

## THE INSTITUTE FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE IN RIO DE JANEIRO IN THE FIRST REPUBLIC AND THE CIVILIZING MISSION OF MONCORVO FILHO

O Instituto De Proteção E Assistência À Infância Do Rio De Janeiro Na Primeira República E A Missão Civilizadora De Moncorvo Filho

### RESUMO

Este trabalho tem por objetivo discutir o higienismo infantil e a caridade científica na Primeira República, tendo como enquadramento teórico o Instituto de Proteção e Assistência à Infância do Rio de Janeiro. Foi utilizada como metodologia a pesquisa qualitativa descritiva, sobretudo à luz da trajetória do seu fundador o médico filantropo e higienista Moncorvo Filho, por meio da investigação de dados documentais e bibliográficos, com enfoque analítico, levando-se em consideração o contexto sociocultural de sua produção e o de sua circulação, considerando a diversidade desses contextos. Para elucidar essas questões, buscou-se referencial teórico mediante material bibliográfico atinente a essa temática.

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVES:** Assistência à Infância; IPAI; Moncorvo Filho

**ABSTRACT**

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The main objective of this work is to discuss child hygiene and scientific charity in the First Republic, having as a theoretical framework the Institute for Child Protection and Assistance of Rio de Janeiro. Descriptive qualitative research was used as a methodology, especially in light of the trajectory of its founder, the philanthropist and hygienist doctor Moncorvo Filho, through the investigation of documentary and bibliographic data, with an analytical focus, taking into account the sociocultural context of its production. and its circulation, considering the diversity of these contexts. To elucidate these questions, a theoretical reference was sought using bibliographic material related to this theme.

**KEYWORDS:** Child Care; IPAI; Moncorvo Filho**INTRODUCTION**

In the First Republic, one of the loci of the discourse of scientific philanthropy and its practice was the Institute for the Protection and Assistance of Children in Rio de Janeiro (IPAI-RJ), which was a pioneer in the medicalization of care for poor children (WADSWORTH, 1999), although it was not the only institutional model for childcare in the first decades of the 20th century in Brazil. It is worth noting that IPAI-RJ was a private, philanthropic institution, of recognized public utility, born above all from positivist values, finding support for its creation in ideas of hygienist medicine. It is worth noting that the Institute was strategically advertised in the press and the medical community as a rigorously scientific establishment.



During its existence, it sought to denounce the lack of public assistance for children, demanding that the authorities take over the care and assistance for children who were called "destitute" and "abandoned to their fate", imbued, according to its creators, with the "noble cause of protecting children" and "protecting the future of the nation". The practices and discourse surrounding IPAI-RJ's projects served as a model in other regions and, due to their repercussions, deserve to be highlighted.

### **The origins of the Institute for the Protection and Assistance of Children in Rio de Janeiro**

Inside that temple of charity, the most patriotic service could be rendered to the nation. Moncorvo Filho (1926, p. 231).

According to Carneiro (2000), its basic purpose consisted, for example, of childcare and nursery services, with an emphasis on gynecology, milk distribution, consultations with infants and vaccinations. Medical gymnastics, popular courses, breastfeeding exams, the distribution of sterilized milk, the donation of layettes and other objects for the unborn, popular courses, intrauterine childcare, home visits, vaccinations and surgeries made up the assistance network conceived by Moncorvo Filho and his collaborators. On specific occasions of the year, specific initiatives were carried out, such as the Christmas, Goodwill, Good Year and Kings' Day celebrations, as well as the Child Robustness Contests (CARNEIRO, 2000). According to Silva Jr. and Garcia (2014), at IPAI-RJ, Moncorvo Filho increasingly consolidated his experience in medical and social assistance to children in line with his principles regarding the healthy development of children. From there, he spread his ideas, his denunciations, his projects and his influence in the field of child protection.

The influences of the child care and protection models used by Moncorvo Filho were not limited to French pediatrics. At the time, he also used similar foreign institutions as a reference, including US models such as the Children's Bureau. This contributes to the understanding that the practices carried out at the Institute through the medical services offered to poor children, consolidated the significance of the representations of medical knowledge in that society, since it was through the foundation of IPAI- RJ that this knowledge became essential to the success of the republican project in the Federal Capital, initiating a political perspective of socio-educational action through assistance to marginalized children. As Wadsworth (1999) also says on this subject, the Institute began to operate from a policy centered on maternal and child care, offering medical consultations in various specialties, support for childbirth and pregnancy,



distribution of layettes and the creation of crèches. Among the main actions developed by IPAI-RJ were the control and distribution of milk, the education and negative propaganda of "mercenary" milk nannies, as well as the organization of maternal and child care clinics.

WADSWORTH, 1999). In this way, associating child protection with the construction of the Brazilian nation, Moncorvo Filho created the IPAI-RJ as an ideological institutional model of protection that later served as an example for other institutions that were created over time in the country. From this perspective, the creation of IPAI-RJ was an integral part of the sanitation project that aimed to achieve "civility" and "modernity", so that childcare was considered to be the "science of the family, carried out with the trusting collaboration of the mother and the doctor, of maternal love enlightened by science" (PAIVA, 1922, p.14).

A magnificent work of human solidarity, it provides rest, food and outdoor life in healthy places for children who are debilitated by various causes and who, like plants deprived of light, languish in the unhealthy environments of urban centers (Jornal do Commercio, 14/12/1923).

According to Wadsworth (1999), since its creation a decade after the proclamation of the Republic, the IPAI-RJ's purpose was to intervene and support poor, sick, "defective", mistreated and "morally abandoned" children in the country's capital through eugenic, preventive, protective and educational measures (CARNEIRO, 2000). According to the author, the Institute was organized into a number of sections and aimed to inspect, regulate, promote and found apparatuses capable of coordinating a general plan of medical, philanthropic and educational assistance to children and impoverished families. The orientation proposed by Moncorvo Filho for the institution was based on the idea, current at the time, that medical reason should prevail over the various forms of organization of the city and individuals. In this sense, Freire and Leony (2011) state that during the period in which it operated, from 1899 to 1939, the Institute intended to put into practice a set of procedures aimed at disseminating and precepting knowledge of hygiene, prevention, protection and care, especially with regard to children and women/mothers (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011). In light of these premises, it is worth mentioning:



What laws do we have to protect women in industry during pregnancy? What about the laws that guarantee the life and health of tiny newborn babies? Where have we regulated the service of wet nurses? What vigilance is exercised here over minors who work in industries, many of which are extremely dangerous and unfit for their age? [...] The Institute [...] will make its best efforts to obtain from the government a series of measures to protect children, by establishing special laws such as those that have produced such fruitful results in other countries. Under its immediate patronage, the Institute will seek to have all the poor, sick, defective, mistreated and morally abandoned children of our capital (MONCORVO FILHO apud CARNEIRO, 2000 p. 117).

In this line of thought, Wadsworth (1999) reached a discussion of superlative relevance on how IPAI-RJ became one of the instruments organized by philanthropic organizations in the process of hospitalizing childbirth, as well as in the "pedagogical" process guiding "being a mother" and "doing motherhood" (WADSWORTH, 1999). Thus, the discourse of Moncorvo Filho and other hygienist doctors had the education of poor women as one of its main targets. At first, the institute operated in a house belonging to the Moncorvo family. When it opened its doors to the public, IPAI-RJ was located in the central region of the city of Rio de Janeiro, a place where very poor women and workers were constantly passing through. The subsidiary nature of the state already appears after fifteen years of operating in temporary headquarters: in 1914, when the federal government donated land for the construction of the Institute's official headquarters (WADSWORTH, 1999).

The core of this IPAI-RJ model was the dispensary and there were a series of other services associated with it, where the role of the dispensaries was, above all, a social service. The first dispensary to care for poor children was created in Paris in 1875 by Dr. Gilbert, in the city of Le Havre, France. This dispensary was dedicated to the free treatment of "sick and indigent children" (Moncorvo Filho, 1926, p. 144). According to Silva Jr and Garcia (2014), the IPAI-RJ offered the services of examining pregnant women, clinical examination of children, distribution of clothes, milk drop (distribution of sterilized milk), examination of milk nannies and daily services in the dispensary according to specialty. The dispensary was the actual care center, where doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists worked, usually on a voluntary basis. According to Wadsworth (1999), the Institute was created by an eclectic group, made up of philanthropists who represented both the new Republican elite in search of social prestige and the traditional elite from the Empire. With this in mind, its founding members were selected for this analysis, as shown in the table below:



Chart 1 - Founding Members of IPAI-RJ

Founding Members of the Institute for the Protection and Assistance of Children (IPAI)		
	Education/Occupation	Position in the IPAI
Abbot João de Mercês	ecclesiastic; director of Colégio São Bento 1893-1903	Founding partner
Alfredo Velloso	---	Founding member
Alvaro de Coutinho Vilhena	engineer; director general of the Telegraphs in 1908	Founding partner
André Jorge Rangel	lawyer; judge praetor	Founding member
Ascanio de Oliveira Macedo	engineer; politician (MP)	Founding member
Betim Paes Leme	---	Founding partner
Carlos Pereira Sá Fortes	Medical	Benevolent member
Domingos Alves Pereira	military (colonel)	Founding member
Dr. João Coelho de Mello Junior	doctor; Yellow Fever Prophylaxis Service	Founding member
Edoardo Loschi	---	Founding member
Ermirio Coutinho	Medical	Founding partner
Francisco Marques da Rocha	military (admiral)	Founding member
General Marcellino Bayma	military doctor	Founding partner
Guilherme do Valle	---	Founding member
Henrique José Alvares da Fonseca	engineer of the Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs	Founding member
Herminio F. do Espírito Saint	lawyer/politician	Founding member
João Gonçalves Duarte	military (Admiral)	Founding member
José Xavier Figueiredo de Brito	military (Major)	Founding member
Léo d'Affonseca	noble (Commander)	Founding member
Liz Bulcão	---	Founding member
Luiz da Fonseca Ramos	military (Major)	Founding member
Luiz da Gama Berquó	military (captain)	Founding member
Manoel Veloso Paranhos Flint	military doctor;	Founding member
Moncorvo Filho	Medical	Founding director
Moraes Barros	doctor; politician (senator, federal representative); industrialist	Founding partner
Pedro Antonio de Menezes	---	Founding partner
Raphael de Vincenze	---	Founding member
Rozendo Julio dos Santos	---	Founding member
Vicente Machado	public prosecutor; judge of orphans; politician (deputy and senator); journalist	Founding member

**Viscount Luiz Augusto  
Ferreira Almeida**industrialist (owner of the São Lázaro  
textile factory); he founded the São Luiz  
Asylum in 1890;

Founding partner

**Source:** the data was extracted from the list drawn up by Caroline Amorim Gil. Philanthropy in Rio de Janeiro: proposals and discussions (1908-1922) - project report. 2008, mimeo.

In the light of the table presented, it can be seen that the group of founders of IPAI-RJ was made up of representatives from various social sectors, mostly hygienist doctors and engineers, but in addition to these, there were lawyers, military personnel, jurists, noblemen, ecclesiastics, journalists and industrialists, and several members also held political positions. In addition, according to Wadsworth (1999), there was also a strong female presence at IPAI-RJ, either from elite ladies who dedicated themselves to the philanthropic cause, or from midwives and nurses. It is important to note that in addition to the founding members, board members, contributors and benefactors, the institution was also structured through various committees that were organized for specific purposes, such as parties, publicity, among others.

According to Freire and Leony (2011), members were divided into five categories: founders, benefactors, honorary, redeemed and contributors/protectors. Founding members were those who had signed IPAI-RJ's founding minutes and contributed a monthly sum of 2\$000 (two thousand réis). Benevolent members, on the other hand, were those who contributed in various ways to keeping the Institute running. In this way, the title of honorary member was granted by the Board of Directors to benefactors with 'special attributes', after their names had been approved at the general meeting. Redeemed members were those who provided regular donations of 200\$000 (two hundred thousand réis) and protectors, those who offered any kind of monthly donation (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011). In the sense of converting these values to the present day, two thousand réis would be relatively equivalent to fifty reais and two hundred thousand réis to five thousand reais, but it is worth pointing out that the conversion, even if approximate, cannot be considered exact.

For these authors, only three types of members had rights and duties: the founder, the benefactor and the redeemed member. These rights included guaranteed attendance at general assembly sessions; submitting proposals; voting; running for a position on the Board of Directors; supervising the Board of Directors or Executive Board; nominating contributing or protective members and even requesting (with justification) the elimination of any type of member. Duties consisted of attending sessions, complying with the bylaws and the obligation to accept functions or positions. An analysis of members' rights and duties, considering the social capital represented by IPAI-RJ, as it is an important collective political actor, leads us to assume that internal disputes were fierce (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).

In this context, IPAI-RJ was broken down into multiple and diversified instances, including the Dispensary, which provided assistance, the Dr. Sá Fortes Milk Drop, which was linked to the



nannies' examination office and the infants' clinic, the Mrs. Alfredo Pinto Nursery and the Scientific Society for the Protection of Children, which brought together the members of the technical team working in the Dispensary and the Nursery. IPAI-RJ's scientific activities were a forum for discussion on children's clinical, therapeutic and hygiene issues, the main organ of which was the quarterly publication *Arquivos de Assistência à Infância* (Archives of Childhood Assistance), in circulation from in 1902 (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926). Supported by advertisements, the magazine also functioned as a space for publicizing IPAI-RJ's accounts and raising new contributions.

According to Freire and Leony (2011), the institutional reports were widely disseminated, even abroad, as shown by the receipt of a copy by the French hygiene magazine *La Mère et l'Enfant* in November 1904, which praised the comprehensiveness of the information tables in the Archives. For these authors, the publicity given to its main sponsors in IPAI-RJ's printed material is in line with the conception of philanthropy as a gesture of public utility and an instrument of social action, ratifying it as an essential component of the culture of the urban elite and signaling its civic-patriotic character. Lists with the names of donors and the value of donations also emerged from the pages of magazines and periodicals, confirming the social prestige of philanthropy. Women's magazines also appealed to the maternal spirit and generosity of women in helping the "underprivileged". This established an identification of philanthropic practice with modernity and new social roles

In 1918, Moncorvo Filho was active in the fight against the Spanish flu in the Federal Capital, when he transformed the premises of the IPAI-RJ into a post to assist the sick (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011). Considered the largest and most overwhelming of the epidemics up to that time, it spread rapidly not only in Rio de Janeiro, where it affected around 500,000 people, but throughout the world. The inhabitants of the city of Rio de Janeiro were facing a series of health crises caused by other epidemics, such as smallpox and yellow fever, or by the imminent spread of bubonic plague and cholera. According to these authors, the unprecedented state of calamity was visible and unmistakable. It should be noted that, at this time, Brazil was experiencing serious difficulties in exporting its products, due to the economic crisis as a result of the First World War. In the meantime, IPAI-RJ had organized the distribution of donations to affected families. Given these conditions, the repercussions of this episode earned it official recognition and the authority to plead for financial support from the government, by publicizing the Institute's prominence and social relevance.





For these authors, apart from the Association, the physical space that housed the philanthropists, the eminently medical instance of the Institute was concentrated in the Central Dispensary, where services were offered such as: medical, surgical and skin disease clinics; massage; dental surgery; infirmary; gynecology; protection for pregnant women (in addition to

monitoring the pregnancy, layettes were provided for the baby); incubator room; examination, vaccination and certification of wet nurses; distribution of clothes, shoes and food; guidance on child hygiene; nursery; inspection and health care for small workers; carrying out home births; performing microscopic examinations; and supplying medication (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).

According to Silva Jr. and Garcia (2014), in addition to adopting practices already established in pediatrics at IPAI-RJ, Moncorvo Filho sought to develop and implement innovative experiments and equip his institute with the most advanced scientific technology available at the time, to differentiate it from the charitable institutions it was intended to replace. This was the case, for example, with Brazil's first solarium, initially installed in Rua do Areal and later as a specialized heliotherapy service, called *Heliotherapium*, in Rua Haddock Lobo (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926). From this angle, the sign on its façade, "*Heliotherapium*", i.e. "cure by the sun", sought to publicize innovation in therapeutics and health care (SILVA and DALBEN, 2020. p. 222). In his speech inaugurating the service on May 4, 1914, the doctor highlighted IPAI-RJ's pioneering role in the therapeutic application of solar irradiation and associated this technology with the assumptions of progress and modernity: "it is a rigorously scientific establishment" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1924, p.6).

In this respect, confidence was placed in the scientific model of therapy and healing through exposure to the sun - heliotherapy - a naturalistic method that was initially developed in German territories and quickly spread to different countries, advocated by doctors Hebert and Paul Carton. Corroborating the therapy developed by the doctors and by Moncorvo Filho, who in 1916 had created the first *Solarium* in Brazil, with a heliotherapy service, on the premises of the IPAI-RJ, as mentioned (MONCORVO FILHO, 1924). The doctor said that

during all the treatments he was able to prove the value of the sun and ultraviolet rays in treating illnesses such as "osteomyelitis, Pott's disease, lame tuberculosis" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1924, p. 29). He noted that the results were achieved "as we can see, in the heart of the city, the Institute's property being neither on the recommended seafront nor in the vaunted mountain altitude" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1924, p. 29). From the perspective of Silva and Dalben (2020,



p. 219), this was a time when allopathic medicines to combat this disease had yet to be proven effective.

Within this framework of analysis, one of the main concerns was to prevent the spread of tuberculosis among children, and the solution was to use sunlight to strengthen the human body (SILVA and DALBEN, 2020, p. 219). For these authors, it is worth noting that knowledge about natural medicine and the different children's institutions that used its teachings to control tuberculosis found different routes of international circulation, such as at the tuberculosis and school hygiene congresses held at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (p. 219). Moncorvo Filho (1925) strove to publicize and extol the virtues of heliotherapy at every opportunity, be it academic events, public conferences or articles in periodicals (MONCORVO FILHO, 1925). In an article published in *Correio da Manhã*, to reinforce his arguments, Moncorvo Filho stated that "all diseases come from the shade, all are cured by the sun", and added: "where the sun enters, the doctor does not"<sup>1</sup>.

In order to work better, the *Heliotherapium* was divided into different sections, according to their purpose, such as radiotherapy and diathermy, for curative purposes, and sun prophylaxis, for the prevention of anemia and rickets (p.3-4). Ten years after it opened, the *Heliotherapium* was the subject of a communication from its director to the National Academy of Medicine<sup>2</sup>, in which he discussed the effectiveness of the benefits of the sun's rays - a matter of debate at the time. According to Freire and Leony (2011), Moncorvo Filho's argument at the time demonstrates the depth of his studies on the subject, the care he took to gather a significant set of statistics and the effort he made to ratify the scientific basis of the care provided at IPAI- RJ and distinguish it from "old" institutions such as Roda. In order to legitimize his heliotherapy service, the doctor kept in tune with the most modern technologies and relied on exponents of the most advanced scientific thinking in the field of pediatrics worldwide and on renowned Brazilian hygienists (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926). As noted by Freire and Leony (2011), this was a strategy to legitimize the sunbathing service provided to the medical community and the general public. According to Silva and Dalben (2020, p. 223), other professionals linked to

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<sup>1</sup> FIORENTINO, A. **Tuberculosis in childhood**. *Correio da Manhã*, n.1.735, p.3. 12 abr. 1906.

<sup>2</sup> Moncorvo Filho was admitted as an honorary member of the National Academy of Medicine in June 1919. In his inaugural speech, "The crusade for childhood", he stated that child protection was a patriotic duty, a national obligation (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, p.300).



Moncorvo Filho's network of sociability were also involved in organizing outdoor medical educational establishments, which enabled him to expand his experiments in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

From this point of view, as well as intervening in the physical body, doctors also sought to intervene in the social body. At first, as an incentive for these doctors to be welcomed into the family<sup>3</sup>. Thus, one of the projects, to monitor pregnancy, also aimed to reach women within the domestic environment and establish a pedagogical action both in relation to physical care and in relation to moral values for a good upbringing of children. To this end, IPAI-RJ developed the "Gynecology and Protection of Poor Pregnant Women" service. This service aimed to provide so-called intrauterine childcare, accompanying women's pregnancies in their own homes. In this way, it is possible that there was resistance from these families "disinherited by fortune" to receiving the agents and doctors, strangers to the home and strangers to their social condition (CARNEIRO, 2000).

In view of the above, it is worth noting the objectives of the IPAI-RJ, according to its 1913 statutes: to fill the gap left by the state in the field of assistance to sick, abandoned and miserable children; to save early childhood, above all by guaranteeing the lactation of the poor; to provide mothers with notions of hygiene to improve the upbringing of their children; to combat diseases that affected childhood; to carry out detailed surveys of the conditions in which disadvantaged children lived; to promote the regulation of women's work in industry, with the aim of indirectly favoring children; to encourage the creation of maternity homes to house women in the last months of pregnancy; encourage the creation of nurseries for children under the age of two; stimulate the creation of kindergartens; inspect public and private schools; create a central dispensary for children's illnesses; found a children's hospital; vaccinate children enrolled at IPAI-RJ; regulate children's work in industry; encourage and favor the creation of child protection societies; exercise guardianship over abused children or those in moral danger (Moncorvo Filho, 1903; Estatutos..., 1923).

It is worth noting that, in Moncorvo Filho's opinion, mistreated children would be those who received psychological abuse, did not receive the necessary care from their parents, were given over to vagrancy or practiced dangerous trades for their age. The "morally abandoned"

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<sup>3</sup> Historiography points to the episode of the Vaccine Revolt in Rio de Janeiro in 1904 as a significant moment in this estrangement between the working classes and the agents of medicine, who "invaded the privacy" of their homes, breaking with sacramental norms of conduct, extrapolating the rules of sociability in force. This approach, due to the health experiences of the early 20th century, had to be negotiated, as there was a popular distrust of the medical profession, who were the agents of the public authorities in the episode of the Vaccine Revolt (SEVCENKO, 2010).

would be those whose parents behaved scandalously, were drunk, lived in beggary or had committed crimes of any kind (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011). From the point of view of these authors, it is worth noting that Moncorvo Filho attributed the high infant mortality rate, since the establishment of the Wheel, to conditions that ranged from its installation in buildings considered old or in unhealthy alleys, to the supposed lack of zeal on the part of the administrations. In contrast to this outdated model, I reiterate that he envisioned and developed IPAI-RJ as an enterprise that lived up to its "noble mission" (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).

We return to this idea at this point in order to emphasize that revealing the financial support received from industrialist Albino Souza Cruz, president of the cigarette factory of the same name, for the construction of IPAI-RJ's headquarters reinforced the social role of philanthropy, given that, as mentioned above, IPAI-RJ was a private philanthropic entity, subsidized by federal and municipal funds. It was recognized as an institution of public utility by municipal decree in 1909, a year after the National Congress of Public and Private Assistance. The table below provides some information on public subsidies, assets and revenue, collected from official statistics

Table 2 - IPAI-RJ budget allocation in 1912

IPAI-RJ - Budget Description - 1912		
Assets	Revenue	
193:952\$677	62:119\$870	
	Budget allocation Federal	30:000\$000
	Budget allocation Municipal	5:500\$000
	Lottery shares	15:053\$660
	Donations	2:144\$710
	Tuition fees and Income from Assets	9:421\$500

Source: PAIVA, Ataulpho de. **Public and private assistance in Rio de Janeiro - History and Statistics**. Rio de Janeiro: Typography of the Yearbook of Brazil, 1922.

The table above shows that around 80% of IPAI-RJ's income in 1912 came from public funds, such as subsidies and lotteries. On the other hand, the institution's accumulated capital was largely obtained through donations from the state, such as land and buildings. In this respect, businessman Albino de Souza Cruz was the main sponsor of the construction of IPAI-RJ's headquarters. In his speech at the foundation stone laying ceremony, the businessman emphasized the patriotic nature of child protection (Souza Cruz, 1919, p.4).

Table 3 - IPAI-RJ budget allocation from 1913 to 1915

IPAI-RJ - Budget Description - 1913 to 1915		
Year	Assets	Revenue
1913	152:276\$844	73:944\$118
1914	158:355\$400	89:174\$340
1915	351:096\$892	102:054\$020

Source: PAIVA, Ataulpho de. **Public and private assistance in Rio de Janeiro - History and Statistics**. Rio de Janeiro: Typography of the Yearbook of Brazil, 1922.

The table above shows an increase in both assets and income between 1913 and 1915. In addition, it can be seen that in 1915, both assets and income practically doubled as a result of the large sums donated to the institution. According to Câmara (2010), the IPAI-RJ initiative was one of the first "scientific" child welfare networks in Brazil. It was an interface between the educational and social spheres. It was a secular service that sought to justify its existence by the importance of its national development project, based on valuing and protecting children as a priority in nation-building. Fighting infant mortality in favor of a physically and mentally healthy childhood, it urged the public authorities to combat the problems that plagued poor children and the world around them, putting the issue of public assistance for children on the government's agenda. In this direction, progress was made from 1899 onwards, driven by groups interested in involving government spheres with the problem of children, in the fields of child hygiene, medicine and schools (MARCÍLIO, 1998). By way of illustration, the table below shows some of the academic productions produced at the IPAI- RJ by doctoral trainees in medicine as a result of their scientific research.

Table 4 - Theses by IPAI-RJ doctoral trainees from 1902 to 1922

Medical Student Interns at IPAI-RJ and their Theses		
Doctoral student	Year	Thesis
Roberto Gomes Caldas	1902	Atrophic odontopathies of childhood in hereditary syphilis
Aristide de Campos Seabra	1902	Medico-legal study of marriage
Antonio Epaminondas Gouveia	1902	Semiotics of childhood hereditary syphilis
Levindo Eduardo Coelho	1902	Early childhood food hygiene
Lafayette Cavalcanti de Freitas	1903	Dispensaries for the treatment of childhood illnesses
Ugolino Penteado	1905	The value of puerimetry
Cesário Arruda	1908	Donate artificial breastfeeding
Almir Madeira	1909	Etiology and prophylaxis of syphilis in breastfeeding
Virgílio Monteiro Machado	1911	Contribution to the study of anemia
Adhemar Adherbal da Costa	1916	Tuberculosis in childhood
Calazans Luz	1922	Postnatal prophylaxis dispensary





**Source:** LEVY, Iete Cherem. **The trajectory of Moncorvo Filho:** childcare and philanthropy in a childcare project (1901-1922). Dissertation (Master's in Brazilian History). Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, 1996. p. 85.

In the table above, we can see the relevance of the research objects of the medical students who did their internships at IPAI-RJ and the health issues that affected society at the time and that were dealt with at the institute, which is in line with its own institutional objectives. In this way, being part of the "theater of observations" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1906, p. 103) led by Moncorvo Filho, being an assistant at IPAI-RJ and experiencing the experiences and practices, allowed the interns to develop their theses in the medical field, aligned with the main problems of child health (LEVY, 1996)

In this respect, it is worth noting that IPAI-RJ's goals were ambitious. They were not limited to simply providing assistance, but to changing the paradigm of how children and motherhood were viewed. It also aimed to provide data on Brazilian children, especially those "down on their luck", to monitor child labor, to guarantee protection for mothers when they were pregnant, in short, very broad and audacious objectives.

Although it didn't get the support it had hoped for in the pro-childhood crusade, the IPAI-RJ was important for the development of public assistance for poor children and the consequent inclusion of the state in this issue (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926). According to Gondra (2002), the Children's Department, founded by Moncorvo Filho in 1919, was effectively funded by the Institute itself until 1938. Two years later, the Federal Government finally created, within the Ministry of Education and Health, the National Children's Department, an institution that centralized, for 30 years, the policy of assistance to mothers and children in Brazil, putting into practice the objectives of the Children's Department, also conceived by Moncorvo Filho.

Furthermore, as Silva Jr. and Garcia (2014) point out, the Sociedade Científica Protetora da Infância, founded on June 28, 1902 by Moncorvo Filho, had the objective of "discussing all issues relating to childhood and to which all members of the Institute's professional staff belong." (p. 620). Being part of the Scientific Society allowed closer contact with other prestigious doctors, with modern medical-scientific theories, as well as as getting in touch with the social problems that came to IPAI-RJ. The Sociedade Científica Protetora da Infância brought together members of the technical team working in the dispensary and daycare center, and its methodology was to discuss the cases presented by the members (2014, p. 620).



According to Leony and Freire (2011), in addition to Moncorvo Filho's pioneering work and the scope that his institution achieved, it is worth noting that the break with a religious charity model, with the creation of IPAI-RJ, makes this institution a fundamental part of understanding public assistance to destitute children and how this assistance, which supports and minimizes social impacts on impoverished groups, without, however, tackling the structural factors of this destitution, especially poverty, is an element that hinders the fight against the roots of inequalities (GONDRA, 2002).

Dr. Moncorvo Filho, a young and studious doctor who has already made a name for himself in the fields of science, has just put himself at the head of the most generous and useful of campaigns: to protect children. We don't need to clarify the highly philanthropic aims of the association that is being organized on the initiative of this distinguished young man. It is enough for today to point out its aims, which are included in the following program: [...]. To carry out the most complete investigations possible into the conditions in which poor children live (food, clothing, housing, education, etc.) in order to provide them with the proper instruction, trying to concentrate the efforts of the various charitable associations and religious collectivities that carry out their philanthropic work in the capital in this direction. To disseminate elementary notions of child hygiene among poor and proletarian families, by means of small booklets, written within the reach of the public, independently of the practical instructions that can be given by the Institute's staff. [...] To protect the hygienic and medical inspection of public and private schools operating in the capital of the Republic by the means at its disposal (Gazeta de Notícias, 1899, p. 2).

Aiming to act on social issues, he criticized child welfare institutions, proposing a scientific and social approach for them. An advocate of medical and social assistance for children, he systematized his efforts with the creation of IPAI-RJ. At this institution, he began a wide-ranging campaign to educate mothers and promote child hygiene (WADSWORTH, 1999). The following sections were created within the Institute: the General Dispensary, the Senhora Alfredo Pinto Nursery, the Gota de Leite, the Scientific Society and the Ladies of Assistance (CÂMARA, 2010).

As Wadsworth (1999) rightly argues, doctors Nascimento Gurgel, Leão de Aquino, Eduardo Meireles, Jéferson de Lemos, Luiz Bulcão, Leonel Rocha, Magalhães Penido, among others, took part in the organization of IPAI-RJ. The specialties offered were medical clinics, surgical clinics, skin diseases, eye, ear, nose and throat clinics, massage, balneotherapy, electrotherapy, medical gymnastics, gynecology and protection of pregnant women, examination and certification of wet nurses, as well as dental surgery, among others (WADSWORTH, 1999).



In this way, in the light of the theoretical basis of Freire and Leony (2011), based on the view that it was up to science to guide social transformations, as well as on the understanding of the fundamental role of the doctor in this "civilizing crusade"<sup>4</sup>, Moncorvo Filho proposed, in 1909, to Mayor Inocêncio Serzedello Corrêa, the creation of a School Health Inspection Service for the Federal District. It is interesting to note that the proposal was based on the intention that the Service should make efforts to broaden its field of action with regard to children, spreading the necessary hygiene precepts to a wider public than that assisted by IPAI-RJ. The aim was to act on schools and schoolchildren, providing medical guidance on school organization and practices (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).

From these authors' studies, we can see that the School Health Inspection Service created by Serzedello Corrêa was first implemented in the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1910. At that time, intellectuals and authorities were debating the best prophylactic measures to ensure the health of students, given the problem of tuberculosis. Moncorvo Filho (1925), when discussing sun cures, explained the possibility of applying them in educational institutions, following the example of what was happening abroad. And he praised it: "sunbathing was extended to establishments for the education of weak, lame or pre-tuberculous children and so the magnificent open-air schools multiplied everywhere" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1925 *apud* FREIRE and LEONY, 2011). In this respect, it is worth pointing out the pertinent recommendation:

[...] bathed in sunshine and penetrated by light and air, with trees and courtyards, which receive every day, before the visit of the doctor or the inspector, the sun that purifies and restores to the poor children the joy of living and breathing, with free and penetrating air, the first lesson in hygiene and comfort, emanating from an educational environment with a laughing and picturesque aspect (AZEVEDO, 1948).

Thus, from the perspective of attributing the term "civilizing crusade" to the actions undertaken on behalf of children, Moncorvo Filho argued that "we must be true fighters in this

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the philanthropists used expressions that went back to Christian experiences, such as the common use by IPAI-RJ members of references to the actions undertaken by the institution as a "holy crusade" and, on the other hand, the common use of the expression "apostles of good" to designate the Ladies of Assistance. Speeches were made and supported from the perspective that a battle of Good against Evil was being waged, highlighting the principles capable of cooperating in the "salvation" of "destitute" children. Through the "holy crusade of Good" they were supposed to act on the mortality and illnesses that plagued society. The allusion to the crusades refers to the Christian-inspired movements that were organized in Western Europe between the 11th and 13th centuries, with the aim of conquering, occupying and maintaining Christian rule over the Holy Land - Jerusalem (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).



crusade of Good to fight for the unfortunate little children, giving them comfort, bread, clothing, medicine, wiping away their sorrowful tears, finally raising their morale dejected by the vicissitudes to which ungrateful nature has dragged them" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, p. 52). Under these premises, the intervention of philanthropists in the social sphere was based on the promotion of health and hygiene. For Moncorvo Filho (1914), the role played by the Ladies of Assistance, in this logic, corresponds to that of messengers of good, passing on values, precepts and social rules, in accordance with hygienist discourses:

The role of the ladies in such a crusade is one of the most appreciable and noble, which is why just now, at the last Child Protection Congress held in Belgium, Wiart said with great truth, addressing the initiatives to be put into practice, that: "Scientific efforts are insufficient if they are not enlivened by kindness, compassion and tenderness! The participation of women must dominate all child protection work" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1914, p. 9).

In this logic of understanding, based on the intentions that guided the creation of the Inspection Service by the mayor of the Federal District in 1910, we are interested in reflecting on the concepts that mobilized the organization of the decree that created it, as well as problematizing the structure developed for the Service, with particular interest in the propositions about the work of doctors and teachers. In the same vein, at the heart of the debates held at the ~~3rd~~ Brazilian Hygiene Congress held in São Paulo in 1926, hygiene education was given this eminent and urgent mission, reaffirming the primacy of the "health-education" binomial. Proving the threat that was emerging, there were many indications that the medical and hygiene inspection service should be regulated (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).

This is corroborated by the fact that, at the National Congress of Public and Private Assistance held in 1908, a proposal to regulate this service was presented and included in the final report of the Congress (Moncorvo Filho, 1926). Thus, the conceptions of child care and hygiene, entangled as parts of the "mission" to be strategically activated in the "art of cultivating children" by the doctor Moncorvo Filho, are anchored in the analysis of the notion of school hygiene (SILVA JR. and GARCIA, 2014).

It is worth noting that during the first two decades of the 20th century, Moncorvo Filho dedicated part of his reflections and writings to school and child hygiene<sup>5</sup>, giving lectures,

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<sup>5</sup> Moncorvo Filho developed an extensive and diversified scientific output on subjects of his specialty. By 1926, he had published more than 300 works on the most varied topics related to children: whooping cough, bacteriology, prophylactic hygiene, lymphangitis, parasitic diseases, tuberculosis, skin diseases, the use of quinine salts, hernias, yellow fever, impaludism, infant mortality, syphilis, mercenary nannies,



reports, popular courses and guides on the subject. Examples of this are the thirty lectures published by Moncorvo Filho and his collaborators under the title: *Hygiene infantil as mães pobres* (1907); *Notas para um guia do médico escolar* (1913); the orientation guide entitled "Notas para um guia de hygiene escolar" (1913), in the periodical *Arquivo de Assistência á Infância* (1913); and the book *Hygiene escolar* (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011). With this in mind, based on the sources indicated, as well as other texts published by the doctor, we sought to nuance the concepts presented by him, locating them within the debates produced at the time. In Moncorvo Filho's terms:

Anyone who, like the writer of these lines, has had the opportunity to examine from all sides the movement that is taking place in cultured countries in favor of poor, destitute, sick, mistreated or abandoned children, cannot be indifferent to the picture that, from this point of view, all the inhabitants of the Capital of the Republic can see. Rio de Janeiro, a city with a large population and a commercial and industrial movement that is already well developed, where misery is beginning to take its first steps among the unfortunate families of those who have lost their fortunes, was worthy, I say, feeling my patriotism vibrate, worthy, I repeat, of greater care for indigent children, on the part of those who are responsible for safeguarding the future of Brazil. It is society's duty to care for these little beings without bread and without a home, those who are robbed of life by illness due to the lack of medical help, and Pierre Laffite was right when he proclaimed the principle that: "wealth is social in its source, it must be social in its distribution". There is no better profession than that of the doctor to recognize human misery and the multiple and intricate problems on which its improvement depends (MONCORVO FILHO, 1901, p. 53).

Emphasizing the importance of the "Popular Course" held in 1915 at IPAI-RJ, which was later transformed into the book *"Hygiene Infantil"*, Moncorvo Filho stated that his efforts, rather than being a vanity, were aimed at providing notions of hygiene for the working classes. That's why, in these courses, he always used charts, graphs, data and statistics, trying to use simple language that was accessible to mothers so that they could understand his teachings. The program planned for this "Popular Course" involved the presentation of various works he had already written up to that date, such as the factors of human degeneration (syphilis, alcohol and tuberculosis), notions of childcare, breastfeeding, school hygiene and considerations about "morally abandoned children". The aim of the lectures and courses was essentially to

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diphtheria, infant feeding, Barlow's disease, congenital cataracts, cardiac rheumatism, the cure by the sun and leprosy, among others (SILVA JR. and GARCIA, 2014).





disseminate hygiene theories in popular language, helping to establish healthy habits among the working classes.

This reflection can contribute to an understanding of how different types of knowledge (medical and pedagogical) established interfaces and profiles that contributed to the formulation of constraints on the outlines and perspectives of children identified as normal and abnormal at school (SILVA JR. and GARCIA, 2014). The conferences were published separately in various issues of the periodical *Arquivo de Assistência á Infância* from 1902 to 1907. The material published in book format was authored by Moncorvo Filho and Nascimento Gurgel, among other doctors who gave lectures from 1901 to 1907. Despite the specific nature of the works, it is possible to establish points of convergence regarding the aspects that mobilized the production of these writings (SILVA JR. and GARCIA, 2014). On the one hand, the author's strong concern to record the actions undertaken, as well as his interest in highlighting his supposed pioneering spirit; on the other, his intention to build "guides" aimed at prescribing procedures and conducts to be adopted in School Inspection, in order to make it as uniform as possible (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).

### **Moncorvo Filho between scientific philanthropy and childcare**

According to Wadsworth (1999), with the creation of IPAI-RJ, Moncorvo Filho became Brazil's representative in matters of caring for poor children abroad. According to this author, the very motto on the central façade of the IPAI-RJ entrance, "Quem ampara a infância trabalha pela Pátria", demarcated the type of action they were looking for, giving them a patriotic character. The inscription was intended to legitimize for the population, especially the political and intellectual elites and government representatives, that their work was, above all, a work on behalf of the nation.

At the 4<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Congress for the Protection of Children, concomitant with the 3<sup>rd</sup> American Children's Congress, held between August 27 and September 5, 1922, he was the president of the Executive Committee, and the main Brazilian exponent of pediatric medicine, due to his long experience in international events aimed at protecting children (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926). Previously, Moncorvo had taken part in other international events aimed at protecting children, such as the International Congress for the Protection of Children, in the city of Brussels-Belgium (1913) and the 2nd Children's Congress in Montevideo (1917).



With regard to the theme, the ~~1st~~ Brazilian Congress for the Protection of Children intended to deal with issues related to children, from a social, legal, medical, hygienic and pedagogical point of view, and in their relations with the family, society and the state, as its sections were divided: "~~1st~~ Section - Sociology and Legislation; ~~2nd~~ Section - Assistance; ~~3rd~~ Section - Pedagogy; ~~4th~~ Section - Children's Medicine; ~~5th~~ Section - Hygiene" (SILVA JR and GARCIA, 2014). The purpose of the event was also to call on the state to finance child protection. According to Wadsworth (1999), this event, chaired by Moncorvo Filho, brought together various specialists from different fields to discuss the problems of childhood and put forward proposals to solve them. At the same event, he launched a book that became one of the main references at the time on the history of pediatrics in Brazil. At this event, October 12, the day of the discovery of America, was suggested as a day to celebrate childhood and the need to focus attention on this segment of the population. Thus, he suggested the creation of a specific day for them, Children's Day (WADSWORTH, 1999).

According to Alvim and Valladares (1988), on November 5, 1924, President Arthur Bernardes sanctioned the celebration of the "children's holiday" on October 12 by means of Decree No. 4,867. The bill that resulted in this decree was the initiative of federal deputy Galdino do Valle Filho, who took advantage of the discussions at the ~~1st~~ Brazilian Congress for the Protection of Children, held in 1922. Thus, for these authors, the decree had only one article and its function within the public administration was merely as an invitation to celebrate a commemorative date. Health and education policies and proposals for legal changes discussed at the congress were not used to draft legislative changes. During the same period, Moncorvo Filho created the Sociedade Protetora da Infância (Childhood Protection Society), which was designed to study issues relating to childcare and which included all the members of IPAI's professional scientific staff - RJ. Moncorvo Filho also had his own periodical - *Arquivos de Proteção à Infância*.

According to Rocha (2003), the emphasis given to childhood as a factor in social development emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, with children receiving greater attention in European countries following the instability of the ~~First~~ World War, a thought that had repercussions in Brazil, indicating the need for intervention by the public authorities to support this segment. However, this demand was not about delegating support for children and young people to the public authorities. From this point of view, according to Alvim and Valladares (1988), these philanthropists were more interested in receiving aid from the



government to carry out their civilizing project than in transferring this responsibility to politicians and legislators. They felt that scientific assistance should be carried out by private specialists, but financed by the government, which, with the change in the republican political regime, would have to get involved in these public assistance issues. There is no analysis of the use of the state to leverage private reputations.

Dr. Levi Carneiro, responsible for a paper at the Brazilian Congress for the Protection of Children, left an important record of how these philanthropists dealt with the issue of public assistance, indicating that these specialist philanthropists claimed the role of interveners in social order, based no longer on a religious discourse, but a private action of a scientific nature, with government support, entering and standardizing social relations, with emphasis on intimate issues such as "conjugal and maternal/paternal relations, work activities with regard to maternal and child protection, child education, individual and collective hygiene, and compulsory therapy" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926).

In fact, this understanding is important because much of the news published in the scientific media of the time was also reproduced in the periodical press, which had a greater social reach. The "philanthropists of the nation", as well as being economically stable, had wide social penetration, participating both in the scientific circuits of the time and through access to the reproduction of their ideas in the press (BARBOSA, 2007). In this way, IPAI-RJ's private initiative emerged from the elites and found important support from them. According to Moncorvo Filho, "men of responsibility took upon themselves the laudable task of studying the subject [childhood and its problems], journalists threw themselves into the fray incandescent by the columns of our advanced press" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, p. 299). Certainly, in the light of the Congress of Practitioners<sup>6</sup>, the health of the individual would also consist of the

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<sup>6</sup> The National Congress of Practitioners, held between September 30 and October 8, 1922, was part of the activities of the International Exhibition to commemorate the centenary of Brazil's Independence, held in the capital of the Republic. For the first time, the Brazilian medical intelligentsia brought together representatives of the profession to analyze the paths they should take. They debated the reasons for the advances and delays in the field of medicine, as well as the forms of dialogue with representatives of the public authorities. The Congress was a forum where issues related to the state's role in health care and preventive medicine were debated by its main leaders. The medical profession was undergoing a profound process of transformation with the increasing technification and specialization of work. It began a month and a half before the inauguration of Artur Bernardes, who had already been elected president but had not yet been sworn in. Resistance to his election had forced President Epitácio Pessoa to declare a state of siege in Rio de Janeiro two months earlier. A presidential succession with these characteristics would have been ideal for the elite of the medical profession to present their opinion and intervene in the course of events, especially in the area of health (PEREIRA NETO, 2002).



health of society. According to Moncorvo Filho (2002, p. 18), "this issue was fundamental to the current state of civilization and could no longer be postponed".

As the Institute for the Protection and Assistance of Children holds its first ordinary session, we must inform the select assembly of everything that has happened since March 24, 1899, when the charitable institution was founded, until the same date this year (WADSWORTH, 1999).

According to the doctor Manoel Ferreira, present at the Congress of Practitioners, medicine should be focused on preventive practices. For him, medical action should focus on the community to the detriment of the individual, which means a view of the disease that analyzes the problem before the disease invades the person's body, a social and primarily preventive medicine (PEREIRA NETO, 2002). At the event, Moncorvo Filho reiterated his proposal for organizing public assistance, clarifying both his conception of assistance and who should be assisted. According to the doctor, the purpose of the public administration body would be to "support individuals who lack resources, taking special care of abandoned children, the alienated, the sick, the old, the infirm, and even those who are valid and without work" (Atas e trabalhos..., 1923, p.177).

According to Câmara (2010, p. 160), in the 1920s there were already 17 Institutes for the Protection and Assistance of Children in Brazil, given the breadth of services that led to the creation of similar institutions in other states. In the same way, according to Wadsworth (1999), the model started in Rio de Janeiro in 1899 was the basis for the development of branches throughout Brazil and other institutes, "following the victorious work of Dr. Moncorvo Filho", the first Institutes for the Protection and Assistance of Children were developed in Bahia and Pernambuco, outside the Federal Capital. According to Alvim and Valladares (1988), Moncorvo Filho saw the political moment of 1922 as a chance to make a success of his childcare project, which had begun at the end of the 19th century in Rio de Janeiro and later had branches throughout Brazil<sup>7</sup>, with their own organization and in line with the

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<sup>7</sup> By 1922, there were eighteen branches or similar throughout the country. The cities or states that had branches were: Rio Grande do Sul, Pernambuco, Maranhão, Pará, Paraíba, São Paulo (São Paulo, Franca, Ribeirão Preto and Santos), Bahia, Minas Gerais (Belo Horizonte and Juiz de Fora), Rio Grande do Norte, Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro, Niterói, Petrópolis and Teresópolis) and Sergipe (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926).



regional reality, the Institutes were connected, based on the principles established by the Institute presided over in Rio de Janeiro<sup>8</sup>

It is necessary to encourage the creation of useful works of scientific charity, to establish the appropriate legislation, far from the usual platonic character, becoming a practical reality, operating, finally, a promising movement, for the dissemination, throughout the country, of the healthy principles that will lead our people, [...] It is high time that we organize Public Assistance in Brazil in a definitive and efficient way and the governments, in view of our pressing needs in this regard. The great progress made by the nations of the Old and New Continents and the social moment we are going through make it imperative to look affectionately at resolving this palpitating problem, seeking, as is required today, to support children, the elderly, the poor, the sick, the indigent and the destitute. (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, pp. 128-129).

On this subject, Moncorvo Filho favored, as a counterexample in his argument, the practices of traditional asylums, which he characterized as backward and pre-scientific, with the Roda dos Expostos being the preferred object of his criticism. From this perspective, although he recognized its value, recalling that before its creation unwanted children were subjected to private care of dubious quality or to exposure in "squares and streets to the ferocity of animals and the weather" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, p.31), he considered it a condemned institution, incompatible with a civilized nation (p.35). He described the Wheel as "a pit of inconvenience", because under the pretext of covering up dishonor, sin or crime, it hid its fruits without bothering to preserve them, perpetuating the attitude of abandonment and becoming a veritable "slaughterhouse of innocent " (p.41). The doctor insisted: "It's not surprising that infant mortality, especially in the first months of life, was excessive there, as administrators and doctors who belonged to it had been saying for almost two centuries" (p.44).

According to Freire (2008), the Institute initially functioned in the home of Dr. Moncorvo Filho, at 93 Rua da Lapa, and was later transferred to a rented building at 22 Rua Visconde do Rio Branco. It was not until 1914 that the Institute built its own headquarters, on land donated by the President of the Republic, Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, at 18 Rua do Areal, later named Rua Moncorvo Filho in honor of IPAI-RJ's founding doctor. According to Freire and Leony (2011), the choice of location for the IPAI-RJ, which was close to the workplaces of working-class women, the target of the campaigns, was in line with the broader objective of

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<sup>8</sup> Moncorvo Filho laid out the basis for effective support for children from the moment they were conceived by their mothers and throughout their childhood. He denounced the precariousness of the care offered to children until then, criticizing its non-scientific nature, since it did not adopt the standards set by childcare and pediatrics (ALVIM and VALLADARES, 1988, pp. 6-7).





focusing assistance on workers as a whole: "to encourage and create working conditions for the working classes, protecting childhood and motherhood" (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011).

On this issue, doctors Moncorvo Filho, Clemente Ferreira and Fernandes Filgueiras drew the attention of public authorities to a gap in the legislation of the time, pointing out the need to protect children from the moment their mothers were pregnant (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, p. 383). Bearing in mind that pregnant women working in factories were subjected to an excessive workload, which put their children at risk and they could even die because of their mothers' weakness. In 1919, Moncorvo Filho developed a national project to stimulate state intervention in the cause of poor children, the Children's Department.

According to Freire and Leony (2011), as a project, the creation of the Children's Department was intended to create a kind of "Ministry" to intervene in the country's "wandering children" and their families, to draw up policies aimed at children, their health and issues related to hygiene and childcare, among which education can be highlighted, with the creation of libraries, archives and museums with materials on child protection, a research center, responsible for collecting data from IPAI-RJ affiliates, and any other institutions focused on children, in order to survey the demands of each location and create specific intervention measures according to the needs presented by each locality (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, pp. 283-288).

It also wanted to monitor birth and infant mortality data; it wanted to create legal instruments to intervene in the lives of "morally abandoned" children, victims of drunken and "immoral" parents; set up a center to report child abuse, encourage the creation of childcare institutions that were rigorously scientific, such as dispensaries, crèches, milk drops, consultations for nursing mothers, restaurants for poor mothers who were breastfeeding, kindergartens, vacation camps and congresses (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, pp. 283-288).

The Gouttes de Lait service, founded by Moncorvo Filho in December 1901, was one of the many innovations he promoted at IPAI-RJ (MONCORVO FILHO, 1903). Inspired by the *Gouttes de Lait de Belleville*, developed by French pediatrician Gaston Variot (1855-1930), its main purpose was to distribute sterilized milk to children up to three years old. The Gouttes de Lait were set up in 1899 by Baron Henri de Rothschild, a doctor interested in children's diseases, at the suggestion of his teacher, Doctor Budin. According to Rollet-Echalier (1990 apud Freire and Leony, 2011, p. 215), although these works were based on the tripod of consultation/distribution of milk/advice, the main motivation of the mothers who came to them



was to obtain sterilized milk. The supply was guaranteed by the daily donation of more than twenty liters of milk, made by the philanthropist Carlos Pereira Sá Forte, president of the Companhia de Laticínios de Minas Gerais (Moncorvo Filho, 1924, p.7). Children whose families declared their poverty and need for food could be enrolled in the service, following certain bureaucratic procedures. Moncorvo Filho (1924) describes:

The child is then registered on a form, where all the personal details and commemorations about the inheritance, previous illnesses, etc. are entered; then the administrator of the service enters the child in a special book, where all the data is minutely recorded, plus weight and height, etc. on the date of entry, as well as the child's state of health" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1924, p. 4).

Emphasizing the aspects of the Drops of Milk service, after confirming that the mother was unable to breastfeed the child, the family would receive sterilized milk every day, along with instructions on how to properly prepare the bottle. The children enrolled were weighed every two weeks, and the results fed into the statistical database produced by the Institute, which proved the effectiveness of the service. The Gotas de Leite (Milk Drops) played a strategic role in the IPAI-RJ project, since, like other doctors and hygienists of the period, Moncorvo Filho considered the problems resulting from inadequate nutrition to be the main cause of the country's high infant mortality rate:

In addition to my civilian clinic, I have two excellent observation theaters, the Institute for Childhood Assistance and the children's diseases service that I also run at the Rio de Janeiro Polyclinic, the latter with a stock of observations of more than 14,000 individuals and the latter with around 16,000, and I have already obtained a certain amount of data that allows me to judge the disasters that are going on about the feeding of little children (Moncorvo Filho, 1903, p.3).

In addition to supplying sterilized milk, the IPAI-RJ offered nursing mothers an examination service, which, together with the certification of nannies, stemmed, on the one hand, from the fear of contagion resulting from transformations in post-abolition social and urban relations and, on the other, from efforts to convince women to breastfeed their children

(FREIRE, 2009). Created in 1901 under the name Gabinete de Exame e Atestação das Amas de Leite Mercenárias, it acted according to various procedures. The first was the detailed recording of data on the women, such as age, parentage, etc., and hereditary and personal history of menstruation, abortions and births. Once this information had been collected, anthropometric, breast and milk examinations were carried out - macroscopic and microscopic examinations, using instruments such as the lactodensimeter



lactobutyrometer and pioscope. Next, the other female systems were examined (urinary, digestive, etc.) and, finally, the infant(s) (MONCORVO FILHO, 1903, pp.278-279). In line with the 5th Brazilian Congress of Medicine and Surgery, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1903, it is worth noting that Moncorvo Filho (1903, p. 280) outlined a brief history of mercenary breastfeeding in Brazil and presented to the City Council his project to regulate the service of milk nannies, to be carried out by private institutions hired for this purpose, with a view to the health of nursing mothers and their children, a primary objective that he pursued, as already mentioned.

It is worth noting that the IPAI-RJ service was later remodeled, with the creation of a booklet and the drafting of new regulations - which Moncorvo Filho took care to patent - and was renamed the Milk Nannies Examination Service. Among the main reasons why nannies were rejected were: insufficient milk or milk that was not very nutritious, alcoholism, poor hygiene conditions, tuberculosis, syphilis and scabies. With this in mind, although demand for the service was initially low, the advantages that were gradually attributed to the certification of nannies increased competition between them and boosted demand. For Moncorvo Filho (1903), the importance of the procedure lay in the use of scientific criteria that went beyond common sense and provided a triple guarantee: for the nannies, the employers and the children. However, as Ferreira and Freire (2005) point out, distributing milk and/or certifying nannies would not be enough to solve what was considered a serious social problem. Moncorvo Filho identified as urgent and imperative the need for public and private actions aimed at correcting cultural habits in relation to raising children, especially with regard to food, and especially among the working classes (FERREIRA and FREIRE, 2005).

As has already been pointed out, Moncorvo Filho launched a veritable educational crusade in order to correct dietary vices and errors, through lectures and conferences given on the premises of his institute. These were later reproduced in booklets and periodicals that taught mothers the basic rules for feeding children, according to Freire (2004). The main element of the campaign was to encourage mothers to breastfeed their children. This was achieved mainly by publicizing the issue in the press and holding children's competitions (FREIRE, 2004). In this context, on the premises of IPAI-RJ, Moncorvo Filho addressed himself directly to "the ignorant mothers who so often let their children die for lack of the necessary care" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926), while in the pages of *Correio da Manhã* he sought the support of the upper classes of society for a change in the way children were protected and cared for



(FREIRE, 2004). Although his discourse was nominally aimed at women/mothers, he intended to reach the elites and the State, with a view to institutionalizing childcare.

According to Novaes (2009, *apud* FREIRE and LEONY, 2011), "more than a concrete transformation of child rearing practices, the aim was to legitimize the authority of childcare". In November 1909, when he gave the keynote speech at the inauguration of the Campos Sales Kindergarten, the doctor used a childcare speech (FREIRE, 2009). Kulhmann Jr. (2002) considers Moncorvo Filho to be the great forerunner of the spread of nurseries in Brazil. The Sr<sup>a</sup>. Alfredo Pinto Nursery School was inaugurated in June 1908, on the occasion of the birthday of the then Chief of Police, Alfredo Pinto.

In 1908, one of the "Ladies of Assistance", Mrs. Alfredo Pinto, who had been honored for her social services and benevolence, christened the first "scientifically" run day-care center. The nursery was located on a floor attached to the IPAI-RJ and was intended exclusively for children whose parents were workers. In addition, with the help of women's philanthropy, in particular the Ladies of Childhood Assistance, Moncorvo Filho held three annual festivals on Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Three Kings' Day. At these festivals, which, according to the doctor, brought together around a thousand children, clothes, toys and donations were distributed, and banquets, games, soccer matches and dances were held (FREIRE and LEONY, 2011). The social and festive events held at IPAI-RJ were reported in newspapers and magazines of the time.

With rare brilliance, the beautiful and touching Christmas, New Year's and King's festivities have just been held by the lovely ladies of the Association of Ladies of Childhood Assistance, for all the poor children who have so far had the good fortune to be protected by the humanitarian Institute for the Protection and Assistance of Children in Rio de Janeiro, which is providing so many services of public charity, thanks to the valuable collaboration of distinguished knights and, above all, ladies from our best society. These traditional festivals, which have been held for the past 12 years by the Childhood Assistance Institute, are a charming reminder of the value of the peace of an unlimited kindness of heart, the refinement of altruistic feelings for the suffering children, those who, outside the happy homes where food is plentiful, where silks giggle and where earrings fill the rooms of the little ones, can only find pleasure and comfort in the affection of this Assistance that lavishes everything on them on those happy dates when they must forget their sorrows and cheer up their spirits (A FACEIRA, 1913, n. 18). 18).

Wadsworth's (1999) theoretical construction is interesting, as he analyzes that in addition to their commemorative nature, the events were a concrete opportunity to provide material aid to children "without bread and without a home", to bring together members of the higher social strata, reflecting and shaping the philanthropic culture of the Brazilian elite, and





to give visibility and publicity to his work. On this premise, making a direct association between child hygiene and the constitution of the Brazilian nation, Moncorvo Filho developed a "double model, ideological and institutional, of child protection" (WADSWORTH, 1999), becoming a reference for a network of similar institutions, created later in the country, as already mentioned.

For this author, Moncorvo Filho's work was not detached from the broader modernizing project, spearheaded by the urban professional and intellectual elite who developed and disseminated a discourse that was simultaneously medical, pedagogical and legal about children, and cemented an explicit link between childhood and the nation. On various occasions, Moncorvo Filho expressed his desire for his ideas and institutions to be incorporated by the public authorities in the creation of a national childcare system. According to Wadsworth (1999), the state's support was felt in promises, praise and motions of recognition for his work, but in few concrete measures.

Thus, in reaffirming his belief in the transformative role of education combined with hygiene, he alerted the public and authorities present to the social reach of the school institution, and took the opportunity to propose a vast program of sanitary inspection in the capital's schools (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926, p.179). The reports and documents produced at the various congresses on childhood and care held in the first decades of the 20th century reveal that these events were unique opportunities for doctors and philanthropists, such as Luiz Barboza, Fernandes Figueira and Moncorvo Filho, to express their opinions and defend their proposals. According to Wadsworth (1999), Moncorvo Filho's exchange and cooperation with other agents in the international political and scientific field played an essential role in his intellectual and institutional trajectory. In Brazil, the singularities of the child protection movement were linked to the economic, political and social scenario.

The IPAI-RJ was the basis of the Children's Department, an institution created by Moncorvo Filho in 1919 with the aim of centralizing information on the situation of Brazilian children, which could serve as subsidies for state action at a national level. Although it received a public subsidy (in a discontinued form), the Department actually functioned through the efforts of the doctor himself and with private resources until 1938. Two years later, the federal government created the National Children's Department along the lines proposed by Moncorvo Filho. Part of the Ministry of Education and Health, this body coordinated maternal and child care policies in Brazil. More than specific changes or adaptations, Moncorvo Filho recommended a radical transformation in the way childhood was conceived and protected





(FREIRE, 2009). Taking it as the hope of the nation and conceiving science as the main instrument for preserving it, he proposed a broad and complex system for sanitizing childhood, focusing on situations of poverty and/or abandonment. According to Wadsworth (1999), in creating the ambitious Children's Department project, Moncorvo Filho intended to:

[...] to act as a research and data collection agency. All the information collected would be made available by the federal government. The Department's statutes stipulated the study of various aspects of child care: the keeping of detailed records of private and official institutions dedicated to the care of minors; the collection of all kinds of statistical and demographic data; the holding of congresses and the establishment of an Exhibition or Museum of Childhood (WADSWORTH, 1999).

In the light of studies by Gondra, Kuhlmann Júnior and Freitas (2002, p. 298), Moncorvo Filho made efforts to demonstrate that alcohol compromised the development of the potential workforce, but also of the offspring when the mother or father was addicted. From his observations, Moncorvo Filho (1928) stated that of the 4,000 children treated at IPAI-RJ, 1,167 were victims of their parents' alcoholism. alcohol contributed to the increase in child mortality, and around 40% of the children who died during that period were the children of alcoholics. In view of this, Câmara's (2010, p. 164) reading is that, among the themes prioritized for the educational campaigns carried out by IPAI-RJ, the issue of alcoholism<sup>9</sup> deserved special attention, and one of the campaigns instituted was the anti-alcohol campaign. In addition, according to Gondra, Kuhlmann Jr. and Freitas (2002), "the propaganda was supported by 12 posters reinforcing the idea of the harmful effects of alcohol on children's health and mental development, based on information and statistical data" (p. 298). Thus, for the aforementioned authors, the campaign was not limited to establishing a salvationist discourse for children, but also for families in need of medical treatment.

The idea spread that if the parents were alcoholics at the time of conception, there was a high probability that the child would be born with some sequelae and that the degenerative effects would continue to decimate several future generations, as the following excerpt clarifies: "In 10 temperate families, 81.9% of children were healthy; in 10 other alcoholic families, only 17.5 children were normal. In another calculation, in 7 generations, of the 709 registered descendants, there were: 142 beggars, 45 prostitutes, 77 criminals, and 64 alienated"

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<sup>9</sup> The pedagogical and moralizing nature of the campaign was evident in the way the characters were portrayed, in an effort to exhort the social roles to be played by "good" parents, as well as to hold accountable those who, as a result of vice, contributed to the future degeneration of their offspring (CÂMARA, 2010, p. 166).



(MONCORVO FILHO, 1928, p. 35). In the light of the discourses coined during the period, Rago (1985) explains that

perceiving the child as a productive body, the future wealth of nations, the economic discourse sought to alert rulers to the depressing picture of helpless children and the country's high infant mortality rate, indicating that only with the support of medicine could Brazil tackle these problems and meet the need to produce a greater number of healthy workers in the future. But at the same time, it was a political discourse: providing medical care and protection for children also meant preventing the formation of discontented, maladjusted and rebellious spirits (RAGO, 1985, p. 121).

That said, in addition to implementing campaigns to combat alcoholism, according to Wadsworth (1999), the creation of the Child Robustness Contests was a strategy to minimize the presumed consequences of weaning on children's health. Among many other practices that sought to improve the race, the creation of the Robustness Contest is the most illustrative and emblematic example implemented by IPAI-RJ. The initiative aimed to reward poor children who represented models of health. The competitions took place once or twice a year, almost always during the Children's Day celebrations. The aim of the contest was always to encourage maternal nutrition in order to achieve types that fulfilled the eugenic ideal (DEPARTAMENTO DA CRIANÇA NO BRASIL, 1926, p. 5). Conceived by Moncorvo Filho and held systematically by IPAI-RJ for 33 years, since July 14, 1902, these contests, aimed at mothers "disinherited by fortune", awarded a cash prize to the healthiest baby up to one year old who had been breastfed until at least six months of age. From this angle, for Moncorvo Filho (1926), the Robustness Contest was an excellent way of encouraging natural breastfeeding, the discrediting of which was "a real social problem" (MONCORVO FILHO, 1926).

In this sense, according to Araújo (1995, p. 166), the Child Robustness Contests are competitions, at first, aimed at poor children, encouraging them to take care of their health. Later, the City Council took it upon itself to promote them in order to encourage breastfeeding. According to the author, "in addition to cash prizes for the strongest children, in the 4th Children's Robustness Competition in 1904, a pound sterling was offered to the weakest child and to the child up to 14 years of age who had the most surgical injuries" (ARAÚJO, 1995, p. 166). This model was later adapted to other groups and age groups, and was even modified for commercial purposes, such as the Baby Johnson competition, an initiative of the company of the same name. In view of this, according to Wadsworth (1999), Dr. Barbosa Viana, respected



by the medical community, reduced the contests to mere human exhibitions comparable to animal exhibitions

As a final point on the subject, it is worth noting that the doctor Germano Wittrock, in articles published in the magazine "Vida Doméstica" in the 1920s, called them superfood contests, because they supposedly encouraged childhood obesity. Thus, the validity of the Robustness Contests was not a consensus among the medical-hygienist community, even though it shared its eugenic assumptions, to the point of practically confusing the categories of hygiene and eugenics.

### CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, aspects concerning the preparation, organization and operation of IPAI-RJ were highlighted, in line with all the theoretical discussion in this chapter and in congruence with the debate on the social formation of the capital city and childhood as a national issue in the First Republic, as discussed in the previous chapters, focusing on the urban context of the city of Rio de Janeiro, the central theme of the research. Therefore, the research brought to light particularities that had the scope of understanding the work of a childcare institute, as a strategy that integrates the education of working children in the perspective of supporting the childhood of those then considered "materially and morally abandoned", bearing in mind that the first decades of the 20th century witnessed the idealization of apparatuses that promised to protect and promote childhood, with a view to making Brazil a "great nation".

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