

Editorial

Arising in Brazil, with roots still in the nineteenth century, the idea of an organizational and ideological unification of the Spiritist movement obtained great results with the significant adherence of spiritist societies throughout the last decades. Later, this ideology, under the tutelage of the International Spiritist Council, was spread, among other member countries, internationalizing this process. But is this kind of activity grounded in doctrine consistent with the strategies established by Allan Kardec for the development of Spiritism as a movement of ideas? What position would be more in accordance with the free-thinking nature of the Spiritist Doctrine? These are issues that the former CEPA president, Milton Medran, seeks to answer in the column "A word from CEPA" in this issue.

The column "CEPA's Memory" brings a biographical account of the Argentine spiritist Luiz di Cristóforo Postiglioni, a figure who had a prominent international role in the dissemination of Spiritism and which promoted intense work in the attempt to demonstrate that the spiritist principle of reincarnation had full conditions to be studied as a natural law.

Our readers can also read the full interview of Jacira Jacinto da Silva in the electronic newspaper "Kardec punto com" regarding the situation of criminal executions and the conditions of penitentiaries in Brazil. Also read about the news of the 2017 Free-Thinking Spiritist Forum, and the Brazilian Symposium on Spiritist Thought.

A Word from CEPA

UNIFICATION AND UNION ARE NOT SYNONYMS



Milton Rubens Medran Moreira
Former President of CEPA (2000/2008)

In all of Kardec's work, look for the word "unification" and you will not find it (at least, in the sense currently used in the Spiritist movement). The Spiritist Magazine, Kardec's most important personal research and exposition laboratory, has in its excellent Portuguese edition a magnificent index organized by its editors Miguel Grisolia, Júlio Abreu Filho and J. Herculano Pires. The general index of reference of the magazine, deserved the edition of a unique volume. It provides, word for word, all the possible and imaginable references in order to facilitate any research that the student of the Kardecist work wishes to carry out. However, there is no mention of the word unification.

Unification, in the popular context, is typical of the Brazilian Spiritist culture. Its clear and undeniable objective is of a genuinely religious nature: the preservation of a series of supposed truths, procedures and forms of organization capable of guaranteeing the hegemony of an order and an authority supposedly emanating from the "High" and delegated to an institution, to be their tutor.

However, words such as union, unity, freedom, and tolerance are often found in Kardec's work. Even when he tried a proposal for the organization of the Spiritist movement, under the coordination of a Central Committee, Kardec immediately warned that he would not be "destined to lead the world and to be the universal arbiter of truth", adding that anyone who had such a claim "...would not have understood the essence of Spiritism, which proclaimed the principles of free examination and freedom of conscience, repudiating the idea of becoming an autocracy." He added: "To pretend that Spiritism will be everywhere organized in the same way; that the spiritists of the whole world are subject to a uniform regime, to the same way of proceeding; that they will have a light at a fixed point to which they will always direct their eyes, would be an utopia as absurd as to claim that all the peoples of the Earth would one day form a single nation, governed by a single leader, under a single code of laws, adopting the same customs." (Constitution of Spiritism, in Posthumous Works, chapter VI).

Even rejecting the idea of a single model or a central command, Kardec emphasized the need for unity among spiritists around the world. The union would result from the "communion of thoughts", as defined in his Opening Speech (Spiritist

Magazine of December 1868). This communion would operate naturally and spontaneously through the common assimilation of the basic doctrinal principles, defined and analyzed in The Spirits' Book, since the appearance of the doctrine in 1857, and revised through Spiritist Congresses.

In the document cited above, Allan Kardec envisaged the formation of "general centers in different countries" - what we would call today: Councils, Federations, Confederations, Unions and Associations (Such as what CEPA agreed to call itself since the most recent congress, the International Spiritist Association) - but that there would be no other bond of union between them, but that of communion of belief and moral solidarity, without subordination to one another", adding later: "The various centers dedicated to true Spiritism must hold hands fraternally, uniting to fight their common enemies: disbelief and fanaticism."

Unification is a typical requirement of religious organizations. It is the instrument to maintain power. Union is a much broader concept, compatible with pluralism, with humanism, where tolerance and dialogue create and establish bonds of cooperation and fraternity.

In our environment, as the unification projects advance, the ideals of union are weakened, and even the dialogue between the different aspects of spiritist thought and the institutions that coordinate it are difficult. One of the guidelines of the unification project is to pretend that there are no other segments but those that they coordinate. Unification then becomes synonymous with division.

Unification goes from top to bottom. Union is the construction of what is done from reflection, debate, dialogue, and joint work, in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance.

They are different paths that also lead to different goals. Distinguishing one from the other may not be easy or comfortable, but it is vital for the future of Spiritism.

CEPA's Memory: Luiz di Cristóforo Postiglioni

Luiz di Cristóforo Postiglioni (1909 - 1979) was one of the great names of Argentine Spiritism in the twentieth century, having a great performance in spiritist and psychic research institutions such as the Constancia Society, the Camilo Flammarion Studies Association, the Argentine Society of Parapsychology, and the Argentine School of Psychic Studies.



His academic training was in the areas of biological sciences and physiotherapy.

In the spiritist press, he had a prominent role as Editorial Secretary of the magazine *Constancia*, one of the oldest and most influential doctrinal publications in Latin America. Another important spiritist publication that received its valuable contribution was the magazine *La Idea*, official organ of the Argentine Spiritist Confederation (CEA by its acronym in Spanish).

In the history of CEPA, he served as delegate in congresses and conferences, as general secretary during the first term (1946-1949), and under Natalio Ceccarino's presidency (1963-1966). He also served as the Delegate of CEPA at the 2nd Pan-American Spiritist Congress held in Rio de Janeiro in 1949.

He was also president of the CEA in the 1960s and president of the International Spiritist Federation between 1972 and 1978.

He was considered a great disseminator of Spiritism through oratory. He presented several works in spiritist and psychic congresses. As a writer, he published the works *Root and Destiny of Allan Kardec*, *Brain Evolution, Science and Soul*, *Reincarnation and Scientific-Philosophical Foundations of Reincarnation* (the latter in collaboration with José S. Fernández, 1st President of CEPA).

He dedicated special attention to the spiritist thesis of reincarnation and, seeking to expand studies in that area, was the idealizer of the International Congress for the study of reincarnation, an event that had two editions in Buenos Aires and one in Curitiba, Brazil. Postiglioni was one of the greatest defenders of the acceptance of this theory among the spiritists of the American school, defending the scientificity and solidity of this principle during the International Spiritist Conference held in 1969 in Glasgow, Scotland, and later when he served as president of the International Spiritist Federation.

When he returned to his spiritual homeland on February 10, 1979, his departure was deeply felt among the Argentine spiritists, since until then he remained fully active in the spreading of Spiritism, beyond responding to the presidency of the Spiritist Society Te Perdono, from La Plata, and act in the Movement at the Service of Spiritism (MASDE).

Postiglioni promoted the development of the spiritist theory of reincarnation through his studies and publications, arguing that this thesis, originated from Kardecian codification, possessed full philosophical and scientific conditions to merit the attention of several areas of knowledge. To remember aspects of the life and work of this character who dedicated his life to the Spiritist cause, it is important not only to know the formation of the freethinker movement, but also to inspire the new generations who intend to enter the paths of research and the development of the scientific aspect of Spiritism.

The President of CEPA gives an interview to the Virtual Spiritist Gazette Kardec Ponto Com

The Virtual Spiritist Gazette Kardec Ponto Com (KPC), a monthly electronic publication, edited in João Pessoa, Brazil, offered an interview with the president of CEPA, Jacira Jacinto da Silva, last February, on the question of Prisons and criminal executions, in Brazil, whose contents we reproduce in full:

THE MAGISTRATE SAYS THAT THE PENITENTIARY SYSTEM MAY BE IMPROVED FROM THE COMPLIANCE OF THE OLD AND GOOD CRIMINAL EXECUTION LAW, WHICH IMPOSES PRISONERS TO WORK AND STUDY.

KPC - Given the recent massacres inside prisons, can we say that the Brazilian prison system is insolvent?

JACIRA - We can safely say that the Brazilian penitentiary system has not served its purpose for a long time. On the contrary, it has contributed to worsen the ethical and civilizing condition of prisoners.

KPC - Can the reforms required by the federal government contribute to the humanization of the system?

JACIRA - Serious social problems always hatch, often through catastrophes. In this context, rapid solutions such as packages of measures, legislative changes and other proposals that attract attention with illusory possibilities are not lacking. The penitentiary system can be improved by complying with the old and good Criminal Execution Law, which imposes prisoners work and study. It would be enough for our rulers to practice it. We can see what was said in "The Book of Spirits," Item 796: In the current state of society is not the severity of criminal laws necessary? - "A depraved society needs stronger laws. Unfortunately, those laws are

more devoted to punishing evil when it was committed than to nullifying the source of that evil. Only education can reform men who, then, will no longer need such rigorous laws."

KPC - In your book "Crime - Educate or Punish?", You suggest improvements in the process of rehabilitation of the convicted as well as serving sentence. What would such prison rehabilitation be like under the "brutal empire" of criminal gangs?

JACIRA - The gangs dominate the environments in which the State is not present. The State should not be submitted to the rule of crime gangs. A well-directed prison leaves no room for criminal gangs to dominate. In the book "Crime - Educate or Punish?", We say that some criminals cannot participate in these rehabilitation programs, because their animal behavior would jeopardize the recovery of those who can be rehabilitated. Those, of course, should receive special treatment; however, the immense majority of the prison population does not have this profile, being able and should work and study.

KPC - In your opinion, what would be the ideal model of prison that would help humanize our convicts?

JACIRA - As we have already said, dangerous prisoners must be treated separately, thus preventing the prison from being disturbed and preventing the institution from fulfilling its function. The penalty does not exist only to punish the offender, but also to reintegrate it, since there is no death penalty, or life imprisonment, it will return to social life, and must be improved. The penitentiary system is responsible for re-educating those who were wrong, offering them an opportunity. The best tools we have for this are work and study, but the prison can offer much more: a professional title; Art in its broadest sense; Sports; allowing the person to receive, effectively, the tools to develop their good potential. We cannot forget that most of the offenders are marginalized people, who did not receive adequate training, having been molded in the experience of crime. Our experience as a prison inspector revealed that when a social rehabilitation work is carried out during a period of eight years, except for those extreme cases mentioned above, the human being always responds positively when opportunity, placing trust and respect in his person. The Criminal Enforcement Act provides for a commitment to work for the prisoner, but the State does not provide the necessary means. Thus, if the State, which is responsible for the custody of the prisoners, does not care to make them better persons, placing them in extremely precarious conditions, as if they were animals, society can expect no reaction other than that of angry animals. We have seen countless testimonies from committees that visit prisons, which testify to the inhuman conditions that exist: people who sleep near landfills, who eat poor food, who've had to bathe with cold water in winter, only if they can bathe at

all, etc. And yet, the penalty prescribed by law is deprivation of liberty and not anything else. Would the citizens who read us accept another penalty beyond that established by law in the event that he was convicted? To conclude, I recommend again "The Book of Spirits". Just two more questions: 761 - The law of conservation gives man the right to preserve his own life. Isn't he making use of this right when he removes a dangerous member from society? - "There are other means of defending himself from danger outside of killing the aggressor. On the other hand, it is necessary to open the door of repentance to the criminal and not to close it." And item 813 - There are people who fall into deprivation and misery by their own fault. Can society be responsible for this? Yes, as we have said, it is often the prime cause of such situations. Besides, should not society watch over the moral education of its members? It is often bad manners that have falsified the judgment of these people rather than repressing their pernicious tendencies."

The complete edition, dated February 2017, of the Kardec Punto Com Gazette can be accessed on the magazine's website, through the link: <https://goo.gl/uVmFe0>

The VIII Free Thinking Spiritist Forum will be in Salvador, Brazil

The next edition of the Free-Thinking Spiritist Forum has a definite place and date. It will be held in the city of Salvador, capital of the Brazilian state of Bahia, from May 26 to 28 of this year. This eighth edition will take place in the premises of TELMA - Spiritist Theater Leopoldo Machado, being its organization fruit of the collaboration with the Brazilian Association of Delegates and Friends of CEPA - (CEPABrasil).

The Free-Thinking Spiritist Forum was originally conceived by the Spiritist Association of Studies and Research of João Pessoa (ASSEPE), in the Brazilian state of Paraíba, which celebrated its first edition in 2008, in the city of its headquarters. This forum was later



TELMA Headquarters in Salvador

adopted by CEPABrasil as an event to be held periodically and in collaboration with institutions from different Brazilian cities.

The event provides the public with the contact and the debate with the works presented by researchers that promote the significant development of topics related to the Spiritist culture.

The central theme will be Ethical Paths of Spiritism: Reflections on a Humanist and Freethinking Perspective.

The TELMA will soon release new information on the event program, as well as the accommodation options, on its official website: <http://www.telma.org.br/viii-forum-do-livre-pensar-espirta>.

Why participate in the 15th Brazilian Symposium on Spiritist Thought (SBPE)

By Alexandre Cardia Machado

Perhaps Jaci Régis in 1989 could not imagine that in 2017 we would be preparing the 15th Brazilian Symposium on Spiritist Thought. The fourth to be made after his disincarnation. We believe that he is happy to see that a 28 years old initiative aimed at bringing together freethinking spiritists who, at that time, had little space to disseminate their ideas in the meetings held by religious spiritists.

The need in 1989 was immense, since, after a Congress of USE - Union of Spiritist Societies of São Paulo, in 1986 it had become clear that our group was incompatible with the rest of the USE movement. The discussion of critical issues such as Roustaing's or Emmanuel's influence on the Spiritist Movement incompatible with Allan Kardec's premises, or whether or not Spiritism was a religion, or whether the initial prayer at Spiritist meetings could be considered or not a ritual, became tense debates that in many cases, crossed the limit of education.

We needed new spaces, at this moment the National Symposium of Spiritist Thought emerged, which at that time was realized with invited speakers, freethinking leaders who explored specific themes and that were then the basis of the discord between the Laity and the Religious.

With the success of the first edition, it was decided to do it every 2 years, becoming the Brazilian Symposium on Spiritist Thought.

Since the second edition, its new format has been maintained until today, we have no more invited speakers, we have spiritists who want to expose their ideas, their works, therefore we are here. There were more than 270 works presented in these 28 years. Now, a large number of Spiritist houses joined CEPA-International Spiritist Association. Within the SBPE, CEPA-Brazil emerged, initially called Friends of CEPA, with them emerged Meetings, Forums and other initiatives that multiply

the opportunities of exposition of works and emergence of leadership. All this is very positive, a virtuous circle was created.

We should not forget that everything originated from the SBPE, and that these new leaders and exhibitors should present their work here as well. The SBPE needs to be preserved as a living memory of the creative energy of this whole movement of renewing ideas, with a clear national and international vocation, fully recorded in its annals, now widely available on the internet.

The SBPE is organized by a small group of people from the Instituto Cultural Kardecista de Santos and the Jornal Abertura, a permanent link for the event. Here is our invitation to once again meet in Santos in the 15th SBPE.

For more information regarding the 15º SBPE, visit the Blog for the Instituto Cultural Kardecista de Santos - ICKS: [http://icksantos.blogspot.com.br/2017/02/15-sbpe-inscreva-se-ya.html? sm_au =irHstMRbCjN8sJHr](http://icksantos.blogspot.com.br/2017/02/15-sbpe-inscreva-se-ya.html?sm_au=irHstMRbCjN8sJHr)

CEPA Newsletter Information Bulletin

Official organ of the Communication Directorate of CEPA - International Spiritist Association

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