study developed via historical method, whose discussion was supported by the concepts of institutional rite, power, capital and field, from Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social World.

Type of study and historical sources

Exploratory study, with microhistorical approach, based on documentary analysis. The historical sources were news reports, which were found in the collection of *Biblioteca Nacional*, via *Hemeroteca Digital*.

Methodological procedures

For historical sources selection, in the public query on *Hemeroteca Digital's* electronic site, one adopted the following criteria: period of time between 1939 and 1945, justified because it is Second World War period; and the names of the Schools of Nursing, with spatial delimitation within the Federal District (city of Rio de Janeiro), which indicated the news reports on the following newspapers: *A Manhã*, *A Noite* and *Diário de Notícias*, with great circulation at the time.

In total, there were 31 articles publicized on the newspapers mentioned above, when another criterion was applied. This one, regarding the effects of the publication on written press of institutional rites related to the courses promoted by the Brazilian Federal District's Schools of Nursing, due to the Second World War, which turned into three news reports.

In those, one applied the matrix of composite analysis of four elements, namely: identification data, content plan, expression plan and relevant data from other sources/literature⁽⁵⁾, when the triangulation technique was used and, next, particularized to the context, for the discussion with the literature of adherence to the study object and to the theoretical referential adopted.

RESULTS

As earlier described, three news reports were identified. In summary, the first one was published on December 02, 1942, on the newspaper *Jornal da Noite*, with the title "*Serão chamadas pelo rufar dos tambores e pelo toque dos clarins*" [They will be called by the drums rolls and the trumpet sounds]. In the news report, one emphasized the authorities present at the emergency nurses commencement rite, mainly the general

and Minister of War Eurico Gaspar Dutra, the commencement speaker. The news report occupied the first page with the publication of said military's discourse, connected to two images: the first one, one of the graduate students receiving the certificate; the second one, the group of graduate students uniformed⁽⁶⁾.

The second news report, dated December 02, 1942, and coming from the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, had the title "*Diplomadas 420 novas socorristas da Cruz Vermelha Brasileira - a cerimônia cívica de ontem no Teatro Municipal*" [420 new Brazilian Red Cross graduate emergency nurses - yesterday's civic ceremony at Teatro Municipal]. It presents to the readers a content similar to the *Jornal A Noite's*, but without mentioning the presence of the Minister of War and his discourse⁽⁷⁾.

The third news report was published on December 9, 1942, on the newspaper *A Manhã*, with the title "Brazilian Red Cross". It highlighted the presences of Darcy Sarmanho Vargas, government first lady, and Maria Isolina Pinheiro, social assistance and educator, who were honored at the rite, and then showed with the graduate students in the foreground of the photography that came along with the piece of news⁽⁸⁾.

The newspapers that published the news reports were come from different editorials. At the time, the newspapers *A Manhã* and *A Noite* had a right-wing editorial line - *estadonovista* - and *Diário de Notícias*, a left-wing editorial line, with communist tendency, with position contrary to the dictatorial government in force.

The time period of those news reports was December between 2 and 9, 1942. This time resizing justifies the typification of the study in the microhistory, when the study object is reduced in its observation scale. The analysis of the documentary corpus allowed the discussion on the symbolic effects of the propagation of institutional rites related to the war effort courses on the written press, what indicated evidences of competition between the Federal District's Schools of Nursing, in order to become seen and recognized. As it will be possible to identify along the discussion, the newspapers, regardless of their editorial lines, turned their attention especially to the Brazilian Red Cross, what highlighted the Nursing profession still emerging in that context.

DISCUSSION

The *Estado Novo* (1937-1945), whose leader was the president of the Republic, Getúlio Dornelles Vargas, is recognized in Brazil's history due to its characteristics analogous to the ones of European Nazi-fascist regimes that appeared in the interwar period, with dictatorial features of nationalist nature, conservative, authoritarian and politically centered. The regime left its symbolic marks on several fields, what happened due to the articulation of a series of strategic measures, among them the creation of the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda* [Department of Press and Propaganda] in 1939, which represented a powerful bureaucratic-repressor apparatus to persuade and consolidate the dictatorial regime.

Through the official control of press and advertising, the *Estado Novo's* ideals were systematically introduced and reproduced. Therefore, The DIP aimed at reaching all social classes, mainly the popular ones, and soon turned into the fundamental

tool for the framing of these classes to the regimes' conceptions and ideologies. The definition by the media of a uniform socio-political orientation, which reached families, schools, industries, quarters and other society sectors, started to count on interventions more and more scathing and restrictive, which sought to assure the dominance upon the country's sociocultural life and make the population to be accomplice of the same established undertaking.

With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and with the tense insertion of Brazil into the bellicose conflict against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in 1942, the government adopted a number of protection measures for possible attacks to the national territory. It led to the civil and military mobilization in the country, and to the preparation of the citizens to take part in that dramatic situation, which caused the sensitization, through the media, of women to act in favor of the country⁽¹⁰⁾. In this process, Nursing profession was considered as an emblem because, as nurses, the women would be also engaged with the regime's causes and would take care of the war victims, whether in Brazil or abroad, once the country was in great development of political, military and economic relations and alliances with the United States of America.

Due to the establishment of the *Estado Novo* and the dynamics configured with the war, the affirmation of the Brazilian national identity articulated with the support from the military and patriotic discourses with fascist tendency started to be performed in the Education field⁽¹¹⁾. The civilization and the nation defense growth stronger as arguments apparently irrefutable in school practices and were opportune means to operate the pedagogic mission and the new order of Getúlio Varga's dictatorial regime, of (the) population conduction.

Thus, the context and the political culture started to be determinant in the building of pedagogic schemes, which legitimated the regime's ideological project through the incorporation and instillation of the Military Forces' culture in youths, promotion of civic parades, for instance, where one commonly watched the participation of boys dressed as scouts and girls as nurses⁽²⁾. It worked as an attempt to shape the patriotic ideal, but also the professional one, emphasizing the noble mission of being soldier and nurse, by imaginary manipulation.

Following the example of the great nations, the United States of America in special, Brazil started to structure nurses effective able to answer to the conflict needs. This entire situation led to the formation of voluntary women contingents for the practice of War Nursing^(1,12-13). Thus, in the Federal District, 11 courses were organized for volunteers during the war. *Socorro de Guerra da Cruz Vermelha Brasileira, Voluntárias de Socorro de Guerra, Primeiros Socorros de Guerra Supletivo ao Instituto Social, Samaritana Hospitalar, Samaritanas Socorristas, Voluntárias Socorristas, Socorrista, Socorrista Hospitalar Supletivo ao Patronato da Gávea, Emergência, Voluntárias Samaritanas e Socorros de Urgência*.

Brazilian Red Cross Practical School of Nursing, Anna Nery School of Nursing, Alfredo Pinto Professional School of Nursing and Luiza de Marillac School of Nursing are among the institutions that strive for the creation and organization of those courses.

Among the selected news reports that informed the courses promotion, the first one was published on December 02, 1942, on the newspaper *Jornal da Noite*, with the title “*Serão chamadas pelo rufar dos tambores e pelo toque dos clarins*” [They will be called by the drums rolls and the trumpet sounds]. In this newspaper, which supported the government, one emphasized the presence of authorities at the commencement rite, mainly the general and minister of War, Eurico Gaspar Dutra, who was the commencement speaker, and had an important role before President Getúlio Dornelles Vargas regarding the accomplishment of the *Estado Novo*'s dictatorship.

In the beginning of the Second World War, the army's commandant, Eurico Gaspar Dutra, seemed to be predisposed to support the Brazilian government political and military approximation with the Nazi Germany and with the Fascist Italy, which was weakened by the definitive political alignment with the Allied countries in 1942. However, in spite of this positioning, he was responsible for articulating Brazil's operative/military involvement in the war, being in several solemnities, as this one of 420 emergency nurses graduation exercise, which was also informed on newspapers *A Manhã* and *Diário de Notícias*, as well as on the Red Cross Magazine. In the newspaper *A Noite*, the news report occupied the first page prominently, and *Dutra's* full discourse was published, as follows:

Dear emergency nurses – Your gesture of extreme kindness inviting me to address this graduating class translates a feel of knighthood and appraisal, carries an ampler sense and a more profound signification – you honor to the very Brazilian Army. There is much of symbolism and understanding in this attitude. Army's reserves as you are, immediate coadjutant of Health and Emergency services, you have sought the friendly hands of your future chiefs to receive the acknowledgment in the career which you were led to by love for Brazil and your people. [...] It is not only material help that mitigates suffering. It is not only the solicitude of the assistance that eases the pain. It is not only the medicine that drives evil away and dominates it. There is much more. There is the moral comfort of your presence, something that speaks to our sensibility and much that says to our hearts. This is your great and unapproachable strength, your secret and mysterious providence, your greatest and best contribution. We understand you, dear ladies, and by penetrating into the rows of whom must go to fight for our country's survival, we stretch out our hands callous by handling weapons that destroy, to shake your hands, which only know of weapons of generosity, sweetness and meekness⁽⁶⁾.

The minister of War's discourse on the women's participation in wars reiterated the characteristics of great part of the discourses published on the written press at the time, which reaffirmed particularities seen as essentially feminine, such as love, abnegation, innocence, meekness and availability.

Such discursive strategy had as argument the establishment of symbolic belief in the imposition of ideals of defense and in the attempt to consecrate those voluntary women, which was illustrated in the midst of a poetic atmosphere covered with emotion and glamor, which took the place of the political reality.



Dois flagrantes da solenidade, vendo-se o ministro da Guerra fazendo entrega do diploma a uma samaritana e parte das jovens que concluíram o curso

Source: *Jornal Diário de Notícias* Dec. 2, 1942; year XIII, ed.6.168, p.3.

Figure 1 – Minister of War at the commencement rite of 420 Brazilian Red Cross new emergency nurses, at *Teatro Municipal*

On the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, the news report on this commencement ceremony came along with two images. In the first one, one can observe the minister of War handing a certificate to one of the Brazilian Red Cross emergency nurses. Most of them worn the cap in the composition of the uniform with the cross symbol. Besides the minister of War, the president of Red Cross, general Ivo Soares was present, as well as representatives from other ministries, major hall, Military Police and from the Passive Defense Service, plus the wife of Henrique Dodsworth, Federal District's intervenient. The participation of these authorities constitutes one of the aspects needed to the legitimation of that passage rite, since it evidences the power of the institutions and of the present authorities themselves⁽¹⁴⁾.

On the other hand, the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, one of the few that were politically against the *Estado Novo*, has not published the minister of War's discourse, as did the newspapers *Jornal A Noite*, *A Manhã* and the Red Cross Magazine, what, in certain way, indicated their left-wing position, situation that put *Diário de Notícias* as sanctions target by the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda* [Department of Press and Propaganda], such as the control and high price paid for the press paper import, which they used to print.

The second news report on the organization of war effort courses by the Schools of Nursing, which was published on

Jornal A Manhã, dated December 9, 1942, emphasized Darcy Sarmanho Vargas' participation, first lady at the time and the only woman to address a graduating class from these courses.

The intention by highlighting the presence of the wife of the president of the Republic was, undoubtedly, to provide distinction. Thus, one put in evidence the figure of an exemplar woman, a model to be followed, due to her engagement with caring and social causes, which culminated with the creation of the *Legião Brasileira de Assistência* [Brazilian Legion of Assistance], under her leadership, which contributed to make women to get involved in the war effort, right after president Getúlio Vargas has declared Brazil's official ingress to the Second World War.

This entity was made popular by the press, when thousands of voluntary women started to enroll in its courses to act in the passive air defense, in saving food due to the recession during the war, in helping the relatives and producing clothes for the Brazilian soldiers who were sent to the Italian front, and to support the qualification of emergency nurses⁽¹⁵⁾.

In that rite, it was up to Darcy Sarmanho Vargas to use her power and prestige as public feminine figure, what, in a certain way, was opposite to the still in force practice of that moment where the policy field was, above of all, a male hunting reserve, where it was not convenient to have a woman⁽¹⁶⁾.

Besides the first lady, Maria Isolina Pinheiro, social assistance and educator, was honored. She has produced several works on Social Assistance and militated in the *Movimento Escola Nova* [New School Movement] for the democratization and gratuitousness of the public education. In May 1944, she established the *Escola Técnica de Assistência Social Cecy Dodsworth* [Cecy Dodsworth Social Assistance Technical School] in the Federal District, nowadays *Faculdade de Serviço Social* [Faculty of Social Work] of *Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* [State University of Rio de Janeiro]. In the Brazilian Red Cross School, Maria Isolina Pinheiro acted as Social Work teacher, occasion on which she structured, facing the risks of modern war, a plan for creation of a Body of Auxiliary Nurses composed of 100 thousand trained women, to support the professional nurses, as well as a Body of Domestic Nurses, with around 500 thousand women prepared to solve domestic urgencies, besides a Nutrition Body and a Drivers Body. Although somewhat exaggerated, the imaginary numbers of her excessive pretension allow an approximation to the place that Nursing assumed in the mobilization discourse at the time^(2,17).

The image came along with the news report whose title was "Cruz Vermelha Brasileira" [Brazilian Red Cross], which registered the commencement ceremony of about 500 emergency nurses from the courses of the *Associação de Educação* [Education Association], *Associação Cristã de Moços* [Young Men's Christian Association] and the *Associação Cristã Feminina* [Young Women's Christian Association], which had support from the Red Cross.

The graduate students were wearing uniforms and a light tone cap, possibly white. At the center of the imagetic text, in the foreground, the first lady Darcy Sarmanho Vargas is to the left and Maria Isolina Pinheiro to the right. The image calls attention to the use of the cross on the uniforms at emergency nurses chest height, one of the most symbolic Red Cross' marks. Thus, the cross symbol and its visual representation



Source: *Jornal A Manhã* Dec. 9, 1942; year II, n.411, p.7.

Figure 2 – Brazilian Red Cross Graduate students with Darcy Vargas and Maria Isolina Pinheiro⁽⁸⁾

demarcated the Red Cross institutionalization, (inter) nationally⁽¹⁸⁾. Over time, specifically during the Second World War, many institutions misappropriated the symbol on their uniforms, such as the Brazilian Army itself, according to what set forth in its legal provisions. The Schools of Nursing have done it as well, but it had different geometric shape and sometimes in other color. One of the cases, even before the adoption of the symbol by the Red Cross, was the one of the *Escola Profissional de Enfermeiros e Enfermeiras da Assistência a Alienados* [Professional School for Nurses from the Care to the Lunatics], the current *Alfredo Pinto School of Nursing*, which adopted the blue cross.

Reflecting on the discourses published by the Brazilian press, on the participation of women in the context of the Second World War, helps to understand how and how much they were manipulated by the agents that legitimate the dictatorial regime⁽¹⁹⁾. In fact, they were element to the gear of the organization of the national identity project, which was provided by the media action through written and imagetic texts, even facing the newspapers' distinct editorial lines.

The institutional rite has this purpose, that is, of manipulating the power constructed and idealized, rightly to (re) produce mental images and certain groups' representations. As a matter of fact, what was at stake was the substance and existence of the government project, once its ideology and values should be primarily acknowledged and legitimated publicly. This can be explained by the magic created by the institution acts, for they tend to print the symbolic belief on the celebrated individuals that their existence is justified and that they should be always ready for the things and causes that are necessary^(14,21).

Moreover, the force established by this kind of symbolic belief favored the power holders to speak on behalf of women voluntary for war, which, in certain way, allowed their celebration⁽²¹⁻²²⁾. Thus, they were led to direct themselves in favor of the political and social game, when they recognized

themselves and let themselves to represent each other in the government's project of mobilization to war.

However, the participation and media propagation of authorities who addressed courses graduation ceremonies of voluntary emergency nurses allowed the capitalization of some symbolic profits for the Nursing representation in social field. Certainly, the agents' prestige depends on their symbolic capital, that is, on the acknowledgment, institutionalized or not, that they receive from a group or from an authorized spokesperson, to speak on behalf of this group. The spokesperson tends to speak on behalf of a given order and has the collective legitimacy, and does so for the symbolic images manipulation and for the semiotic operations of juxtaposition of values to signs and symbols⁽⁴⁾.

Besides, the realization of institutional rites of this nature had as essential function to print the collective communion and unity and generate emotional tension states to be propagated by the media in favor of the dictatorial regime. In this sense, such nationalist spirit performances were carried out with the presence and engagement from ordinary and illustrious people. This allowed the critical sense to be anesthetize and makes the messages to the audience/readers more permeable⁽⁴⁾, even so that the newspapers with editorial lines against the dictatorial regime sought, in what was possible, to resist to serve as mechanism to reinforce the established symbolic belief.

On the other hand the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* manipulated symbolically the journalistic message when excluded the government speech. This would result, regarding the unwary reader's reading, in decreasing the effect of a government representative's discourse at the institutional rite occurred. However, by omitting the speech, this newspaper also assured greater Nursing visibility in the article, even before the manipulation of the information transmitted.

In summary, the "representations in things" or, better saying, the symbolic manipulation strategies — the promotion of public rites and acts, the presence of emblems, anthems, discourses and declarations to the press, and the propagation of images produced for those purposes — had the finality of, even when part of the institutional rite was omitted, aiming at certain impressions that the others should have.

It is worth mentioning that, besides the Brazilian Red Cross, the other federal District's Schools of Nursing also dedicate themselves to the preparation of nurses, to what was possible and opportune for them, but have not had visibility on the newspapers. This is perceived by the symbolic belief established by and in the Red Cross, regarding its (inter) national humanitarian actuation in conflicts and public calamities, what brought symbolic profits due to the credibility at the time, defined specially by the construction and reproduction of representations favorable to the institution^(13,23).

Surely, during the years of war and dictatorship, what was in evidence among the Federal District's Schools of Nursing was the intention to impose a genuine vision with respect to the human resources qualification for Nursing. In this process, one noticed a symbolic fight for the monopoly of making itself to be seen, giving, knowing and making itself to be acknowledged as one of the elements of maintenance and sustenance of these institutions in social and political fields.

Therefore, in spite of the relations between the agents that integrate the Nursing field being permeated of cooperation, in those the conflict and the disputes for the authority, to speak and act on behalf of the field, coexist. In other words, despite the order established between the institutions for creations and organization of those intensive courses, there was, between the lines, the strong presence of the fight to stand in the field, to accumulate capital and for the symbolic power.

In the same way, the institutional rites are generally operated with the use of an efficient language and with a kind of psychological preparation, which need a number of gestures, symbols, vows and patriotic discourses recognized by the society. It is, in fact, one of the transcendence strategies to act in the social reality, strengthen the symbolic belief, the opportunities being created with the nurses' constant appearance on the media⁽⁴⁾.

The fact that one counted on authorities at the institutional rite, such as commencement speakers, was one of the elements of sensationalism for the journalism submitted/subordinated to the *Estado Novo*, in order to infuse its ideology. Due to that, the intensive courses of voluntary emergency nurses had visibility, as one noticed also in the spatial disposition of the news reports on the newspapers' pages. Then, the news records ended up giving visibility to the Brazilian Red Cross and to the War Nursing Courses created and organized by it, getting, as consequence, considerable number of volunteers enrolled. It was evidenced in the educator Maria Isolina Pinheiro's discourse, about war not being won only in the battlefields, but also at the rear⁽¹⁷⁾.

Furthermore, the analysis exercise indicated the potentiality of the Brazilian Red Cross in human resources qualification for service on situations of collective emergencies, especially in Second World War, what, originally, was not subject of consideration in other studies.

Study limitations

The limitation of the study was related to the practice of discursive and argumentative historical synthesis, due to its density and complexity. On the one hand, options were made on the adherence and coherence of the results found, but it was to meet the methodological rules. On the other hand, the discussion evidenced important historical traces, which allows versions and interpretations beyond those sometimes crystallized.

Contributions for the Nursing field

The study allows the possibility of amplifying the knowledge of the history of Nursing profession in the context of the Second World War, characterized for being a moment of advances, ruptures and paradigmatic changes about the professional qualification and practice, and by the necessity to debate the circumstances of the social and political uses of the press, in the construction of representations on the professional identity of old times that, in general, tend to be (re) updated in the present, when the past is (re) apprehended.

Thinking about this perspective is to look at the past in the present, in order to better understand the constructed representations. It implies in resignifying the past experiences and improving certain present but also future practices. In fact, it was in similar circumstances and scenes, of war and chaos,

that the Nursing identity was strengthened, what was vector for its professionalization and reinforced the legacy of its mission: save lives.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

On the discussion of the news reports articulated with the context, by the reduction of the object of study focused on the rites of graduation of Federal District's emergency nurses, throughout the Second World War, the highlighted involvement of the Brazilian Red Cross arose explicit, in the sense of mitigating the dramatic effects that, generally, the situations of international armed conflict encase.

In fact, the period of *Estado Novo* contributed to value the Nurse profession, despite the symbolic effects of manipulation under the dictatorial aegis. Even by the reduction of the observation scale of the object of study, one noticed the diffusion of information on Nursing on the newspapers at the time. In fact, it assured a buildup of some symbolic profits for the Brazilian Red Cross, but also for the profession itself, mainly in relation to the visibility increase and acknowledgment of its honor and necessity on war situations.

The journalistic analysis regarding the graduation of the courses promoted by the Brazilian Red Cross in the war effort demonstrates its potentiality in the preparation of women to act

as "war nurses" in favor of the country, when making one to see the strategies of captation of volunteers to act in caring the war victims. It was stimulated by the *Estado Novo's* context, which mobilized the construction of the intern front and of the nurse supporter public image throughout the Second World War.

The study found that the propagation by the written press of those voluntary emergency nurses at institutional rites gave visibility to the Nurse profession, what legitimated their presence in public spaces, traditionally occupied by men, despite the reaffirmation of feminine and masculine roles perceived in the authorities' discourses, illustrious representatives from the political, social and military fields. Besides, the study emphasized the symbolic effect that the institutional rites exercise in favor of the domination and manipulation schemes, by ratifying their strategic uses and the relations of power established in social spaces.

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