

# São Paulo, Inc.

Database maps out the migratory flow of qualified labor that furthered São Paulo's post-1945 industrial development

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São Paulo's fast industrialization following World War II (1939-1945) was one of the most important chapters in the history of the state and can now be better told. What few people know is that the presence of large contingents of qualified immigrants coming from Europe and Japan, two of the regions most affected during the conflict, was fundamental to this process. What happened was not merely an increase in the number of workers entering industry in the Greater São Paulo. They also embraced agriculture, which became modernized and was characteristic of the "new immigrants" in that these formed a more specialized work force, not in formal terms, but concerning their technical and practical qualifications.



This new view is just beginning to be outlined thanks to the project “The new immigrants – Migratory flows and industrialization in São Paulo (1947-1980)”, from the Center for Population Studies at the State University of Campinas (Nepo/Unicamp); from 2003 to 2008 the project recorded more than 60,000 documents that now form a database with some 200,000 records of people who arrived in Brazil and became part of the workforce. This vast collection, which promises to make researchers both in Brazil and abroad happy, was assembled in such a way that the information can be explored in various ways: by name, nationality, profession, region of origin, employer, etc.

And this is not all. Data that are more detailed can be crosschecked, such as all German automobile mechanics who were unmarried or people with higher education – in the latter case, regardless of nationality. It is also possible to prepare graphs, tables and other types of data consolidation, which can be of great help in demographic studies, to name just one possibility. The database is already available at Nepo/Unicamp and the Memorial do Imigrante (the Memorial to Immigrants Museum) in São Paulo.

**W**ith the data readily available, the project team felt that their work had ended, having made a collective contribution to other researchers. However, the group is still together for what is called a continuation of its commitment to information and dialogue with other interested parties. It is headed by the researchers Maria do Carmo Carvalho Campello de Souza (USP and Idesp, coordinator from 2003 to 2006), Teresa Sales de Mello Suarez (Nepo/Unicamp), Célia Sakurai (Museum of Japanese Immigration and Nepo/Unicamp), Odair Paiva (Unesp and the Memorial to Immigrants Museum), José Renato de Campos Araújo (USP and Idesp) and Maria do Rosário Rolfsen Salles (Unesp and Idesp, coordinator from 2006 to 2008).

Sociologist Maria do Rosário Rolfsen Salles, who devised the project along with Célia Sakurai, explains that in the first stage they tried to identify, organize, catalogue, computerize and archive the documents deposited in the Memorial to Immigrants Museum in São Paulo that concerned the arrival of about 500,000 foreigners, many of whom were lodged in the then Immigrant Hostel in São Paulo. The second stage of the project consisted in conducting the thematic studies that led to work that discussed aspects that had been ill explored by the historiography of immigration in the period.

“Our project’s chief merit, if we can say that, is providing new research with the possibility of accessing the documentation that is now computerized and that can guide countless pieces of research on the period, such as nationalities, international organisms,

refugees, the stateless, etc.,” believes Maria do Rosário. According to her, what stands out in the work is the special profile of people from the European countries that had traditionally supplied immigrants to Brazil, in addition to other nationalities from Central and Eastern Europe. This was in marked contrast to the less qualified immigrant profile that characterized the large immigration wave of the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. “The origins of the immigrants are also interesting,” she points out. For example, concerning the Italians, they came from western Italy, contrary to what one might expect, since these areas were less developed and their workforce was more technically specialized than formally.

To understand the process better, the professor recommends going back to the nineteenth century. As from the 1870s, one can identify very significant periods during which immigrants entered the country; there were longer periods that had a stronger impact on the growth of the Brazilian population, such as the expansion of coffee farming in western São Paulo, the start of the subsidy policy and the *en masse* arrival of immigrants, mainly Italians. “This period ended in 1902, with the prohibition of subsidized emigration by Italy - the well-known Prinetti decree – and the redirection of Italian emigration to the USA,” she says. The second cycle was characterized by the Agreement of Taubaté (1906), by the arrival of more Portuguese and Spaniards and the beginning of the influx of Japanese (1908); this period lasted until World War I.

The second period is characterized by a smaller inflow of immigrants due to factors such as the re-

**From European immigrants’ train to arrival with their families at the national centers**



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## The last migratory cycle began when Brazil reopened its immigration policy at the end of WWII

strictions that were already in place in the 1920s, like the end of the subsidy policy, or the coffee crisis, which peaked in 1930. The phase was typified by the entry of the Portuguese and those classified as having “other nationalities” (Polish, Russian, Romanians, Jews, etc.). The final migratory cycle began when Brazil reopened its immigration policy at the end of World War II, thanks to the political opening that materialized with the ending of the New State period. The inflow during this cycle was much smaller than the previous one and consisted mainly of Italians, Spaniards and “other nationalities,” as we have seen, from Central and Eastern Europe, in addition to the Japanese as from the 1950s. One of the characteristics of this contingent, says Maria do Rosário, was the presence of refugees between 1947 and 1951 and of stateless individuals who had lost their nationality for various reasons during the war and who were unable or unwilling to return to their home countries.

During the work, the researchers had countless surprises, such as the large number of Italians, Spaniards and Japa-

nese who went to the inner-state to work in agricultural concerns and in the city of São Paulo. They also found that these immigrants tended to be concentrated in industrial neighborhoods in the east and south of the city, besides other areas, such as the Center, the north, Vila Leopoldina, Lapa and the west. “In fact, each of these nationalities needs to be researched in order to determine the direction they took in São Paulo.”

**F**or Célia Sakurai, who has a PhD in social sciences from Unicamp, the database that resulted from the research makes it possible to reflect more clearly on the influence of immigrants in São Paulo. She notes that she was unaware of the extent of post-war immigration, especially where the profile of the immigrants is concerned, as it was markedly different from those who came before World War II. “The variety of occupations also drew her attention, as did the profile of the companies, from the Japanese multinationals which came in the late 1950s, to the small, sometimes family concerns, which welcomed these im-

migrants.” Regarding the Japanese, what drew her attention was the large number of farmers who came to work in agricultural projects.

The researcher believes that the profile of Japanese immigrants changed after World War II; they were young, unmarried men who were professionally qualified, in contrast to their fellow countrymen who immigrated before the War. These new immigrants, she continues, fitted into the São Paulo industrialization process in positions that required qualifications. They came as technicians in new sectors, such as electronics, metallurgy and project design for air conditioning circuits. “The contribution that this type of information will add to the study of immigration in Brazil will present a different and little known facet of these people in our country.”

The total cost of the project was about R\$ 130,000, expended on creating a program for building the database, setting-up the data input teams, treating and laminating the documents, the purchase of permanent material, and a domestic and international bibliography on the post-war migration processes and the constitution of international organisms, such as the International Refugees Organization (IRO), the International Committee for European Migration (Cime) and Japan Migration and Colonization (Jamic). According to Maria do Rosário, what helped to consolidate the project was having two teams of researchers involved, one from the Institute of Economic, Political and Social Research of São Paulo (Idesp) and the other from the Memorial to Immigrants Museum itself, which subsequently also incorporated a researcher from Nepo/Unicamp.

Professor Odair da Cruz Paiva, who has a PhD in social history from USP, came into the project while working at the Memorial to Immigrants Museum. One of his jobs was to organize the document collection. At the time,



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everything on post-World War II immigration was dispersed throughout the collection and disorganized, rendering research into the subject unfeasible. He recalls that the idea of “The New Immigrants” Project was born out of conversations with professors Célia and Maria do Rosário. “Little by little, we determined its chief objective: to organize and computerize the data in that documentation.” When preparing the project, the team was already formed and had held some discussions about what direction to take.

The functions were divided into two core functions. The first involved organizing the collection and inputting the data in the computerized database. “A team of trainees hired by the Memorial to Immigrants Museum was charged with this task.” The group of researchers – in which Paiva included himself – supervised and guided the work of the trainees, while also correcting the database and collecting information. Each researcher prepared and developed his or her own project, which was fed with data that was being entered. “In my case, I researched the incorporation of these immigrants into the São Paulo industrial market from the 1940s to the 1970s.” Célia embraced Japanese immigration and Maria do Rosário took the war refugees who came to São Paulo from 1947 to 1951.

Paiva was also responsible for the database, a task he shared with IT technician Paulo Eduardo de Vicente. “We initially wanted to insert the information from the documentation about immigration at this time. Most of it comprises individual records with the personal, professional and family data of the European, Japanese and the Middle Eastern immigrants.” They continued in this vein throughout the project, as this was its main objective. “What happened during the course of the four years it lasted was the need to adapt and change the working system we used for inserting the information and even the database structure; this was largely due to the multiplicity of available supporting documents.”

Paiva believes that the system that was assembled means that the data now reveal much more accurate information about this period in the Brazilian

### Application to Brazilian authorities for a visa: flow of refugees

immigration process. “In my case, for example, one can now fully map out the enterprises that received this labor force, the professional profile of the workers and their past experience in Europe.” He adds that this is very rich and varied information. “I believe that the project still has the potential for helping many researchers and producing knowledge about immigration in this period that is fundamental.”

At present, the coordinators of “The New Immigrants” want to publicize the initiative as much as possible, so as to encourage other researchers to work with the information gathered. The

team, Paiva points out, is fully aware that many other points of view are fundamental to drawing the most out of the large amount of available data. The idea is to continue the information analysis work and gradually make it public. This year, the book *Migrações pós-Segunda Guerra Mundial* [Post-World War II Migration] was compiled and edited with FAPESP aid. “In this text, some of the issues that arose when carrying out the research were noted, particularly the contributions of experts working with the topic of migration in that period.”

In a way, the researcher concludes, this is essentially unprecedented documentation that has the potential to unveil the many dimensions of immigration in São Paulo. ■

MODELO S.C. 136

KOOCHERENKO also spelled  
KUCHERENKO

  
REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL  
REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES OF BRAZIL  
Ministério das Relações Exteriores  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
PEDIDO DE VISTO EM PASSAPORTE ESTRANGEIRO  
REQUEST FOR VISA ON FOREIGN PASSPORT

NUMERO DO PASSAPORTE HK-463  
NUMBER OF PASSPORT

Autoridade que expediu o passaporte United Nations Refugee Office, Hongkong  
Authority which issued passport

Nome (por extenso) Olimpiada F.  
Name in full

Filiação (nome do pai e da mãe) Pedor (father)  
Parentage (name of father and mother)

Nacionalidade Russian Estado civil Widow  
Nationality Civil state

Logar e data do nascimento Bessarabia, Russia 1/7/1893  
Place and date of birth

Profissão Housewife Religião Orthodox  
Profession Religion

Origem étnica White Instrução M. school  
Ethnic origin Education

Pôrto de desembarque no Brasil Rio de Janeiro  
Port of disembarkation in Brazil

Destino final Rio de Janeiro Fim a que se destina em território nacional  
Final destination in national territory Object of entering

Nome e domicílio do parente mais próximo no país de origem none  
Name and domicile of nearest relative in country of origin

FOTOGRAFIAS  
PHOTOGRAPHS

MENORES DE 18 ANOS QUE CONSTAREM DO PASSAPORTE  
MINORS UP TO 18 YEARS WHO APPEAR ON PASSPORT

	NOME Name	PARENTESCO Parentage	IDADE Age
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

(data) Hongkong, 10 de Abril de 1953.  
(place and date)

O.F. Koocherenko  
ASSINATURA DO INTERESSADO OU RESPONSÁVEL  
Signature of interested or responsible party

(ESPAÇO RESERVADO À AUTORIDADE CONSULAR)  
(SPACE RESERVED FOR THE CONSULAR AUTHORITY)

Deu entrada em \_\_\_\_\_ de \_\_\_\_\_ de 19\_\_\_\_  
Entered on (date)

Conceda-se o visto. Classifique-se como Permanente  
(Assignatura de imigração) (classification)

de acordo com o No. 128/10/4/53  
in accordance with

(data) Hongkong, 10 de Abril de 1953.  
(place and date)

  
Selo do Consulado  
Consular Seal

RECIBO  
RECEIPT

Recebi o passaporte, as fichas consulares de qualificação e toda a documentação que apresentei.  
I have received the passport, consular notes of qualification and all the documents which I presented.

O.F. Koocherenko  
ASSINATURA DO INTERESSADO OU RESPONSÁVEL  
Signature of interested or responsible party

REGULAMENTO DE IMIGRAÇÃO-DEC. N. 1.010 de 1938

H & S Ltd.  
Ed. emendada.  
1953

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