

*Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta*

I started my academic career in 1991 at the Federal University of Ouro Preto. Since 1995 I have been a professor and full time researcher of history at the Federal University of Minas Gerais and in 2016 became a titular professor at the same university. At UFMG, I have served as Chair of the History Department and Coordinator of the History Graduate Program. Furthermore, I have acted as visiting research-professor at the University of Maryland (2006-2007), offered a course to graduate students at the Universidad de Santiago de Chile (2009) and taught a short course at Universidad Nacional de Colombia (2015). I have been visiting professor at the Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine of Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, where I occupied the Simón Bolívar Chair (2016) and offered a course for the Maestría de Historia Contemporánea of Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (Argentina, 2018). I have also served on the editorial staff of several academic journals and as evaluator for agencies that promote academic research.

I have collaborated with the Brazilian History Association (ANPUH) on many occasions, especially as national president during the biennium 2013-2015. By that time we were already confronting the challenge posed by the ascension of conservative political groups and the initial appearance of the “Escola sem Partido” movement which alleges that there is a conspiracy among professors—principally in history—to indoctrinate the young and turn them into communists and gays. ANPUH positioned itself in the vanguard of the struggle to defend schools and instructors and in favor of the right to academic freedom. Aside from the major ANPUH conference—with nearly 7,000 participants—we organized seminars to discuss questions such as the issue of ethics in historical research and the challenges of teaching history in the context of the Brazilian crisis and the educational reforms in various countries. We have also led a campaign to enact a law establishing formal stages for the historian profession and achieved a partial victory when the lower Chamber approved the bill (March 2015).

As for research experience, since the beginning of my career my research has explored political phenomena in historical perspective. From the doctoral thesis on I have combined the study of classical political history themes with approaches closer to the Cultural History of the Political. Following this path I established contacts with the social sciences, seeking theoretical and methodological inspirations from anthropology, political science, sociology and literary studies.

Such thematic preferences and theoretical choices led me to research issues such as right-wing politics, authoritarian regimes, propaganda, political discourses, left-wing movements, iconography of power, memory and oral history and recent history.

My current research is a comparative and connected history of the periodical press in Brazil and Argentina during the military dictatorships of the period 1960-80. The aim is to understand and explain processes of legitimation of the authoritarian states, but also their limits and the mobilization of discourses of resistance in the name of liberty.

Since 2002 my research projects have been financed by the National Research Council (CNPq) in which I have the status of researcher level 1. One of the projects that I am most proud of (and that combines research and outreach) was the organization of the archives of the Department of Political Police (DOPS) of Minas Gerais, which led to the opening to the public of a collection of hundreds of thousands of documents. This was meaningful not only for academic research but also for the struggle for citizenship and human rights. My main book-length publications include: *Em guarda contra o perigo vermelho: o anticomunismo no Brasil* (São Paulo, Perspectiva/Fapesp - soon to have an edition in Spanish language through Ediciones UNGS), in which I analyze the embedding of anti-communist discourses and practices in the twentieth century that have advanced the

construction of the two Brazilian dictatorships. The significance and relevance of this thesis, unfortunately, was demonstrated by the recent right-wing surge in Brazil, since past anti-communist obsessions have been appropriated by new authoritarian movements; *As universidades e o regime militar: cultura política brasileira e modernização autoritária* (RJ, Zahar, 2014), a book that benefited from a period of research at the US National Archives and Records Administration. In this work, I studied the policies of the military dictatorship toward the universities, which combined violent repression (such as faculty purges and murders of activists) with the modernization of the university system (expansion of research and graduate training). The central hypothesis is that the objectives of the military project was to provide inputs for economic growth while pacifying intellectual opposition. Another significant book is *Jango e o Golpe de 1964 na caricatura* (RJ, Zahar, 2006), a study of the construction of public images, in critical tones and caricatures, of the Brazilian president who was overthrown by the armed forces in 1964. In addition, I have co-authored six books and published more than a hundred other texts (articles and book chapters).