

Pilots, airplanes and technicians: Salgado Filho's actions at the Ministry of Aeronautics

Pilotos, aviones y técnicos: la actuación de Salgado Filho en el Ministerio de Aeronáutica

Pilotos, aviões e técnicos: as ações de Salgado Filho no Ministério da Aeronáutica

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Salgado Filho's performance as the first minister of the Brazilian Aeronautics. It aims to understand what main actions he employed to unify, under his control, all the sectors of the Brazilian civil and military aviation and try to transform the Brazilian nation into an air power. It is defended here that the main strategy adopted by him, during almost five years he was at the head of the ministry (1941-1945), consisted in the elaboration of a State project aimed at the construction of what was called at the time of an "aeronautical mentality".

Keywords: Salgado Filho. Ministry of Aeronautics. Aviation. Getúlio Vargas.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la actuación de Salgado Filho como primer ministro de Aeronáutica de Brasil. El objetivo es comprender cuáles fueron las principales acciones empleadas por él para unificar, bajo su control, todos los sectores de la aviación civil y militar del país e intentar transformar la nación brasileña en una potencia aérea. Se argumenta aquí que la principal estrategia adoptada por él, durante los casi cinco años que estuvo al frente de la cartera (1941-1945), consistió en la elaboración de un proyecto de Estado destinado a construir lo que se denominó en su momento una "mentalidad aeronáutica".

Palabras clave: Salgado Filho. Ministerio de Aeronáutica. Aviación. Governo Vargas.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a atuação de Salgado Filho como primeiro ministro da Aeronáutica do Brasil. O objetivo é compreender quais foram as principais ações empregadas por ele com o intuito de unificar, sob o seu controle, todos os setores das aviações civil e militar do país e de tentar transformar a nação brasileira em uma potência aérea. Defende-se aqui que a principal estratégia adotada por ele, ao longo dos quase cinco anos em que esteve à frente da pasta (1941-1945), consistiu na elaboração de um projeto de Estado voltado à construção do que foi chamado na época de uma "mentalidade aeronáutica".

Palavras-chave: Salgado Filho. Ministério da Aeronáutica. Aviação. Governo Vargas.

1 INTRODUCTION

The year 2021, since the date of January 20, is being marked by the 80th anniversary of one of the most important ephemeris in the history of the Brazilian aviation: the creation of the Ministry of Aeronautics. This event represented the material and symbolic culmination of the profound transformations that the air field was undergoing in the 1930s, like for example the significant technological advances in the civilian and military use of aircraft. Based on these rapid changes, the structuring of an exclusive ministerial

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entity to control all sectors of national aviation was considered strategic by Getúlio Vargas administration (1930-1945), in 1940, because it was assessed that it would be able to enhance the use of aircraft as means of commerce, communication and defense.

This measure put an end to the model adopted for many years in Brazil, in which the air sector was divided under the control of three different ministries. This conformation was originated with the installation of the Naval Aviation School on August 23, 1916 (BRASIL, 1916), and the Military Aviation School on January 15, 1919 (BRASIL, 1919), which were subordinated, respectively, to the entities of the Navy and the War. The civil air navigation services were regulated on July 22, 1925, and were subordinated to the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (BRASIL, 1925). Proposals for changes to this paradigm have occurred since the creation of these sectors in the Armed Forces, mainly due to the auxiliary and incipient role given to them by the Navy and the Army, by not having any administrative, technical or operational independence (TEIXEIRA, 1992, p. 21).

During the interwar period (1918-1939), the rapid development of aviation caused the major European powers to reorganize the military air forces of their countries, making them independent from of the Navy and Army. England was the first one, when the Ministry of Air in April 1918, which began to manage all military and civilian aeronautical activity¹, was established. France, on the other hand, unified its air forces in 1928, maintaining part of naval aviation under the administration of the Ministry of the Navy. In turn, Italy introduced the Ministry of Air in 1929, which had control of all civil and military aviation in the country completely (FALCONI, 2009, p. 26-28).

In Brazil, the search for autonomy intensified in the 1930s, when more intense criticism of the dismemberment of the air sector gained momentum, with the year 1935 as a milestone. On February 20, Captain-Aviator Antonio Alves

Cabral uttered, at the Military Club, a conference in which he proposed the creation of a “Ministry of Air” in the country, based on the Italian model of complete unification of military and civil aviation. At the end of the presentation, he received support, among others, from General Góis Monteiro, then Minister of War². In addition, campaigns were organized with repercussions in the media that advocated the establishment of the ministerial entity at hand. One of them was launched in April by Navy and Army aviators, such as corvette captain Amarílio Vieira Cortez and Lieutenant Colonel Armando de Souza Ararigbóia (LAVENÈRE-WANDERLEY, 1975, p. 213).

However, the government was only inclined to evaluate structural reform in the area after the outbreak of World War II. The news of the victorious attacks of the German and Italian aviation at the beginning of the world conflict brought evidence of the importance of the aerial arm to ensure national security. Therefore, Getúlio Vargas decided to consult the institutions involved in the civil and military sectors of aviation, requesting the production of opinions stating whether or not they are favorable to unification. In response, both the Army and the Ministry of Transport and Public Works were in favor of the measure³. In turn, the Navy General Staff, representing the Navy, manifested against⁴ the measure. Besides knowing the institutional position of the organs and ministries that would be affected by the centralization, the president also wanted to know the individual opinion of the military personnel who worked in the branch. To this end, he requested Captain Nero Moura, his private pilot, to gather fellow airmen of the Armed Forces and consult them on the issue, producing a document in which he synthesized the predominant position. The result was the consent to the foundation of the new ministry (MOURA, 1996, p. 92 and 93).

Examining all this information, the Head of State decided, in the second half of 1940, to make the Ministry of Aeronautics a reality, creating it on January 20, 1941,

¹ Only in 1937 was there a change, when the British government accepted that The Embarked Aviation ceased to belong to the Ministry of Air and returned to the control of the Ministry of the Navy (FALCONI, 2009, p. 26).

² Information extracted from the diary of Eurico Gaspar Dutra, produced when he held, from July 1933 to April 1935, the post of Director of Military Aviation. See: Eurico Dutra Archive, ED dp 1930.10.14. Folder I.2. P. 105. CPDOC/FGV.

³ The opinion prepared by the General Staff of the Army and the letter produced by the Minister of War Eurico Gaspar Dutra are deposited in: National Archive. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 6, package 15, dossiers 12 and 13. On the other, the letters with the projects authored by the Department of Civil Aeronautics and the National Aeronautics Council are located in: National Archive. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 6, package 15, dossiers 14 and 15.

⁴ The memorandum forwarded to the National Security Council, with the opinion of the decision, can be found at: National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 1, package 1, doc. 2.

together with the National Air Forces (BRASIL, 1941a)⁵. In addition, not to cause unnecessary friction between the Army and the Navy, if he chose to put to preside over the newly launched portfolio the member of one of these institutions, Getúlio Vargas chose a civilian: the gaucho⁶ Joaquim Pedro Salgado Filho. He was chosen both because he was someone of the president's trust and for his extensive political and administrative experience, since, he was graduated in Law, had been Minister of Labor, Industry and Trade (1932-1935) and federal deputy (1935-1937). Moreover, his family and his professional trajectory contributed favorably, because they had elements that brought him closer, on the one hand, to public security, by having held the post of chief of police (1932), and, on the other hand, of the military, both for being the son of a colonel and having exercised the activity of minister of the Supreme Military Court (1938-1941) (MOREIRA, 2001).

The focus of this article is precisely geared on the performance of the first minister of Aeronautics, during the almost five years he was at the head of the position (1941-1945). The objective is to understand what actions he has defined and followed to be successful in the difficult task of integrating the aviation of the Army, Navy and Department of Civil Aeronautics (DAC), as well as trying to transform the Brazilian nation into an air powerhouse. It is defended here that the main strategy employed by Salgado Filho for this purpose consisted in the elaboration of a project, that is, an "organized conduct to achieve specific purposes" (VELHO, 1994, p. 101), aimed at the construction of what was called at the time of an "aeronautical mentality" (RODRIGUES, 1941). This expression served to represent the broad attempt to generalize the awareness of the population about the needs for a collective effort for the development of air navigation.

After defining the direction, he would give to his administration, the minister took advantage of the celebrations of The Aviator's Day, which occurred in October 1941, during the "Week of the Wings", in order to disseminate to the general public, the phrase program coined by him to synthesize the goal of achievements outlined for his folder: "Pilots for Brazil, airplanes for pilots and technicians for airplanes. This is the aeronautical streamer"(A MANHÃ, 1941b, p. 13). That is, the goal of providing the country with a significant number of prepared and competent aviators, of training aircraft to train them and professionals capable of designing and maintaining

aircraft. From here on, we will follow the development of this triad of pilots, airplanes and technicians, in the civil and military aspects, considered by the ministry, to be interdependent in the process of building the aeronautical mentality.

2 PILOTS FOR BRAZIL

As soon as he took over the office, Salgado Filho announced, as one of his main concerns, to increase the number of military pilots in Brazil. Given the complexity of this goal, the government also began to invest in an air reserve, formed by young civilians, encouraged to learn the basics of the aviation universe (A NOITE, 1941a, p. 3). To this end, the Minister of Aeronautics encouraged the emergence and strengthening of pre-aeronautical teaching organizations, considering that the Active School of Air Youth and the Air Scouts are the most important ones. The first school, created in 1940, in Rio de Janeiro, by former Army aviator Armando Pinto Ferreira, had, in February 1941, 7,000 associates, from all the States of Brazil (A NOITE, 1941b, p. 8). The Air Scouts were created in Curitiba by major aviator Godofredo Vidal in 1938. However, the significant growth of the organization occurred after Salgado Filho founded, on April 19, 1944, the Brazilian Federation of Air Scouts (FBE-Ar), responsible for stimulating the foundation of entities in various States of the country (A NOITE, 1944, p. 7).

The Department of Press and Propaganda (DIP) sought to collaborate with the initiative by publishing books encouraging children to pursue the pilot's career (GRIECO, 1941). To facilitate the association, the Ministry of Aeronautics invested, starting in August 1941, public resources in aeroclubs and civil aviation schools, through subsidies that reduced the price of flight hours of piloting courses. Young people with completed secondary education could receive a 50% reduction in the value of the instruction (A MANHÃ, 1941a, p. 13). These financial incentives contributed to the multiplication of such entities. If before 1941 they were only 20,⁷ on November 30, 1943 the number of civil aviation schools and aeroclubs reached 202 (SOUZA, 1944, p. 279-284). This substantial increase in units had a direct impact on the number of trained pilots. In 1930, Brazil had 145 fliers, with brevets by Aeroclube do Brasil. In the beginning of 1942, the scenario was different, with 1,100 civilians already receiving aviator diplomas (CULTURA POLÍTICA, 1942, p. 214).

⁵ On May 22, 1941, the National Air Forces were renamed the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) (BRASIL, 1941d).

⁶ A person from the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

⁷ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 6, package 17, dossier 4.

In the military aspect of the aeronautical mentality, Salgado Filho's main action, with the end of the Navy and Army Aviation Schools, was to restructure the training of aviator officers, adapting it to the new times, to meet the youth that would be better prepared. Thus, seeking to correct errors considered recurrent in the past, such as lack of investment and high indiscipline, the minister created, on March 25, 1941, the School of Aeronautics (BRASIL, 1941c), located at Campo dos Afonsos, in the outbuilding that had belonged to military aviation. The teaching given to pilots comprised a three-year course consisting of Basic Education, Military Instruction and Aeronautical Instruction (CULTURA POLÍTICA, 1941, p. 224). The concern that motivated the measure was to train, in large numbers, highly qualified pilots, of high intellectual level (extensive technical knowledge) and perfect physical condition.

To this end, the young people who entered the new school's rank would be subjected to a severe selection and training, in which the expected moral qualities of the pilots would develop, made of "serene courage, of quiet and conscious boldness, and above all of unalterable cold-blooded"⁸ and of the "determination of sense of responsibility and discipline of flight"⁹. The Ministry of Aeronautics sought to be guided by the following direction: "Gone is the time when aviation was the element of the crazy and the unconscious: today's pilot must have the exact notion of the value of his own life and the material entrusted by the State to his expertise"¹⁰. The goal was to train more and better. Therefore, there was an effort to accelerate the production of aviator officers. According to projection deposited in Salgado Filho's fund, the planning conducted by the office would be able to increase the numbers from 145 enrolled students and 24 effectively graduated in 1941 to 1,100 enrolled and 256 graduates in 1946.¹¹

3 AIRPLANES FOR THE PILOTS

As regards the construction of the civil aspect of an aeronautical mentality, the incentive to the

rapid growth in the number of pilots needed to be accompanied by similar efforts in relation to the number of available aircraft for the training of aviators. In order to increase aircraft offer, the minister developed the National Aviation Campaign (CNA), by which the private donation of money was requested to be used in the purchase of training planes, then offered free of charge to the most diverse Brazilian aeroclubs. The initiative, launched in 1941, was the result of a partnership between Salgado Filho and the journalist Assis Chateaubriand (SOUZA, 1944, p. 210).

Given the large amount needed to purchase an air device, the campaign was aimed primarily at entrepreneurs. A significant amount of them accepted the invitation, such as José Joaquim da Cunha, a farmer in Ituiutaba, Minas Gerais, who made a donation, on March 3, 1944, for the acquisition of the plane "Vila de Tefé"¹². However, less favored classes also contributed to aeronautical equipment in Brazil. For example, Salgado Filho received, on November 23, 1942, 1,500 cruzeiros from spontaneous collection made among Construction and Furniture workers in the city of Campo Grande, Mato Grosso.¹³

The result of the campaign proved promising, exceeding the most optimistic expectations. The April 1943 issue of the magazine *Cultura Política* recorded, up to that time, 315 airplanes, which caused about 250 aeroclubs from various States of the country to receive aircraft (ESCOBAR FILHO, 1943, p. 75). Approximately 600 aircraft were obtained by the campaign by the end of the Estado Novo.¹⁴ The analysis of such an initiative shows that it was capable, in a short period of time, to significantly develop and transform Brazil's civil aviation, since, in addition to obtaining hundreds of aerial training aircraft, it also stimulated the foundation of aeroclubs, the construction of airfields and hangars, the training of hundreds of pilots and the delivery of the same number of brevets.

With regard to the supply of aircraft aimed at building the military aspect of the aeronautical

⁸ File Gustavo Capanema, GC i 1938.00.00/2, microfilm roll 70, folder XIII, photo 346/2. CPDOC/FGV.

⁹ Same as above.

¹⁰ Same as above.

¹¹ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 15, doc. 84.

¹² National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 8, package 23, dossier 12.

¹³ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 15, doc. 94.

¹⁴ Getúlio Vargas Archive, GV c 1945.07.27, microfilm roll 8 photo 895/2. CPDOC/FGV; and National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 9, package 29, dossier 3.

mentality, Salgado Filho's efforts have mainly turned to strengthen the national aviation industry, making the country less dependent on other nations. The main action taken by him, while at the head of the ministry, was to complete the two enterprises considered by the Vargas government capable of guaranteeing Brazilian autonomy in the production of air devices and their components, taking large steps for the country to become an air power: the National Aircraft Factory and the National Engine Factory. By guaranteeing Brazil the mastery of technology and mass production, they would provide the fighter planes to the Brazilian Air Force.

Since the 1930s, Getúlio Vargas had the intention of installing an airplane factory in Brazil prepared to supply devices to the Army and Navy. To this end, he set up a commission, in which, in September 1934, French engineer and aircraft manufacturer René Couzinet was included, an expert invited by the president to participate in the initiative. After long studies, the commission chose Lagoa Santa for the installation of such industry, located 50 kilometers from Belo Horizonte/MG and, therefore, away from the coast, making the enterprise less vulnerable to enemy attacks (SOUZA, 1944, p. 455-457).

Once this issue was resolved, a public bid notice was launched to hire a company in charge of installing and exploring the factory. The government committed to obtaining from the United States, the license to build the North American NA-44 aircraft and order aircraft, Hydroplanes, and spare parts annually. (BRASIL, 1938). The company Construções Aeronáuticas S.A., which had Antônio Lartigau Seabra as one of the main shareholders and René Couzinet as a Technical Director, presented a proposal and obtained the bid.

From 1940, the focus was the construction of the factory. However, the context of World War II undermined negotiations with the United States, preventing the shipment of the necessary machinery. The creation of the Ministry of Aeronautics raised expectations that the situation would change. Indeed, Salgado Filho, on the day he took office, declared his commitment to accelerate

the construction of the National Aircraft Factory (A VANGUARDA, 1941, p. 1). With this objective in mind, on May 29, 1941, a special credit of one thousand seven hundred contos de réis¹⁵ to fund the enterprise (BRASIL, 1941e) and two thousand contos de réis was opened to pay part of the acquisition expenses of the equipment required with the Americans (BRASIL, 1941f).

However, the distrust of the United States in relation to the Technical Director of the Brazilian factory, René Couzinet, accused of Franco-German collaboration¹⁵, proved to be a major obstacle to the release of the ordered equipment. So, in September 1942, the Vargas government requested the sale to Brazilians of the company's shares owned by foreigners, which occurred on December 10, when Francisco Pignatari, owner of Companhia Aeronáutica Paulista, acquired most of them. This way, René Couzinet got rid of the titles he held and, together with the technicians brought from Europe, moved away from the Construções Aeronáuticas in January 1943¹⁶.

Despite this, the United States did not release the equipment, claiming, in early 1943, "shortage of airplane machines, tools and materials."¹⁷ Only on August 26, 1943 the Americans did authorize the sending of the technology.¹⁸ In the months that followed, the new administration of Construções Aeronáuticas still had to employ many actions so that the plant could work, causing the first planes to be ready only in 1946.

So that the autonomy project could be complete, it was also necessary to master engine construction techniques. To this end, the Minister of Transport and Public Works, after the president's agreement, requested, on October 26, 1938, studies on the feasibility of the construction of a factory of this component in the country (INSTITUTO HISTÓRICO-CULTURAL DA AERONÁUTICA, 1990, p. 589). In July 1940, Getúlio Vargas released five thousand five hundred contos de réis so that it would start leaving the drawing board. (BRASIL, 1940). Colonel engineer Antônio Guedes Muniz, who became responsible, in August, to complete the project of the National Motor Factory (FNM) and to take care of its installation in Xerém, in Duque de Caxias, a city in the State of Rio de Janeiro.¹⁹

¹⁵ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 67, folder 3, doc. 12.

¹⁶ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 6, folder 7, doc. 2.; and National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 67, folder 3, doc. 17.

¹⁷ National Archive. Fundo Civil Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic, BR AN RIO 35, Series Ministries, Subseries Aeronautics. Can 513. Process n°. 1.122/43.

¹⁸ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 65, folder 1, doc. 17.

¹⁹ Gustavo Capanema Archive, GC i 1938.00.00/2, microfilm roll 70, pasta XIX, photo 802/4. CPDOC/FGV.

With the creation of the Ministry of Aeronautics, Antonio Guedes Muniz began to work in partnership with the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, contributing more closely to the development of the factory and pumping money into it. In order to materialize the Brazilian project of autonomy in the air sector, Colonel Muniz traveled to the United States in early 1941, in order to negotiate the acquisition of the machinery and the patent of an engine necessary for FNM. However, the external conjuncture, due to the expectation of the Americans entering the Second World War, hampered the negotiations, since their priority at that time was to use the entire production for their own and England's protection.²⁰

The situation changed in March 1942, when the United States, seeking a more active participation of Brazil in the protection of the American continent, granted the Brazilian Ministry of Aeronautics fifty million dollars, of which the president authorized the holder of the office to employ one million nine hundred thousand in the purchase of the machinery to be installed in FNM.²¹ This approach allowed Brazil to sign a technology assignment contract with Wright Aircraft Engines and Fairchild Engine and Airplane Corporation. Throughout the years 1943 and 1944, the raw materials and machinery essential to the operation of the plant finally arrived in the country, allowing the first engines to be ready in the second half of 1944 (CULTURA POLÍTICA, 1944, p. 48 and 49).

4 TECHNICIANS FOR THE AIRPLANES

Continuing the construction of the civil aspect of the aeronautical mentality, Salgado Filho's office sought to encourage young people, as adults, to opt for technical professions in the airfield, such as mechanics or engineering. To this end, he was assisted by the DIP, which published books aimed at Brazilian students, in which he presented, in an exciting way, the crafts of construction and maintenance of aircraft and called on the "little calculators of cubic roots, trigonometric curves, of second-degree equations!" to stand ready to become "future mechanical birds' surgeons" (GRIECO, 1941,

p. 27). To facilitate the training of stakeholders, the Ministry of Aeronautics, since August 1941, has structured a policy for granting grants to aeroclubs and Civil Aviation Schools to reduce the price of enrolment in aviation mechanic and flight radio telegraph training courses (CULTURA POLÍTICA, 1943, p. 41 and 42).

Among the many actions used in order to awaken in the new generations the interest in these occupations, Salgado Filho identified in model aircraft the best strategy to achieve this goal. In addition, the main definition of this modality in the country, elaborated in 1940 by Dominique Pierre Gay, technician of the Aeroclube do Brasil, began to serve perfectly, in 1941, the interests of the Ministry of Aeronautics: "first theoretical and practical school of aviation" (GAY, 1940, p. 2). Thus, because it was an activity that involved the construction of small-scale aircraft, it allowed the practitioner to acquire, in addition to patience and discipline, technical and practical knowledge of calculation, metric, aerodynamics, painting, drawing, engine operation, body shop and carpentry.

Therefore, the Ministry of Aeronautics carried out several actions directed to this practice, demonstrating the importance attributed to it for the formation of the future staff of technical aviation professionals. In August 1941, it was launched a campaign aimed at installing a "Model Aircraft Club" in each Brazilian school unit (O IMPARCIAL, 1941, p. 4). Two months later, the First National Model Aircraft Championship, for those under 21 years of age, during the "Week of the Wings", was created with free registrations and cash prizes (O JORNAL, 1941, p. 5). In 1943, to keep the activity even more in evidence, Salgado Filho increased the number of annual competitions, which took place in other months besides October (DIÁRIO DA NOITE, 1943, p. 3). That is, the stimulus, among young Brazilians, to the practice of model aircraft has become the most important governmental measure to form an air reserve of aeronautical builders.

In turn, in the military sphere, Salgado Filho's main action to strengthen the training of air equipment technicians was the creation, on March 25, 1941, of the School of Aeronautics Specialists (BRASIL, 1941b). This unit of instruction,

²⁰ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box72, folder 4, doc. 1.

²¹ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 72, folder 5, doc. 23.

installed in Galeão, in the former premises of the defunct Naval Aviation School, served to the training and improvement of personnel who entered the course of Mechanical Officer, intended for non-officers and mechanical first sergeants for Airplane, Radio, Armament and Photographers; in the Course of Specialists, aimed at the privates of the Armed Forces and civilians voluntarily enlisted; and in other courses, specially authorized by the minister and intended to form and improve, eventually, the Subaltern Personnel Corps of the Aeronautics (ESQUADRILHA, 1943, p. 4).

The great interest of the Ministry of Aeronautics for the proper training of those responsible for conserving and repairing all the equipment involved in the military aviation was to solve the intense criticism received by the former aviation schools of the Army and Navy. Their content concerned the lack of maintenance of equipment and aircraft, which had in the past generated significant losses, both financial and in the training of officers. After all, the efficiency of the Brazilian Air Force depended on well-prepared technicians to ensure the integrity of airplanes (expensive, delicate and short-lived devices), cargo transported and the lives of pilots and passengers.²²

Precisely for this reason, Salgado Filho structured Parque dos Afonsos to meet reparations and revisions, manufacture of parts and, eventually, construction of complete aircraft, of the 1st Aviation Regiment, of the School of Aeronautics and of the National Air Mail. In order to fulfill its functions, the Parque had, in 1943, more than 800 men in their workshops, including mechanics, adjusters, carpenters, boilermakers, painters and radio craftsmen²³. The School of Aeronautics Specialists developed widely after its creation, so much that, by September 1944, it had already trained more than three hundred sergeants, including airplane mechanics, flight and land radio telegraphers, aerial photographers and weapons mechanics, in six classes.²⁴

Despite the commitment to expand the School of Aeronautical Specialists, its ability to form new staff was inferior to the growing demand for specialists, especially after Brazil's entry into World

War II. To solve this issue, Salgado Filho, with the help of John Paul Riddle, owner of a private of aeronautical technical-professional education network in the United States and managed to bring one of the units to Brazil, inaugurating it in São Paulo, on May 2, 1944, under the name of Technical Aviation School. The new institution was created to increase the training of specialists for the Aeronautical Reserve. However, due to the war efforts, all graduates on the site ended up automatically joining the active service of the Brazilian Air Force. The intensification of relations with the United States, due to Brazil's participation in the world conflict, made it possible not only to set up the school, but also the arrival of U.S. technicians and instructors to help in the training of the students (CAVALCANTI, s/d, p. 43 and 45).

5 CONCLUSION

This article analyzed the main material and symbolic actions employed by Salgado Filho, while at the head of the Aeronautics office, in order to meet the conditions necessary for the transformation of the nation into an air power. To this end, the minister, during four years and nine months in which he held the office, made efforts to implement a State project aimed at building an aeronautical mentality. It consisted of a set of ideas, principles and actions, to be internalized by the entire population, related to the decisive importance of aviation for the country.

After the creation of the new ministry, Salgado Filho intensified measures to strengthen the civil and military aspects of the aeronautical mentality, by disseminating, during the "Week of the Wings" of 1941, the slogan that would guide his administration: "Pilots for Brazil, airplanes for pilots and technicians for airplanes". This phrase summarized the plan to train, in significant quantity, highly qualified aviators (air associations, aeroclubs and Aeronautics School), increase the number of aircraft for training and protection of the territory (National Aviation Campaign, National Aircraft Factory and National Engine Factory) and have specialized professionals to design and fix them (model aircraft, School of Aeronautics Specialists and Technical Aviation School).

²² Gustavo Capanema Archive, GC i 1938.00.00/2, microfilm roll 70, folder XIII, photos 346/2 and 347/1. CPDOC/FGV.

²³ Same as above. Photo 349/2.

²⁴ National Archives. Salgado Filho Fund, BR AN RIO R0, box 8, package 23, dossier 13.

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BRASIL. Decreto-Lei n.º. 3.302, de 22 de maio de 1941d. Dá nova denominação às Forças Aéreas Nacionais e aos seus estabelecimentos.

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