

Scientific
Journal of
**Applied
Social and
Clinical
Science**

**THE CRIME OF THE
“EVIL HEALER”:
A
PRACTICE OF “ILLEGAL
MEDICINE” IN IRATI-PR
(1925-1926)**

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Abstract: The story presents its important meaning when it develops, through the investigative method, the search for the valorization of the human being as a subject of its daily life. The encounter with the particularities of human actions in history, with regard to the construction of their meanings, suggests an understanding of the diversities that make up the cultural dimension. Therefore, in this study, a look is given to practices that assume the connotation of healing, or even the “art of healing”. Using the criminal process as a documental source, the presence of this practice in the construction of daily life is highlighted, mainly in the region studied. The analyzed criminal document shows that healing practices are visible in this context, through the identification of an “evil healer” in 1925 in Irati-PR. This studied criminal process presents the personality of this practitioner of “illegal medicine” and brings up the idea that the criminalization of this action is based on the social relations of the time.

Keywords: Daily; Healing Practices; Healing; Crime; Power.

INTRODUCTION

This research is developed by approaching the criterion of historical explanation, from which it is perceived that history “is not recreation, but explanation” (VEYNE, 1976, p.71). Therefore, there is a need to construct explanations that promote the understanding of the elements that underlie the realities and their meanings.

Thus, we observe the first half of the twentieth century, more precisely the period 1925-1926. We sought to detect the possible characteristics of these healing practices, due to the fact that the documentary source used,

the criminal process found in the CEDOC¹ - Documentation Center - on the Campus of Irati-PR, directed us specifically to this time frame into which we “dive”. It must be noted that the criminal process found and corresponding to this historical period is what motivates the investigation of time and space that underlie this research. The use of this source favors the historiographical development for the understanding of this reality.

The development of this analysis goes through the areas of knowledge and practices consistent with the construction of everyday life. Thus, “some knowledge and practices survive the state and scientific ones” (SOCHODOLAK; CARDOSO, 2015, p.5), that is, the existence of recognition and legality of healing practices is considered, while the question arises that the other practices of this “art of healing” can assume, as a consequence, an “old-fashioned” position to the criteria of “legitimacy”.

The search for a theoretical framework in Michel Foucault inspires the analysis of the discourses present and justified by the relations between these practices. These relationships highlight the conflicts, interests and controls that can be identified and worthy of being investigated for the understanding of reality through the powers of “medicine” and “healing”.

These discourses and resistances that are involved in this reality allow the understanding of the strategies that underlie the very concept of crime in this period. This way, there is a search for the understanding of a society that disciplines its individuals and that produces a subject as a criminal.

The use of the criminal process as a source of this investigation allows proximity

1. “Centro de Documentação e Memória do Campus de Irati”, CEDOC/I, is a collegiate body linked to the Directorate of Campus de Irati, of “Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste”, UNICENTRO, dedicated to the archival treatment of documents of a permanent nature, recognized for their historical, scientific and cultural value, produced and received by the institution and preferably, documents related to the region covered by UNICENTRO, produced in the public or private sphere.

to new possibilities for historiographical development. The condition of presenting reality through the criminal file becomes an attitude that innovates the way of researching and understanding everyday life.

THE DAILY LIFE OF IRATI-PR – 1925-1926

The present research, through the criminal process as a source, makes possible the encounter with the context that the temporal cut reveals. We are referring to the period 1925-1926, and, for that time, we look at the space of the city of Irati-PR².

During this period, the city of Irati had been in existence for eighteen years as a municipality and still belonged to the comarca of the city of Ponta Grossa.

In the motivation of the elements that are present at the source of the criminal process, we have already highlighted that:

On January 31, 1925, the accompanying petition was presented to this Public Prosecutor's Office - by doctors in medicine, Plinio and José Augusto, reporting the criminal act of which a "healer" was the author who, in the practice of "illegal medicine" administered harmful treatments to a 6-year-old child, daughter of Mr. Emílio residing in this village (Process-Crime, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 2).

This fragment of the process suggests the identification that, for the context, a conflicting relationship between "healing practices" was experienced. We refer to the practices of "official medicine", with the representations of "doctors in medicine" that are presented in the initial report of this case. As well as the presence of the practice of "healing", which also participates in this same local scenario. The conflicts and debates that already stand out in this process convey the reflection of a

daily life marked by intense disputes.

It must be noted that through the conflicts between doctors and healers, as presented in the auto reports, we note the existence and permanence of both practices in this region. It is pertinent to verify that, for example, the presence of people with the references of practitioners of faith healing becomes common, since in the same speech of the doctors it is verified that "however, the child's condition would not have assumed such serious proportions if it were not for the illegal interference of a "healer" of the many that exist in this interior (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 4).

The child who was mentioned in this statement, by the doctors in this process, refers to the main fact that occurred and which supports the accusation against the healer. This episode is reported as follows:

On the 10th day of January, the doctors report that they had a call with the utmost urgency to attend to a little daughter of Mr. Emílio, whose condition was very serious - resulting from a fracture in the right arm [...] we found the girl who is over six years old with the forearm and right arm gangrenous up to the middle third of the arm, requiring an immediate intervention. Therefore, we proceeded with the necessary amputation that, although saving her from a certain death, nevertheless, forever of a member for active service in adult life (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 4).

Faced with this fact, the doctors demanded an attitude, as did the public prosecutor himself when he opened the case, noting that "the healer's incompetent acts resulted in a surgical intervention carried out by the doctors who signed the petition [...] an intervention that, in the doctors' learned opinion, would have been avoided if it weren't for the absurd treatments, wickedly administered by the

2. Irati is a Brazilian municipality in the State of Paraná. Located in the Southeast region of the State. The comarca of Irati was created by State Law No. 2,464 of April 2, 1927 and installed on May 24, 1927, in accordance with the Judicial Decree nº 453/1927. See: IBGE – Irati-PR – History. Available in: <https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/dtbs/parana/irati.pdf>

charlatan” (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 2).

In this sense, these reports “reaffirm the legitimacy of scientific medicine, the only one capable, according to them, of deciphering, through discourse [...] the true language of symptoms [...] of bringing order to chaos, restoring the body’s balance, health” (LOYOLA, 1984, p. 23-24).

The presence of the practice of healerism suggests the perception of a “normality” of these actions in the context of the time in Irati. For, in addition to the healer of this process, there are many others in the region. However, this idea of normality does not refer to the widespread acceptance of this practice, as this is a period in which, at the national level, the exaltation and pursuit of hegemony of “scientific medicine” over “popular medicine” takes place:

In the task of substituting popular medicine for scientific medicine, the dominant sectors combined two attitudes. The first was the initiative for the sanitary re-education of the population, under the responsibility of the Secretariat of Health which, mainly, from 1925 with the creation of the Inspectorships of Hygiene and Sanitary Education, began to work in the inspection of places of residence and work, in the introduction of new eating habits in the population and in the change of popular practices in face of health/disease [...] the second initiative, undertaken by the constituted authorities, was the repression of the popular practices of medicine [...] 99, p. 70).

It is through this reality that we notice the daily life of Irati, in 1925-1926, constituted by the presence of the “healing arts” and the challenges that are established for them. Thus, we find the characterization of “illegal practices”, “illegal medicine”, “healing” and “charlatanism”. These expressions direct us towards the source we use, as they identify practices that are opposed to official medicine. Therefore, now we find the reason why the

criminal process builds the social reality of that period and space analyzed.

THE “EVIL HEALER”

The main character in this criminal process is the “healer”. The characteristics that are composed for your identification build your personality through the expressions and denominations given to you. This occurs even before his own pronouncement, that is, before he manifests himself and is heard. The prosecutor characterizes him as a “healer who administered harmful treatments to a child” or even as a “charlatan” who carried out “absurd, evilly administered treatments” (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 2).

In these initial expressions of the process, we have already ended up considering a construction of this character’s image that assumes a negative characterization, favoring the formation of a personality that urgently needs to be incriminated without objections.

In the documentary sequence of this auto, this personality of the healer is even more emphasized. Doctors of medicine refer to him when they report their responsibility for exercising the “malicious practice of illegal medicine” or even, in the description of the event about the six-year-old girl, they use the identification of a “healer who treated her [...] without the slightest scruples” (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 4).

With these references directed at our character, since the beginning of the process, the accusations have intensified more and more. Until on October 17, 1925, at the Irati police station, Mr. Emílio, an industrialist, resident of that village and father of the six-year-old child who was presented as the victim of the healer’s activity, presented himself for testimony. In this statement, the references built about the “charlatan” begin to be transformed. Emílio declares that:

In the month of January of the current year, a minor daughter of the declarant fractured an arm and was called to fix it - Bonifácio; that Bonifácio, when he arrived at the declarant's house, did not want to do anything for the benefit of the patient, delegating having doctors in the village; that the declarant, convinced that the fracture was not complete, limited himself to home treatments administered by himself, but recognizing that it was not enough, he resorted to medicine looking for trained doctors (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 7).

Under the conditions of this statement, the image of the "evil healer" begins to change. On November 23, 1925, at the police station in Irati, Mr. Bonifácio, seventy years old, married, a farmer, Brazilian, and a resident of this district, appears before the chief of police and the clerk. This is the great character of this auto, the one that until now was titled as "healer", "charlatan" or even as the practitioner of malevolent actions. He is now recognized by his own name, Bonifácio, and when asked about the fact, he said that "in January of this year he was called urgently to Emílio's house and when he arrived there, a child with a broken arm was presented to him, deponent, telling him what he did not do because he did not know the service, advising Emílio to take the child to the doctor" (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 11).

When developing the process, this declaration breaks down the pre-established parameters so far. The comparison of the testimonies of both Emílio and Bonifácio promotes a new dynamism to the investigations.

THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE PRACTICE

To understand the process of criminalization is one of the main purposes of this research. The investigative development of the criminal process allows the perception

of how the production of criminality occurs. This construction of the criminal's image becomes clear when the speeches within this process are investigated.

At the beginning, when the prosecutor presents the application, he states about the healer's action that "since the practice of 'illegal medicine' is in itself a crime, this is aggravated by the disastrous consequences it produced" (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 2). The intensities of the speeches in the document of doctors in medicine, Plínio and José Augusto, are also noted, when they already present themselves with their degrees and training:

The undersigned, doctors of medicine, the first graduated from the Faculty of Rio de Janeiro and the second from the Faculty of Paraná, come before Your Excellency to inform of a serious fact, the result of the malevolent practice of 'illegal medicine', so that Your Excellency, in the performance of the brilliant mission of looking out for the interests of justice, deign to take the measures that the case requires (Process-Crime, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 4).

Still in this discursive intonation, when referring to the healer, the doctors point out that "we verified by means of a detailed examination that we proceeded with, that the result would have been different, if the treatment had been administered with the necessary requirements of medicine". And it is with this aspect that they show greater emphasis and determination when, in the same speech, they state that "the healer who treated her had been without the slightest scruples beside the patient, practicing all sorts of acts born of her ignorance that resulted in the sad outcome and the commission of a crime" (Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 4).

This highlighted process, corresponding to the period 1925-1926 in Irati-PR, helps in verifying and contextualizing that the healing

practice was being framed with illegality and criminality. It must be noted that at that time, what was in force was the orientation of the Penal Code of 1890.

Mainly through this analysis, we understand that this context is marked by the political and economic effects of a new organization of Brazilian society. This novelty was reflected by the factors that the Brazilian administration assumed as a model of government - the Republic.

From the new proposal for Brazilian society, based on republican principles, factors can be seen that will be valued as mechanisms for adapting this system. The elements that sought to “qualify” society along European lines can be pointed out. This qualification is characterized by the implementation of actions and behaviors that transformed the reality of Brazil into a standardized society, that is, one that reflected the social, political and economic model in everyday life.

Thinking about the social reality at that time participates in the dynamics of relating the proposed changes that built society together with the mindsets that built these principles and practices. This dynamic also assumes a conflicting relationship between these practices through health promotion. In this regard, “we also highlight the proposals for the re-education of the population and the repression of popular medicine practices, elaborated by doctors, public authorities and intellectuals of the period” (CARVALHO, 1999, p.15).

In the criminal process, of this research, the powers that bring the reflection of a production of the practice of popular medicine as a crime become present. Discourses that exalt medical and judicial authorities also seek to demonstrate the production of a truth about the facts. So it can be noticed that:

The objective of criminalizing popular medicine practices and framing healers

(healers, masseuses, herbalists, sorcerers, witchdoctors, etc.) was to curb the practice of this type of medicine in society, mainly within families, where the reproduction of medicine practices took place. (CARVALHO, 1999, p.71).

The possibility of relating the concepts of violence and power assumes characterization and development also in the cultural structure. The human being in the face of social reality produces its principles, norms, laws and concepts that permeate its conduct in society. The concepts of violence and power become intrinsic in the relationships that justify the maintenance and existence of man in social dynamics.

Starting from this conceptual relationship, it is possible to notice how power is intrinsically conditioned to the elements that favor the understanding of violence and that even this, violence, manifests itself in a language that constructs what Foucault identifies as the “statements” that are established in “discourses” in society, therefore, “power, for Foucault, is just the variable and unstable form of the game of forces that define social relations in each concrete historical moment, and which is defined through specific practices and discourses” (PASSOS, 2013, p.11).

When the reflection on the “Archaeology of Knowledge” is analyzed, Foucault leads to the perspective that the subjects of society are formed or constituted by the discourses that are established for them, that is, the discourse produces subjects because it “situates the subject’s places in the thickness of an anonymous murmur” (DELEUZE, 2005, p.19). This reflection participates in the development of the so-called “linguistic personology” (Idem) that establishes the presence or even the construction of subjects through the languages that are identified in society. It is pertinent, in view of this reflection, the perception that there is a complex tangle of constitutive elements of discourses that

favor the formation of subjects, including the structure of institutions that need, through their languages, the elaboration of discourses for the realization of their subjects. Thus, institutions need statements to also establish power for their individuals. It is also possible to point out the idea that for the formation of its subjects there is a relation to the use of violence for the execution of discourses and power, thus making the connection of these concepts clear in the face of the practice of this cultural and social dynamic.

The relationships that affect everyday life are loaded with statements and cultural dynamics. These often structure patterns and even the formation of “taboos” in the face of social relations, participating in a historical construct between knowledge and power. And this construction that involves and dissipates this daily life, does not escape the proportions of the mentality about violence that occupies this same cultural wisdom and for which a “cartography” can be established as a method for this analysis and which is assumed by the social sciences.

When observing that the “social cartography described here is linked to the fields of knowledge of the social and human sciences and, more than a physical mapping, it deals with movements, relationships, power games, confrontations between forces...” (FILHO; TETI, 2013, p.45), it is noted that it is in the development of the analysis strategy on social relations that the scopes of violence and power in everyday life are manifested, where they also refer to the construction and observation of spaces, the places to which they are characteristic. This way, it is linked to the performance of what can be identified as a “topology of violence”, because through the most refined and diversified social maintenance, which can be transformed according to the time and space of society, violence assumes proportions

that “it is no longer a part of political and social communication, but withdraws into subcommunicative, subcutaneous, capillary, intrapsychic spaces. It shifts from the visible to the invisible... and this structural modification of violence is what increasingly dominates its occurrence” (CHUL HAN, 2017, p.21).

Even with the perception of the elements that produced the criminalization of the healer in this process, on November 30, 1925, the deputy prosecutor reveals:

“Verifying from the testimonies of Emílio and Bonifácio that the latter was not the cause of the infection in the arm of his youngest daughter, I am of the opinion that the present records must be archived due to the testimony of Emílio, who is the only interested party and that evidence could still be collected, for the formalization of the inquiry there is no basis for such”(Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. page. 14).

This way, despite the clashes promoted and the construction of the speeches present, our great character, Bonifácio, was not incriminated. However, before filing this case, on December 5, 1925, the judge himself declared that: “I am not satisfied with the declarations on the papers as proof of the non-existence of a criminal act attributed to the healer Bonifácio, since he did not testify a single witness in the case. (Crime-Process, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. pgs. 15). It is noted here the existence of clashes and conflicts in the speeches of the judicial representatives of this process.

Finishing the presentation of this process we find a last statement, referring to April 18, 1926:

In my view, there is no crime in the present case, based on the statements made on page 7, by Mr. Emílio, the father of the minor referred to in the present case file. In these statements, the father of the minor states that his daughter having fractured an arm, he called Bonifácio to heal him and that,

when he arrived at his house, he declared that he did nothing for the benefit of the patient, given that there were doctors in the village, even advising that he call one to see the child. On page 11, Bonifácio confirms these sayings, thus generating the truth about the fact. Therefore, finding it fully verified that it was not Bonifácio who caused the infection in the arm of the minor, Emílio's daughter, I find no basis for her to denounce him for having practiced this act. For these reasons, I request that these records be archived for the purposes of law, however, the Scholarly Judge orders us what Justice deems convenient. (Process-Crime, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. pages 17).

In this context, there are analyzes that can be considered antagonistic or paradoxical, but that reveal the great richness that involves the investigation of the daily relationships that weave the life of the human being. In these parameters, the process was filed on April 3, 1926.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This reflection proposal starts from the historical and social context for the development of the understanding of everyday life. Understanding the elements that constitute the mentalities of the actions of individuals in each historical context is what allows the establishment of a historiography for the interpretation of this reality.

Even before establishing the analysis of healing practices and their manifestations, it is necessary to point out the structural elements of their legitimations. When we think of a society and the context that constitutes it, we can also think about the construction of its "everyday life". Analyzing everyday life allows an investigative look at the factors that build reality. For this study of factors that refer to everyday life, we can also look for the reference of cultural elements.

The historical sources of criminal proceedings provoke the desire to verify

the context in which they are inserted. The questions that arise are related to the proposal to understand the existence of adequate mentalities for the construction of these processes.

As stated by Sidney Chalhoub (1986, p.23), when working with criminal processes, these sources represent "a crossroads of many struggles". These struggles can be highlighted as being the due conflicts, interests and controls that can be identified and worthy of being investigated for the understanding of reality. "Struggles" that manifest themselves as the reflection of a society that guides its behavior or ethical judgments through the construction of representations and symbols, and in this case, through criminal proceedings.

It is through these visible or intrinsic factors in society that the manifestations and repercussions in which violence and power are related develop and which thus underlie everyday life.

Therefore, Irati-PR, in the first half of the 20th century, more precisely in the period 1925-1926, is a place where the most complex representations that build its daily life are practiced. This perception occurs through the documentary source of the criminal process that we use, it contributes to the visibility of this region identified by the practices of healing and the art of healing.

We locate these practices, whether "popular" or "scientific", and the conflicts between them through power relations. The use of criminal processes as sources allows the encounter with the discourses that legitimize these practices and that even justify the construction of society at the time.

Thinking about the bias of crime, or the practice of criminality, ends up assuming an investigative notion in the process of understanding reality. The work with documentary sources directed to criminal processes, from that period, corresponds

to the possibility of understanding the constructions or even reconstructions of their meanings. Thus, in the study of criminality and everyday life we can note that “if apprehended at a deeper level, criminality expresses both an individual relationship and a social relationship indicative of behavior patterns, representations and social values” (FAUSTO, 2014, p.27).

This relationship or conflict with behavior patterns is what directs the great investigative proposal, since it can be the basis for understanding values, mentalities and social meanings. We can also see that “recent research in the area of social history has reversed this axis and shifted crime to the center of social life, highlighting the proximity between everyday life and behavior considered criminal” (BRETAS, 1991, p.49).

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Fonte: Criminal proceedings, Irati, 1925, CEDOC/I. BR. PRUNICENTRO. PB005.2/264.21