



**“We are nationalizing!”: the schools of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in Rio Grande do Sul and the Nationalization Campaign of the Teaching of the New State<sup>1</sup>**

“Estamos nos nacionalizando!”: as escolas da Igreja Luterana – Sínodo de Missouri no Rio Grande do Sul e a Campanha de Nacionalização do Ensino do Estado Novo

“Estamos nacionalizándonos!”: las escuelas de la Iglesia Luterana – Sínodo de Missouri en el Rio Grande do Sul y la Campaña de Nacionalización de la enseñanza en el Estado Nuevo

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**Abstract**

This article seeks to understand the process of nationalization of education proposed by the Brazilian State and its relationship with the schools of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, at the end of the 1930s. Although the synod understands that it is not part of its sphere of action, in the educational area, the issue of defending a Germanic culture, and of being nationalizing such understandings were not so evident especially with the Secretary of Education and Health of Rio Grande do Sul who, at the very least, suspected and employed surveillance over the synod. Finally, if, on the one hand, the synod claimed to be in the process of nationalization, on the other, several schools of the synod were closed for failing to comply with the rules of nationalization of education.

**Keywords:** Nationalization of Education. Lutheran Schools. Missouri Synod.

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## Resumo

O presente artigo busca compreender o processo de nacionalização do ensino proposto pelo Estado Brasileiro e sua relação com as escolas da Igreja Luterana - Sínodo de Missouri, ao final da década de 1930. Apesar de o sínodo entender não ser da esfera de sua atuação, na área educacional, a questão da defesa de uma cultura germânica, e de estar se nacionalizando, tais entendimentos não eram tão evidentes especialmente junto à secretaria de educação e saúde do Rio Grande do Sul que, no mínimo, suspeitava e empregava vigilância sobre o sínodo. Por fim, se por um lado, o sínodo afirmava estar em processo de nacionalização, por outro, várias escolas do sínodo foram fechadas por não conseguirem cumprir as normas da nacionalização do ensino.

**Palavras-chave:** Nacionalização do Ensino. Escolas Luteranas. Sínodo de Missouri.

## Resumen

El presente artículo busca comprender el proceso de nacionalización de la enseñanza propuesta por el Estado Brasileño y su relación con las escuelas de la Iglesia Luterana - Sínodo de Missouri, al final de la década de 1930. A pesar del sínodo entender no ser de la esfera de su actuación, en el área educacional, la cuestión de la defensa de una cultura germánica, y de estar se nacionalizando, tales entendimientos no eran tan evidentes especialmente junto à secretaria de educación y salud del Rio Grande do Sul que, por lo mínimo, sospechaba y empleaba vigilancia sobre el sínodo. Por fin, si por un lado, el sínodo afirmaba estar en proceso de nacionalización, por otro, varias escuelas del sínodo fueron cerradas por no consiguieren cumplir las normas de la nacionalización de la enseñanza.

**Palabras-claves:** Nacionalización de la Enseñanza. Escuelas Luteranas. Sínodo de Missouri.

## Introduction

In Education Nationalization Commission's report, dated October 5, 1940 and addressed to Gustavo Capanema, minister of Education and Health of Getúlio Vargas's government, the reporter Lourenço Filho made the following comment regarding the process of Education's nationalization in the national territory.

For the first time, in the history of the country, the government has taken to heart the problem of nationalization of immigrants and their descendants. Before 1937, this wouldn't have been possible in some states, because the current institutions developed in electoral forces the nuclei of foreign origin, giving it enough influence to thwart the intentions of the Central Government. (FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS - CPDOC, 1940, p.6)

However the president of Lutheran Church ecclesiastical institution – Missouri Synod<sup>2</sup> in Brazil, Rev. August Heine, in the year 1942, in correspondence to Dr. Plínio Brasil Milano, delegate of the Department of Political and Social Order of Rio Grande do Sul, emphasized that the religious institution under his presidency strictly complied, in schools linked to the aforementioned synod, with all the dictates of the Campaign for the Education's Nationalization:

It is, therefore, a historical fact that our church has already fought for nationalization, as it works mainly within the German population of our State, before the grandiose nationalizing campaign for the New State began, executed among us so brilliantly by the State government and mainly by Dr. Coelho de Souza, your honorable Secretary of Education and Public Health. Let it be said that with the same Secretary signed our church an agreement that unequivocally proves the high prestige that our ecclesiastical corporation enjoys in the governmental circles of this State (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, 1942, p.1)

Both quotes were taken from primary sources<sup>3</sup> that relate to the same historical event: The Campaign for the Education's Nationalization promoted by the New State, and its relationship with schools, in this case, linked to a protestant ecclesiastical institution with a strong presence among German immigrants and their descendants on Brazilian soil (here in after referred to as German-Brazilians).

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<sup>2</sup> According to Marlow (2013), despite German immigration to Brazil starting in 1824, Lutheran synods only appeared in Brazil later in the century: "Sínodo Riograndense" (1886); "Sínodo Evangélico Luterano de Santa Catarina, Paraná e outros estados na América do Sul "Associação de Comunidades Evangélicas de Santa Catarina e Paraná" (1911) and "Sínodo Evangélico Brasil Central" (1912), all from Germany, would unite, in 1968, and from "Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil" (IELCB). In addition to them, coming from descendants of Germans who lived in the United States of America, the Missouri Synod began its activities in Brazil in 1900, being made official in 1904. In 1937, it adopted the name: "Sínodo Evangélico Luterano do Brasil", and later, in 1954, the current nomenclature: "Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil" (IELB). In this article, we will use a term most frequently used in the New State (1937-1945): Missouri Synod.

<sup>3</sup> The reports presented in the article are primary sources of research and preserve the wording used at the time of its issuance.

To understand this relationship, Dominique Julia's reflections on school culture as an object of historical analysis are relevant. According to Julia, the problematization of school culture is necessary given that it is interconnected with other issues. Thus, the author states:

The school culture cannot be studied without a precise analysis of the conflicting or peaceful relationships that it maintains at each period of its history with the set of cultures that are contemporary to it: religious culture, political culture or popular culture (JULIA, 2001, p. 10).

Making a political and cultural analysis of the historical process of education in Modernity, Julia (2001) quotes, as one of the elements of this process, the emphasis given by the Protestant Reformation - and, from it, by the Lutheran Protestant pastors, - on knowing how to read and write, and how this was reflected in German society and in those societies which Protestantism had some impact, as in the case of Lutheran schools in Brazil. In this sense, Julia states, that "the importance given by the Pietist doctrine to Confirmation, in Lutheran Churches as a public affirmation of an interior conviction [...] [results] in favor of compulsory schooling" (JULIA, 2001, p. 26).

Thus, based on Julia's analyses, we believe it is opportune to seek to understand the friendly and/or conflictual relationship between the Brazilian State and the Missouri Synod regarding the nationalization of education, as these issues interrelate and affect both groups.

It would be convenient to carefully analyze the cultural transfers that were operated from the school towards other society's sectors in terms of forms and contents and, inversely, the cultural transfers operated from other sectors towards the school (JULIA, 2001, p.37).

This article will seek to understand, therefore, the action of the Brazilian State through the Campaign for the Education's Nationalization towards schools linked to the Missouri Synod, as well as to understand the Synod's reaction to the guidelines that were imposed on it. To do so, at first, it is necessary to know the process called the Campaign for the Education's Nationalization in order, later, to understand its relationship with the aforementioned religious institution and its schools.

### **Remembering the Nationalization Campaign of the New State**

The New State Nationalization Campaign aimed to build a kind of Tupiniquim nationalism, especially with groups of foreign immigrants and their descendants who lived on Brazilian soil. The Brazilian authorities understood the need to "Brazilianize" those who lived in Brazil and who still maintained the cultural, social, economic and religious traditions of their homeland, that is, so that they could be Brazilians in fact and in truth.

Schwartzman states that, starting in 1938, the nationalization project effectively tried to become a reality on Brazilian soil, since "[...] it is fertile in legal measures and projects identified with the construction of Brazilian nationalism" (SCHWARTZMAN, 2000, p.149).

This process would take place mainly in the educational area, through the action of the Ministry of Education and Health, headed by Minister Gustavo Capanema, assisted by the respective state education secretaries in promoting a genuinely national identity. Thus, "the constitution of nationality should be the culmination of all the pedagogical action of the ministry, in its broadest sense" (SCHWARTZMAN, 2000, p. 142).

Schwartzman (2000) still understands that it would be up to the Ministry of Education and Health to invoke national elements in the education of students, through a mythologized

history of national heroes and institutions, from cult to government authorities, including an emphasis on Brazilian Catholicism, considered a more legitimate form of religiosity compared to other ecclesiastical segments in the country. In other words, it would be up to the ministry to emphasize the green-yellow pride, to the detriment of other cultures, traditions and religions considered inadequate to the Brazilian reality.<sup>4</sup>

However, Schwartzman (2000) also ponders that such proposal did not consider the national reality, since, in the composition of the Brazilian population, a large part came from waves of immigrants who settled in Brazil from the second decade of the XIX century. According to the author,

It's hard, and it was much more in those times, to realize the ideological burden of the notion that education should be an instrument for the construction of Brazilian nationality, until we consider the fact that Brazil is largely a country of immigrants. There has never been, on the part of the various political currents of any significance in Brazilian history, anyone who defended for the country the constitution of a culturally pluralistic society, which would give each nationality brought here and the country's own primitive inhabitants conditions to maintain and develop their own identity ethnic and cultural (SCHWARTZMAN, 2000, p.127).

From this perspective, we are reminded that, in 1824, with the foundation of São Leopoldo, in Rio Grande do Sul, by Germans - the initial mark of the great migrations to Brazil identified by traditional historiography -, large waves of immigrants would settle in Brazilian territory, especially in the three southern states of the country: Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná. However, a significant portion also settled in other states, such as São Paulo and Espírito Santo. Important waves of immigrants were not only Germans, but also Italians, Poles, Pomeranians, Syrians, Lebanese, among others, who emigrated to Brazil.

Also Seyferth (2017, p. 592) agree that for New State authorities, it was essential the role of education and, in particular, the use of the vernacular in teaching in the classroom, such as promoting factors to a kind of national conscience, along the lines of the concepts elaborated by Ernest Gellner (1983)<sup>5</sup> and Eric Hobsbawm (1990).<sup>6</sup>

This time, according to Seyferth (2017, p. 598-599), within the process of nationalization of education, government authorities understood that the following measures would be necessary to achieve the objectives of “Brazilianizing” all residents on national soil :

- 1) Spreading Brazilian patriotism;
- 2) Have a faculty trained in your vast majority by Brazilians;
- 3) Teach in the classroom only in Portuguese;
- 4) Prohibit foreign language teaching for children under fourteen years of age;
- 5) Censoring textbooks in other languages to privilege the

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<sup>4</sup> In this sense, due to the fact that they are of different religiosity from Catholicism, Dreher suggests that “[...] the large and largest group reached by the New State and its proposal for nationalization was the Evangelical Lutheran” (DREHER, 1994, p.87).

<sup>5</sup> Gellner highlights the school's role in shaping nationalism: “Nationalism is essentially the general imposition of a high culture on a society where, previously, popular cultures had occupied the lives of the majority, and in some cases the entire population. This implies the widespread dissemination of a language mediated by the school and academically supervised” (GELLNER, 1983, p. 91).

<sup>6</sup> Hobsbawm also understands the importance of school in fostering nationalism: “Naturally states would use the increasingly powerful communication machinery with their inhabitants, especially primary schools - to spread the image and heritage of the 'nation' and inculcate adherence to it, as well as linking them to the country and the flag, often 'inventing traditions', or even nations, for this purpose” (HOBSBAWM, 1990, p. 112).

Portuguese language, via the Ministry of Education; 6) Prohibit nationalized schools from receiving grants from foreign institutions and governments.

Bomeny (1999), when highlighting the great political project of the New State, which involved the construction and valorization of Brazilianness at the expense of other conceptions of nationality and citizenship, understood that, of all foreign groups in the national territory, the one that caused the most concern to the authorities was the German group: “There was no space in the New State’s nationalist project for the inclusion and acceptance of coexistence with strong and structured foreign cultural groups in the colonization regions” (BOMENY, 1999, p. 145).

Even considering other groups of immigrants, such as Italians and Japanese, affected by the Nationalization Campaign, the hard assimilation by German-Brazilians was due to the maintenance of cultural traits of the homeland, Germany, which, according to the understanding of the Brazilian authorities, rivaled national patriotism.

As an example, regarding the Brazilian authorities' thinking about the reality of German colonial nuclei in Brazil, considered true ethnic cysts, we take the words of Góis Monteiro, Chief of Staff of the Army, based on observations reported by the 5th Command Southern Military Region, to the Minister of War, Eurico Gaspar Dutra, in 1938. Góis Monteiro states that the situation of non-assimilation of the foreign element to Brazil occurred as a result of poorly organized and structured colonization: “[... ] as to the disastrous consequences of a misguided colonization in our country, without the necessary government directive and indispensable control” (FUNDAÇÃO GETÚLIO VARGAS - CPDOC, 1938, p. 1).

In view of this, Góis Monteiro believed that effective action by the Brazilian State through the nationalizing work was necessary, since “the maintenance of the nationality of origin, [...] which must be above the homeland in which they were born, must be the main concern when starting any campaign” (FUNDAÇÃO GETÚLIO VARGAS - CPDOC, 1938, p. 2).

If the nationalization of education was fundamental, in the face of an apparent danger and attachment to nationalities diffused from the Brazilian, Góis Monteiro understood that the main group that distanced itself from the objective proposed by the nationalization was the German.

Thinking that of all the elements rooted in our country, the best organized are the Germans, due to their isolation in which they seek to live, transmitting language, customs, beliefs, mentality, culture and patriotism to their descendants. [...]. German colonization is the most pernicious, because it has behind it, with the policy of Germany today, a policy capable not only of encouraging it but even protecting it, either by force or by diplomatic injunctions (FUNDAÇÃO GETÚLIO VARGAS - CPDOC , 1938, p. 2).

To resolve this situation, it was essential for the Brazilian State to act effectively on all institutions that would not be collaborating in the process of fostering a Brazilian nationality. In this case, the so-called German-Brazilian parish schools that existed in the regions of German colonization in Brazil.

In the next section, we will learn about the reality of these schools during the period of the New State Nationalization Campaign, as well as how they were or were not adapting to the measures of the Brazilian Government.

## German-Brazilian schools in Rio Grande do Sul

The secretary of education and public health of Rio Grande do Sul, JP Coelho de Souza, in a Conference held in 1941, in Rio de Janeiro, identified the existence of about 2,000 schools in areas of foreign colonization in Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>7</sup> These schools were basically linked to ecclesiastical denominations or were independent schools.

Among the religious denominations to which the schools belonged are the Catholic Church, the German Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Adventist Church. According to Coelho de Souza, “the Missouri Lutheran and Adventist Churches practically maintained teaching in the Portuguese language, the same not happening with the German Catholic and Lutheran Church, where the official language was German” (SOUZA, 1942, p. 17).

Kreutz (2013) understands that the so-called ethnic schools in Rio Grande do Sul did not behave homogeneously, with important differences occurring between them. An example of this is the existence of urban schools and rural schools. There were also lay schools and “confessional or parochial schools” linked to ecclesiastical institutions, “since that in Rio Grande do Sul, the confessional link of immigrant schools was much more expressive than in other states” (KREUTZ, 2013, p. 22262).

Also according to Kreutz, based on the Yearbook of the Association of German Immigration Teachers in Rio Grande do Sul, there was the following number of schools linked to German immigration in the state, in fact, a number below of what was mentioned by Coelho de Souza.

**Table 1:** Total German-Brazilian schools in Rio Grande do Sul

Number of German-Brazilian schools in Rio Grande do Sul in the 1930s	
Schools linked to the Lutheran Church	705
Schools linked to the Catholic Church	451
Mixed schools	169
Total German Immigration Schools	1.325

Source: KREUTZ, 2013, p. 22262

The problem in the thinking of the New State authorities who promoted the Nationalization Campaign was not the fact of the existence of such schools, but the inexistence of an education aimed at promoting "Brazilianness", since ethnic schools promoted aspects of the culture of homeland of their ancestors.

In this case, the peculiar and extremely serious situation in the German centers in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul drew attention. As Seyferth emphasizes, the authorities of the New State “perceived the school as one of the pillars of Germanity [Deutschum], as it was taught there the mother tongue, an essential element of cultural difference” (SEYFERTH, 2017, p. 586).

In Seyferth's words, we can understand the educational process that took place in ethnic schools in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul and the consequent concern of Brazilian authorities regarding the subject.

<sup>7</sup> The conference given by Coelho de Souza, in 1941, was published in 1942, with the title: Denúncia: o nazismo nas Escolas do Rio Grande, by Globo Publishing House.

In practice, religion, citizenship, Germanic cultural heritage and the reality of colonization were part of the curriculum, along with teaching in the German language, eventually in Portuguese, in addition to the subjects of geography, history, mathematics and natural sciences. The classes were taught in Portuguese, the main reason for the assimilationist criticism. After all, in the perception of Brazilian nationalism, in these schools, the history of Germany was given greater relevance to the detriment of the history of Brazil, a subject that, along with language, was at the heart of the “German-Brazilian” school issue (SEYFERTH, 2017, p. 587).

Both Kreutz (1999; 2013; 2014) and Seyferth (2017) point out that the vast majority of German-Brazilian schools in Rio Grande do Sul developed aspects of Germanism, that is, German culture, on the other hand, also understood that their function in Riograndense soil was to promote Brazilian citizenship on those who were under their care in the classroom. “The anthem 'Der Deutschbrasilianer' by Otto Meyer, which appears in practically all reading manuals at the German-Brazilian school, is an example of this, they professed their Brazilian citizenship with German songs” (KREUTZ, 1999, p. 152-153)

In this way, there was no doubt, at least for a significant part of German-Brazilian schools in the south of the country, of its dual function: to keep the memories of German cultural heritage alive, but also to promote Brazilian citizenship:

The community organization of German immigrants does not mean disengagement or ignorance of the national and state political structure. They had no doubt that they belonged to the Brazilian nation. [...] it can be seen in these publications that the curriculum, the teaching material and the method used in schools aimed at training for citizenship and community participation (KREUTZ, 2013, p. 22267).

The possible misunderstanding of this mentality, adjusted to the idea of the effective need for a “Brazilianization” of all those residing on Brazilian soil, led to preventive and repressive measures towards ethnic schools in the south of the country. According to Kreutz (2014), the main school preventive measures can be listed in the following government actions, which have not necessarily been fully implemented: 1) Expansion of the state school network; 2) Nationalization of the private school system; 3) Creation, in 1939, of the body of regional school delegates and technical advisors; 4) Creation of as many new school units as possible; 5) Appointment of teachers for the state public network.

But the actions of the authorities of the state of Rio Grande do Sul were not limited only to preventive measures, and also resulted in repressive measures. “The Campaign for the Nationalization of Education resulted, [...] in strong tempers, in the arrest of teachers and in the destruction of historical and culturally valuable works and documents” (KREUTZ, 2014, p. 123).

An example of this can be seen in the number of schools that were closed during this period, in an INEP document that pointed to the number of open and closed schools during the process of nationalization of education. The document presented data from the main states, in the south and southeast, which had the largest contingent of foreign immigrants established in their respective territories, as shown in Table 2:



**Table 2:** Opening and Closing of Schools during the Education Nationalization Campaign

State	Created Schools	Closed Schools
Rio Grande do Sul	238	103
Santa Catarina	472	298
Paraná	70	78
São Paulo	51	284
Espírito Santo	45	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>774</b>

**Source:** Fundação Getúlio Vargas - CPDOC, 1940, p.8.

It should be noted that, with the exception of São Paulo, a state in which the share of Teutist schools was small compared to other nationalities, for example the Japanese, in the southernmost states of Brazil and also in the state of Espírito Santo, according to a survey of INEP, there was an increase in the number of schools compared to the existing ones. However, it was also noticed a high number of schools that were closed in the same period.

It is necessary, however, that new research deepen the degree of efficiency of these schools in the period under review. For Quadros, however, it is noticeable that "therefore, it dates from the nationalization of education, which is why the process of organizing a state school system in Rio Grande do Sul should not be underestimated by educational historiography" (QUADROS, 2017, p 4).

Santos and Cecchetti (2018, p. 300) understand that, although the government closed a large number of German-Brazilian schools, what occurred the most in the period was their adaptation to the nationalism proposed by the Brazilian State. In other words, what happened was an acceleration of historical transformations, with a gradual expansion of the offer of public schools, from the first decades of the twentieth century, and a growing integration between the Teut population and the world outside that population.

It is also convenient to understand, even if briefly, the process of formation of these schools, as well as the question of whether or not they encourage the maintenance of Germanism (Deuschtum) in Brazilian lands.

### **The Missouri Synod schools and the issue of promoting Germanism in Rio Grande do Sul lands**

The relationship between the Lutheran Church and education goes back a long way. The Reformer Martin Luther, in the 16th century, had demonstrated in his writings the importance of school education. According to Santos and Cecchetti (2018, p. 293), especially in two of Luther's writings it is possible to attest to the appreciation of school education: In the first, from 1524, entitled "To the Councils of all cities in Germany to create and maintain schools Christians" and, later, in the writing "A sermon to send their children to school", of 1530. Beck states that "these writings do not reach the point of formulating a Christian theory of education. However, they serve to justify the commitment to good education that has characterized communities and leaders since the Reformation" (BECK, 1995, apud, SANTOS; CECCHETTI, 2018, p. 293).

Again, Julia's analyzes help us to understand the importance of the Protestant Reformation in the educational sector, when she states that "The Lutheran Reformation is based, however, on the idea that states should create and maintain schools: it is a necessary effect [...] teach children the principles of a Christian life" (JULIA, 2001, p. 29).

And this was really a premise of the Missouri Synod, not only in Brazilian territory, but since its foundation, in 1847, in the United States of America. Steyer states that the goal of the

Missouri Synod in the United States could be summed up in the statement: “a school beside each congregation” (STEYER, 1999, p. 36).

Also according to Steyer, such emphasis was also present in the speeches of those who started the synod's missionary work in Brazilian lands. Steyer quotes the October 1900 Report, the year the Missouri Synod arrived in Brazil, in which it states: “If we really want to settle down and expand, we must give special emphasis to school” (STEYER, 1999, p. 36). In that way, on August 26, 1900, the first Evangelical Lutheran Parish School was founded, in Colônia São Pedro, in the interior of Pelotas/RS, with 30 enrolled students. “Thus, the school was, at this time of implementation, the great expansion strategy of the Missouri Synod among German immigrants in Rio Grande do Sul” (STEYER, 1999, p.54).

Steyer (1999) also points out that, in 1903, the Concordia Institute was also founded, in Bom Jesus, in the interior of the municipality of São Lourenço do Sul/RS. This institution would be responsible, in Brazil, for the formation of pastors and teachers for the synod schools. The teaching, despite being carried out in Brazilian territory, was basically in the German language. In Steyer's words,

The curriculum included Portuguese, German, mathematics, history and geography. Three hours a week for German. For the Portuguese language was dedicated one hour a week. Although in Portuguese the students knew more than the teacher himself, so the teacher only supervised this activity (STEYER, 1999, p. 90).

But what was the position of the Missouri Synod on the issue of propagating Germanist ideas on Brazilian territory? Was the synod also understood to be responsible for the propagation of German culture on Brazilian territory, or that its function was only of a spiritual order?

Research on the subject indicates that the Riograndense Synod, of German origin, and which also worked among German-Brazilians in Rio Grande do Sul, understood as one of its premises the maintenance of the inseparable link between Germanism and the Church in Brazil. Authors such as Dreher (1981), Gertz (1987; 1998), Magalhães (1998), Prien (2001), highlight the role that Germanism has as a discourse of the Riograndense Synod among its membership. As it was said at the time: “Luthertum ist Deuschtum [Lutheranism is Germanity]” (Magalhães, 1998, p. 172).

On the other hand, researchers such as Gertz (1987; 1998) and Marlow (2013) point out that the Missouri Synod in Brazil understood that, in the first place, its function as an ecclesiastical institution was to announce the Word of God to the people, in this case also, mostly, the German-Brazilians. At the same time, the synod understood that it did not have the emphasis on Germanism, that is, on the dissemination of German culture in Brazilian lands, since this practice belonged, in the opinion of authorities linked to the synod, within the doctrine of the two kingdoms in Luther, to the secular kingdom.<sup>8</sup> “The Missouri Synod has always vehemently refused to be an institution that fostered Deuschtum [Germanism]” (GERTZ, 1998, p. 35).

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<sup>8</sup> Regarding the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms in Luther, Junghans states that: “As for the field of action of governments, Luther differentiated between spiritual/internal and temporal/external things. Spiritual government has to do with the relationship with the human being and God. It is governed by Christ himself, who acts by the word of God which is spread through preaching. Spiritual government does not rule by force, but by the Word. Secular government extends external things. It must maintain peace, law and life for the benefit of the common good” (JUNGHANS, 2001, p. 50). In this way, the Missouri Synod understood that spiritual matters were incumbent on him, and the other Germanic institutions in Brazil (Cultural Associations, Press, among others) were responsible for promoting Germanism, something in the sphere or in the secular government.

Marlow (2013), on the other hand, recalls the Missouri Synod document, dated 1937, in which it was reiterated that it was not the synod's competence to propagate Germanist ideals:

Due to the repeated publication of false or misleading reports by different parties as to the position of our Synod regarding the Volkstum<sup>9</sup>. [...] The same decided at this year's Convention [1937], in Porto Alegre/RS, to make the following declaration: 1. Our Church recognizes the existence of Germanism and the cultivation of things pertaining to the people (maintenance of language and customs). These are matters in the lives of citizens and, therefore, attributions of the arrangement of life in society (government, political parties, associations, etc.); 2. The Church as such has neither the right nor the duty to practice Volkstum. In view of this, our Church disapproves of any form of Volkstum as its mission, leaving it to the arrangements that the exercise of citizenship may create. [...]. Our Church grants freedom to its congregants, teachers and pastors as to their life as citizens in the matter of cultivating the things of the people, while keeping away from the worldly spirit, often connected with this, and from the “religious mixing”, contrary to the Scriptures and the [Lutheran] Confessions. From your pastors and teachers our Church, obviously, expects them to refrain from political activities. (KIRCHENBLATT, 03/15/1937, apud MARLOW, 2013, p.72).

But what about the Missouri Synod schools? Could these encourage Germanism among your students? Research in this regard still needs to be carried out in order to present a clearer view of the role of the synod schools. However, considering the already published researchs, despite not directly dealing with the subject, they point in the same direction as what was exposed in relation to the religious institution.

In this regard, both Weiduschadt and Tambara (2016) and Albrecht (2019) researched the booklets used by the Missouri Synod in their parish schools. The authors detail that the school material of these schools originated either from the Concórdia Publishing House, from the synod itself, or, in some cases, from the Rotermund Publishing Company, linked to the Riograndense Synod.

If, on the one hand, the booklets portrayed a reality closer to Germany than to Brazil itself, the aforementioned researchers understand that they had no intention of valuing ethnic and racial issues. Furthermore, Weiduschadt and Tambara explain that the booklets were in the German language, but the emphasis was doctrinal and biblical, not properly linked to Germanist issues, that is, ethnic-cultural ones.

Despite the Synod being instituted in the United States, the book, when approaching this text, maintains a certain preference in accentuating the relationship with Germany as it is considered a synod that uses the German language. Hence, the need to use the language and the ethnic issue can be reinforced. This relationship is also due to the fact that the synod's project to value Lutheran doctrine, supported by the use of the Germanic language (WEIDUSCHADT; TAMBARA, 2016, p. 289).

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<sup>9</sup> Seyferth describes the complexity of the term Volkstum: “The term Volkstum could be translated as national nature, or nationality, but it is an ambiguous expression as much as Deuschtum. [...] It is the ancestry (blood), the culture, the language of the individual. It is the essence of a people or race. Deuschtum is the German Volkstum, the Germanism or Germanity of Germany, representing the Teutonic world (SEYFERTH, 1981, p. 45-46).

According to Warth (1979, p. 219), who outlines a historical panorama of the Missouri Synod, it was exactly in the 1930s, under pressure for nationalizing measures, that Editora Concordia published literature in Portuguese with more expressiveness. Although not providing additional information, Warth remembers the *Ordem e Progresso* series launched in the 1930s. Even, as we will see later, in the report presented by the Missouri Synod to Secretary JP Coelho de Souza, this series is mentioned. According to Kuhn and Bayer, “for mathematics classes, two series were published: The *Ordem e Progresso* series, launched in the 1930s, and the *Concordia* series, launched in the 1940s” (KUHNS; BAYER, 2017, p. 152).

Finally, what is the relationship of the Missouri Synod schools and the Rio Grande do Sul education and health department, regarding to the nationalization of Education? How did the education department, and especially its main representative, JP Coelho de Souza, see the situation of the schools linked to the synod with regard to Nationalization? And, similarly, how did the Synod try to position itself on these issues? This is what is answered in the next section.

### **Action and reaction of the Brazilian State and the Missouri Synod towards the Nationalization of parochial schools.**

Although they understand that the Missouri Synod schools were apparently becoming nationalized, this did not prevent authorities from the Brazilian State, and more specifically from the State of Rio Grande do Sul, to pronounce on the matter, generating in return important arguments in defense of the aforementioned ecclesiastical institution regarding the nationalization of its schools.

What can be seen through correspondence from both parts is that there was, on the part of the authorities that dictated the guidelines of nationalization, a certain distrust towards the Missouri Synod, since, for working mostly with German-Brazilians and using predominantly the German language, could not be effectively contributing to the nationalizing enterprise of teaching in its schools.

We realize this thought in terms of the correspondence sent by the secretary of education and public health of Rio Grande do Sul, JP Coelho de Souza, to the president of the Missouri Synod in Brazil, Rev. Augusto Heine, dated July 10, 1941. Coelho de Souza dealt more closely in his correspondence with the issue of religious education in the German language, on which he was emphatically contrary, also in the letter the secretary praised the educational performance of the Missouri Synod.

for although I do not profess the same religious confession, it is most agreeable to me, as a secretary, to recognize and appreciate the contribution of Lutheran work in the field of education. The model educational establishments linked to the religious network overseen by Your Excellency they are eloquent testimony to a spirit of heightened understanding and a sure demonstration of the desire for cooperation with government action. [...] in view of the modern political-social panorama when the secretariat addresses the problem of nationalization of education, the attitude of the Lutheran Church is evidenced in a manifest spirit of collaboration with the signing of the agreement signed last year (SECRETARIA DE EDUCAÇÃO E SAÚDE PÚBLICA DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1941, p. 1).

Coelho de Souza understand the collaboration of the Missouri Synod to the teaching process of nationalization, but, however, it reinforced the religious education through Confirmatory education should be conducted in the vernacular, the Portuguese language:

It does not seem to me, however, necessary that religious instruction be given in a foreign language, or with its help, as it corresponds precisely to the school period, in which the child learns to handle the native language. I believe that teaching the Catechism, taught in a foreign language, will not inevitably contribute to nullifying the school's action (SECRETARIA DE EDUCAÇÃO E PÚBLICA DO SAUDE DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1941, p. 2).

The secretary concluded by stating about the collaboration between the Missouri Synod and the Rio Grande do Sul Department of Education: “once again, I want to say to Your Excellency that the ministers of the confessional network that you direct will be received in schools of the State, for Religious Education, with all the satisfaction” (SECRETARIA DE EDUCAÇÃO E SAUDE PÚBLICA DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1941, p. 3). Apparently, an agreement between the two institutions had recently been signed for Missouri Synod teachers to teach Religious Education in the schools of the German-Brazilian colonies, evidently in the national language. Such a document has not been found, but it will also be mentioned by the synod, as we shall see later.

If, in the correspondence addressed to the Missouri Synod in July 1941, the atmosphere was friendly, the same cannot be said about the conference held by Coelho de Souza at the Associação Brasileira de Educação, dated in November of that same year. Later, this conference would be published, in 1942, under the title *Denúncia: o nazismo nas Escolas do Rio Grande*.

In that conference, Coelho de Souza (1942) discusses the situation of ethnic schools in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, emphasizing the reality he found. In the rural areas of Rio Grande do Sul, with regard to parish schools linked to religious institutions, there was a small part that was becoming nationalized, a minority group that met the wishes of the German National Socialism, and a large majority, called “traditionalists” by Coelho de Souza, who were apparently nationalizing themselves, but who needed to be constantly watched.

For Coelho de Souza, above all, it was up to the Brazilian State to take due care to imbue the feeling of nationalization. “On an exclusively private initiative, institutions emerged: [...] religious communities, recreational societies, and a vast school network. Therefore, it was up to the Brazilian government to nationalize them and not destroy them” (SOUZA, 1942, p.15).

At the same time, it was in this group that was nationalizing itself - the traditionalists -, but which should be constantly watched, that Coelho de Souza inserts the pastors and members of the Missouri Synod in Brazil and, in this case also, the parish schools linked to that synod.

It is made up of Catholics and the part of Lutherans that Nazism failed to excite. [...] In the Lutheran sector, dissident pastors of the German Church guide us. They do not nurture political intentions, they preserve tradition, rather, for reasons of a spiritual order. They believe that the spirit of discipline of people of German origin resides in tradition - the basis of their religiosity (SOUZA, 1942, p. 16).

However, Coelho de Souza goes further in his argument stating that “the absence of an immediate ideal does not make it harmless” (SOUZA, 1942, p. 18). And he compares it with the case of Austria which, according to Coelho de Souza, allowed the imperialist ideology of the German Third Reich to prevail there, which should not happen here, justifying constant and intense vigilance.

The [group] of traditionalists should not be harassed, but rather educated, as a process of preservation, since the absence of an immediate political ideal does not make it harmless - as a denationalized environment can serve as a means of culture for the most dangerous ideologies. But, it should be emphasized, the indicative process, as I said, is educational and not repressive; deployment of the state school network; rigorous nationalization of the private school system; use of the national language in religious acts and prohibition of periodical publications in a foreign language (SOUZA, 1942, p. 18).

The Missouri Synod's response, however, didn't take long to come, since, if we cannot find in the document the corresponding date of its submission, it is inferred that it is after the conference held by Coelho de Souza, in November 1941, as mentioned in the document. Such correspondence, dated 1942, is not addressed to Coelho de Souza, but to the Delegate of the Social and Political Order of Rio Grande do Sul, Dr. Plinio Brasil Milano, and is sent to the president of the Missouri Synod in Brazil, Rev. August Heine.

The correspondence initially seeks to clarify that the “distrust” that may exist towards the Missouri Synod is due to the existence of another Lutheran synod, the Riograndense Synod, which, according to Heine, did not follow the precepts of nationalization. “I am very sorry that, at least for the time being, our church is considered suspect of unspeakable activities” (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, 1942, p.1).

Later, the president of the Missouri Synod highlights the conference given by JP Coelho de Souza, congratulating him for the excellent explanation, but not failing to show surprise at the fact that the synod was classified: “The distinguished speaker issued the following concept to respect of our church. Belonging to the second group: the traditionalist” (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, 1942, p. 2).

Heine, in this way, makes clear his dissatisfaction or discomfort with the concept attributed to the ecclesiastical institution to which he belongs, without, however, arguing the reason for his dissatisfaction with such classification.

We were very sorry to have Dr. Coelho de Souza affirming at the same conference that we cannot be considered “harmless”. However, the lecturer bases his point of view on the fact that there can be a German environment serving as a cultural medium for imperialist ideologies and that religious sentiment can give way to a racist ideal. (IGREJA EVANGELICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, 1942, p.2).

Despite not presenting statistical data in the correspondence, Heine is emphatic in defending the Missouri Synod, stating that it is in the process of nationalization and that this has already been happening since the beginning of the measures imposed by the Brazilian State: “When undertaken in the year of 1938 by the New State, the most commendable work of Nationalization, immediately offered our Church the most decisive collaboration” (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, 1942, p. 2).

It is interesting to point out, at this moment, the words of the report of the Executive Secretary for Missions of the Missouri Synod, Dr. F. C. Streufert, cited by Rehfeldt, who, on a visit to Brazil, presented the following overview of the situation of the schools linked to the synod:

Despite the fact that in an investigation of the Quinta Coluna, in the Denúncia [ie, the book: Denúncia by JP Coelho de Souza) it is clearly stated that we cannot be confused with the “Igreja Riograndense”, which was supported by Germany [... ] and despite the fact that researchers speak enthusiastically about our schools, as having been nationalized several years ago, and despite the “agreement” and agreement between the Department of Education and our Synodal District concerning our schools, an accusation made by an unknown enemy can lead the pastor to prison or its members before the Court and prison (STREUFERT, apud REHFELDT, 2003, p.143).

In this report, Streufert follows the same line of thought as Heine, reporting the issue of the German Lutheran Church as a propagator of Germanism, which the Missouri synod is nationalizing, as well as citing the agreement made between the synod and the Rio Grande do Sul secretariat of education.

But, probably, the document that best marks the Missouri Synod's position regarding its adherence to the Vargas Government's Nationalization Campaign is found in the Report of Parish Schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil. Consisting of 10 pages with photos and illustrations, the document is addressed to the “Exmo. Mr. Dr. Coelho de Souza D. D. Secretary of Education and Public Health of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Porto Alegre” (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 1).

A fact that calls attention concerns the signatories of this report: Pastors Paulo Schelp and Francisco Carchia, the first of American origin and the second of Italian nationality, that is, clearly demonstrating that they were not, in principle, German or even German-Brazilians responsible for the information. Although it does not indicate a date for its publication, it is understood that the report must have been compiled between the years 1939 and 1941, given that the process of nationalization of Education was already taking place in Rio Grande do Sul and no mention is made in the report about the conference held by Coelho de Souza, neither about the agreement with the Rio Grande do Sul education and health department (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 10).

The Report is divided into the following sections: 1) Presentation; 2) The Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its doctrine; 3) Relationship between the State and the Church; 4) Schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Brazil: 4.1) Number of parochial schools in the various states; 4.2) Headquarters of Schools in Rio Grande do Sul; 4.3) Teachers; 4.4) Students from parochial schools; 4.5) Buildings and school books; 4.6) Pedagogical Courses; 5) Lutheran Church teachers and the new laws; 6) Request.

Initially, the document presented the Missouri Synod in Brazil, highlighting its presence from Rio Grande do Sul to the state of Minas Gerais. Furthermore, it emphasized that the schools linked to the Synod were becoming nationalized, and that in many moments what was happening was confusion with other Lutheran synods or even from another Protestant line:

Having knowledge of the Decree of Nationalization of Education and respecting it with the greatest respect, we declare to Your Excellency that the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Brazil has no

interest in cultivating any ideology other than the national ones, and has therefore been repeatedly harassed and even secretly and frankly persecuted by ministers of other Protestant churches, and who is ready to undertake everything necessary for his parish classes to meet the requirements of the new decree (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p.1- 2).

Data presented by the Report concerned the total number of schools under the Synod's responsibility, as well as the number of enrolled students, as shown in Table 3:

**Table 3:** Missouri Synod Parish School Numbers (1937)

<b>States</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Students</b>
Minas Gerais	3	61
Espírito Santo	17	268
Distrito Federal	3	110
São Paulo	3	300
Paraná	1	60
Santa Catarina	10	232
Rio Grande do Sul	108	3267
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>4298</b>

**Source:** IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 4

It can be seen, by the numbers, that the vast majority of schools linked to the Missouri Synod were located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, a proportional number of students who were enrolled in these schools as well. The Report also pointed to the location of these schools in the southernmost state of Brazil.

**Table 4:** Headquarters of Schools in Rio Grande do Sul

<b>Headquarters</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>
Porto Alegre	2
Pelotas	1
Ijuí	1
Getúlio Vargas	1
Novo Hamburgo	1
Campo Bom	1
Canoas	1
[...] [Interior]	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>

**Source:** IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 5.

The expressive number of schools located in the rural area of the state of Rio Grande do Sul is noteworthy, exactly in those locations where the effective presence of the State was often lacking, as well as those that would have more difficulty adapting to the nationalization rules, as that, in many cases, the local pastor spoke only German and was also the principal and/or teacher of the school.

The Missouri Synod, however, sought, in the Report, to demonstrate just the opposite, that most of its pastors were either Brazilian or were married to Brazilian women. Regarding the pastors who attend the schools, the report described that, "of the parochial primary school



teachers, 55% are native Brazilians, approximately 20% are naturalized, others were unable to become naturalized due to lack of resources, despite having been in Brazil for a several years.” (IGREJA EVANGELICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p.5).

The Report pointed out that not only children of German or German-Brazilian origin attended the schools linked to the synod, although it did not scale proportions. Furthermore, it reinforced this idea by pointing to the presence of a black pastor at the Missouri Synod, Pastor J. Alves, active in Pelotas/RS, as well as describing that teaching in the classroom sought to promote equality among all.

The schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil are attended by Brazilian children of different races or origins. The classes led by Rev. J. Alves - colored pastor - are attended by colored boys, other classes by Portuguese-Brazilian or German-Brazilian children. All students, despite being from different origins, are instructed in the same religion, in the language of the country, in the homeland history and chorography of Brazil. This is proven by the schedule of the parish school in Porto Alegre that accompanies this memorial (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 6).

The Report also pointed to the textbooks used, highlighting the productions of the publisher Concordia, emphasizing the “Brazilianess” of its responsible: “of the books used in teaching, some are the same used in public schools, others published by the Lutheran Church typography - Concordia Publishing House [...] whose manager is Mr. Guilherme Goerl, born Brazilian” (IGREJA EVANGELICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL s/d, p. 5).

The document also highlighted, as shown in Figure 1, the *Ordem e Progresso* Series, in Portuguese: “the reading books, from the “*Ordem e Progresso*” Series, bear witness to pedagogical aptitude, culture and high patriotism. The series of books on Arithmetic are elaborated with care and perfection” (IGREJA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 6).

Finally, the Report again reinforced the Missouri Synod's desire for separation between Church and State: “[...] which, marching apart, lead to the same high destiny - the education of the people” (IGREJA EVANGELICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 8).

However, the Report warned and pointed to the difficulties that the synod schools could face, given the precarious financial issue of some schools and the need for the presence of a teacher who taught in Portuguese, something that apparently would not occur in most of these schools:

With the above-exposed Memorial, we show the development and the current state of our parish schools and ask Your Excellency to deign to allow the teachers of these schools to prove their competence in teaching the subjects required by the new decree. Because, on the contrary, many communities would be forced to close their classes due to their precarious financial situation, which does not allow them the subsistence of two teachers, and thus, evidently many teachers, Brazilians and parents, would be unemployed and without resources, (IGREJA EVANGELICA LUTERANA DO BRASIL, s/d, p. 10).

However, it is also clear that, despite the Missouri Synod being nationalized, something in a way verified by the authorities, for example, by JP Coelho de Souza, many of the schools linked to the synod were closed between the years 1938 to 1941. Rehfeldt highlights the closing of 48 synod schools in this period, that is, about 35%, as expressed in the numbers in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Number of Parish Schools from 1938 to 1941

1938	139
1939	115
1940	99
1941	91

Source: REHFELDT, 2003, p. 140.

The number of students also decreased, from around “4,159 students in 1937 to 3,554 students in 1941” (REHFELDT, 2003, p. 140). However, as stated by Rehfeldt (2003), the loss of students was not greater because the closure of most schools occurred in the interior of the state, where there were fewer students compared to schools in municipalities that managed to meet the requirements of the Brazilian State.

### Final considerations

Since its arrival in Brazil in 1900, the Missouri Synod in Brazil has given importance to education. As heir of the process of the Protestant Reformation, in addition to the religious sphere, he also acted in the educational sphere, aiming to serve that one.

Basically working with German immigrants and their descendants in Brazilian territory, German-Brazilians, similarly, as in the religious sphere, also mostly used the German language in their school activities. However, from the perspective of the separation between Church and State, the synod leadership understood that the use of the German language, whether in church or school, should not be used as a promoter of Germanism in Brazilian lands, but only as a means of interconnection with its membership.

Apparently, the position of the Missouri Synod was not necessarily clear to the Brazilian authorities during the New State period, who aimed to “Brazilianize” everyone who lived here. In fact, on the contrary, this fact led Brazilian authorities to also suspect the Missouri Synod in Brazil, in its educational practices. This is quite clear in the speech and correspondence exchanged by the then Secretary of Education of Rio Grande do Sul, Coelho de Souza, with the authorities of the respective synod.

On the other hand, the Missouri Synod sought to defend itself from the stigma of being a possible propagator of Germanism, stating categorically that it was nationalizing itself. In reality, the synod began to carry out this nationalization only in the 1930s, and with extreme difficulty, since many of its schools were unable to adapt to the new reality, having to close their doors.

We conclude by stating that the theme proposed in this article inspires the need to expand research on the subject, in order to provide answers to many open questions. However, such research is still extremely necessary today, according to the analyzes made by Julia, in view of the importance of school culture in all its aspects as an object of historical knowledge.

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