

Clerics, Exiles, and Academics: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States, 1969–1974

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ABSTRACT

Virtually no one in the United States raised objections to the 1964 military takeover of the Brazilian civilian government. In the early 1970s, however, the Brazilian regime had become associated with torture and the arbitrary rule of law. By the end of that decade, compliance with human rights standards had developed into a yardstick for measuring U.S. foreign policy initiatives in Latin America. This paper argues that between 1969 and 1974, a small group of dedicated church activists, exiled Brazilians, and academics introduced the issue of human rights in Latin America into the U.S. national body politic. A network of concerned activists fashioned a systematic campaign to educate journalists, government officials, and the public about the abuses taking place under the generals' rule. Their activities helped isolate the military regime and laid the groundwork for a broader solidarity movement with Latin American popular struggles in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Thomas Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs: I hope you're as happy about Brazil as I am.

President Lyndon B. Johnson: I am.

Mann: I think that's the most important thing that's happened in the hemisphere in three years.

Johnson: I hope they give us some credit, instead of hell.

—From a conversation taped at the White House,
April 3, 1964 (quoted in Beschloss 1997, 306)¹

Virtually no one in the United States protested the March 31, 1964, military takeover of the civilian government of Brazil, which the U.S. State Department supported. Likewise, few people mobilized a year later against the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. By 1970, however, the new Brazilian regime had become associated with torture and the violation of human rights. This was not the only regime that drew notice. In late 1973, dozens of solidarity groups sprang up in most major U.S. cities in response to the overthrow of Chile's democratically elected president, Salvador Allende, and the brutal repression that took place after

General Augusto Pinochet's rise to power. Less than a decade thereafter, national solidarity committees with hundreds of local affiliates supported the Sandinista revolution and the Salvadoran insurgency and mobilized massive demonstrations, direct-action sit-ins, and other protests against the Reagan administration's complicity with the counterrevolutionary forces in Central America. According to one analyst of that solidarity movement, "more than one hundred thousand U.S. citizens mobilized to contest the chief foreign policy initiative of the most popular U.S. president in decades" (Smith 1996, xvi). By the late 1970s, human rights violations had become a yardstick for U.S. foreign policy in Latin America.

The catalysts for the change in official foreign policy initiatives often have been nongovernmental activists. Most scholars who have written about the importance of human rights discourse during the Carter administration (1977–81) point to groundbreaking work by activists against torture in Brazil in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and especially the flurry of political organizing related to reports of torture and repression in Chile after the 1973 military takeover. Lars Schoultz (1981, 6) rightly argues, "human rights conditions in these nations [of Latin America], particularly Brazil and later Chile, were the first to attract the attention of U.S. human rights activists." David P. Forsythe (1989, 142) concurs, emphasizing that "individuals associated with the National Council of Churches argued that it was their concern with torture in Brazil and American funding for foreign police training which, with the support of Senators Church, Abourezk, and others, had really started the renewed U.S. concern for human rights between 1969 and 1971."

Although Edward L. Cleary dramatically dates the beginning of the "human rights era in Latin America" as September 11, 1973, the date of the Chilean coup, he, too, documents earlier organizing for Brazil, after President Artur da Costa e Silva assumed dictatorial powers in December 1968, as critical to later efforts regarding Chile (Cleary 1979, 1, 141–43). Kenneth Cmiel (1999), in an overview of human rights politics in the 1970s, focuses largely on the activities of Amnesty International as emblematic of the shift that took place in the mid-1970s from grassroots organizing to Washington lobbying and media campaigns. His study, however, misses the details of the origins of human rights activities as they related to Latin America, and therefore emphasizes NGOs rather than less institutionalized groups that laid the groundwork for later organizations.

Following the lead of these scholars, this article documents and analyzes in detail the activities between 1969 and 1974 of the small group of dedicated church and left-wing activists, exiled Brazilian intellectuals, and Latin Americanist scholars who played such an important role in introducing the issue of human rights in Latin America into national political debates. In Europe, a parallel campaign against torture and

human rights violations in Brazil and, later, other countries of Latin America developed during this same period, although that movement is beyond the scope of this article. In both the United States and Europe, Brazilian political exiles, allied at times with left-wing sectors of the Catholic Church and other forces, waged a relentless campaign to isolate the Brazilian government (Cavalcanti and Ramos 1978; Costa 1980; Rollemberg 1999; Serbin 2000, 91).

In the United States, these efforts initiated a gradual shift in official and public opinion that provided a basis for much broader campaigns against repression, torture, and disappearance in Latin America after the Chilean coup. Facing a hostile White House that overtly backed military regimes throughout Latin America during the Nixon-Ford years (1969–76), an expanded base of activists targeted the U.S. Congress to enact measures limiting U.S. government support for repressive regimes abroad. Early legislative victories regarding Latin America included language in the Foreign Assistance Acts of 1973 and 1974: “It is the sense of Congress that the President should deny any economic or military assistance to the government of any foreign country which practices the internment or imprisonment of that country’s citizens for political purposes” (quoted in Schoultz 1981, 195). In 1975, the Harkin Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act gave Congress the power to limit U.S. economic assistance to “any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights” (Bertoli et al. 1979, 6). The following year, this restriction was expanded to include military aid. After Jimmy Carter adopted and popularized the issue of human rights as a guiding criterion for U.S. foreign policy during the 1976 electoral campaign, what had once been a somewhat isolated political critique of U.S. foreign policy by leftists and certain liberals suddenly became part of national discussions about the direction of government policies abroad.

This analysis focuses on the genesis of what Cmiel (1999) has observed as the mainstreaming of human rights discourse regarding Latin America in the United States in the late 1970s. The intent of this article is not to establish a causal relationship between the efforts of clergy, exiles, and academics and a shift in U.S. government policy; nor does it argue that the campaign waged in the United States against the violation of human rights in Brazil altered the Brazilian military’s domestic policies. Instead, this study examines the foundations laid by activists focusing on Brazil for later organizing against human rights abuses in the Southern Cone and other parts of Latin America. As Lars Schoultz has pointed out, “the ‘Brazilianists’ taught the rest of the human rights cadre everything they needed to know to get started” (Schoultz 2001).

The building of a national network of activists, the documentation of systematic torture and repression, the public positioning of prominent

figures against human rights abuses, and the patient building of contacts with the press all contributed to the forging of an image of Brazil under military rule as a land of torture and terror. Graphic tales of the treatment of political prisoners created powerful symbols for a discussion about political repression in Latin America under authoritarian military regimes backed by the U.S. government. The groundwork laid by these early activists dealing with Brazil, especially the impact of their efforts in the press, provided an important basis for subsequent political organizing during the Ford, Carter, and Reagan administrations.

THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY COMES TO POWER

The victory of the Cuban guerrilla movement in 1959 added new energy and direction to nationalist and anti-imperialist movements in Latin America. In Brazil, leaders of peasant leagues in the Northeast, sectors of the student movement, some junior officers and rank-and-file military, militant labor activists, and leftist intellectuals all found inspiration in the intransigence of the new Cuban regime, which stood up to Washington's imperial arrogance in Latin America. The radicalization of the Goulart period was by no means unilaterally a result of the Cuban revolution; yet many leaders in the various Brazilian movements looked positively at the new Cuban regime by virtue of their links to the Brazilian Communist Party or their identification with the Cuban revolution's radical discourse.

The period from 1961 to 1964 was marked by a sharp increase in peasant organizing, labor strikes, and student agitation. Although the radical nationalist wing of President João Goulart's Partido Trabalhista Brasileira favored measures to limit foreign capitalist investment and backed a modest program of land reforms, Goulart, himself a large landowner, was far from interested in leading a socialist revolution in Brazil. Nevertheless, the increasingly polarized political situation provided the necessary conditions for the armed forces to stage a military coup on March 31, 1964, that initiated 21 years of the generals' rule. U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson was prepared to intervene directly to back the insurgent military leaders, but this proved unnecessary. Clandestine CIA and FBI operations, diplomatic overtures by U.S. Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, and logistical back-up by the Pentagon offered the required assurances that Washington would support the military's seizure of power (Parker 1977; Black 1979).

W. Michael Weis (1997), in his assessment of U.S. press coverage of the 1964 Brazilian coup, has shown that U.S. officials successfully "managed the news" in the three-month period immediately after the military takeover. With rare exceptions, the U.S. public received a distorted pic-

ture of the Goulart regime. According to Weis's analysis, only the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* presented the position of both sides of the crisis, although they quoted the military rebels much more than members of the Goulart government. Weis (1997, 42–43) attributes this partly to the large number of journalists involved in reporting the events for these two newspapers. Other journals relied on wire services and tended to present a unilateral, promilitary version of events. The press gave near-unanimous support to the Johnson administration's lightning-speed recognition of the new military government and the coup leaders' anticommunist agenda; although noted exceptions were the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *Daily Worker* (Weis 1997, 47). Reporters largely ignored the massive arrests of regime opponents, dubbing the change of power a "bloodless coup" that had avoided a civil war.

Emblematic of the negative portrayal of the Goulart years imbued with Cold War anticommunist rhetoric and praise for the military was the anonymous *Reader's Digest* article "The Country That Saved Itself" (1964). A one-page ad accompanying the piece informed interested readers about how to "use this article to best effect."

"The Country That Saved Itself" contains vital, useful information for every nation menaced by communist subversion. It is a heartening story, and one which deserves the widest possible dissemination. The message is this: with determination and intelligent planning, an aroused citizenry can rid itself of even a deeply entrenched communist threat. If you would like to help spread this important message, here is what you can do. (*Reader's Digest* 1964, 159)

Readers were encouraged to detach and mail the article to friends living abroad, "either in such sensitive areas as the new developing countries, or in older countries confronting communist threat." Those particularly inspired by the article's message could obtain reprints (5 copies for 35 cents, 50 for \$3, and 100 for \$5) to send to "relatives and friends working abroad, such as government or Peace Corps representatives, teachers, doctors, missionaries, etc." And if the concerned citizen were traveling abroad as a tourist or on business, *Reader's Digest* suggested that reprint copies could be placed in the hands of concerned people that one might meet.

An uninformed U.S. public was thereby given the impression that the new Brazilian government had defended democracy from a communist assault. This notion merely reinforced the pervasive public sentiment in which 86 percent of U.S. citizens in 1964 feared communist threats when polled about foreign policy issues, an all-time high (Schoultz 1981, 25). News coverage of the political events in Brazil soon disappeared from the front pages of newspapers and magazines.

LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY ACTIVISTS COALESCE

Although events in Brazil did not spark protests against U.S. collaboration with the generals in power, as Bob Dylan observed, the times were indeed changing. Civil rights mobilizations in the U.S. South, supported on college campuses throughout the nation, led to the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964 and a growing politicization of students, who challenged the Cold War anticommunist discourse and criticized the limitations to democracy in the United States. Opposition to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began to expand in 1965, creating a climate in which a new generation began to question Washington's overall foreign policy.

The 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic, with the support of Brazilian troops, dramatized the U.S. government's willingness to intervene militarily in Latin America when its geopolitical interests were allegedly threatened. The events surrounding the invasion also had a profound effect on a cluster of radicalized missionaries and former volunteers who had served in the Dominican Republic and had experienced U.S. intervention firsthand. Many went on to become leaders in the Latin American solidarity movement in the following years (Della Cava 2001; Strharsky and Strharsky 1999; Goff 1999, 2001; Wheaton 1999; Wipfler 2000).

Opposition to Lyndon B. Johnson's policies regarding the civil war in the Dominican Republic also reflected a change in the way many intellectuals viewed U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America. Several weeks after the April 25, 1965, U.S. invasion, a group of academics, calling themselves the University Committee on the Dominican Republic, gathered more than one hundred signatures of leading scholars of Latin America and published a "Letter of Latin American Specialists to President Johnson on the Dominican Crisis" (1965) in the *New York Times*. The list of academics backing the statement included some of the most prominent professors of Latin American studies in the country, as well as junior scholars who would lead the field during the next 30 years.

Citing the principle of nonintervention as laid out in Articles 15 and 17 of the Charter of the Organization of American States and appealing to the "best intentions" of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy and John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress and Peace Corps, the open letter alleged that Johnson was returning to the "sterile policies" of "Gunboat Diplomacy" and the "Big Stick." The statement appealed to the President to avoid characterizing Latin American "revolutions" as simply pro-communist or anticommunist. It further argued that U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic discouraged and antagonized democratic forces in Latin America and undermined "the progressive elements now striving for reform" (University Committee on the Dominican Republic 1965).

The language of the protest statement thus still couched its opposition to U.S. foreign policy in the framework of the liberal reform initiatives of the Roosevelt and Kennedy administrations. Although moderate in tone, perhaps in order to receive broad support among academics, the petition nevertheless challenged basic premises of the Cold War initiatives that marked U.S. foreign policy to Latin America in the wake of the Cuban revolution. Like the former missionaries and volunteers, many of the university professors and graduate students voicing their disagreement on the Dominican Republic invasion would later provide important support for the movement critical of Washington's other foreign policy initiatives in Latin America.

In 1967, a broad coalition of different forces founded the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA). Initially, NACLA acted as an open forum to unite geographically dispersed individuals who opposed U.S. intervention in Latin America and favored far-reaching social change throughout the continent. According to Brady Tyson (1967, 4), a longtime civil rights activist and a Methodist minister who was expelled from Brazil after the 1964 coup, the prime movers behind the formation of NACLA were members of the Students for a Democratic Society and personnel of the University Christian Movement. They joined peace movement activists, left-wing Catholics, returned volunteers from the Peace Corps and other developmentalist or church-related programs in Latin America, graduate students, young university professors, and a few Latin Americans living in the United States (Goff 1967). The presence of former Peace Corps volunteers among the NACLA founders mirrored the growing disillusionment among a segment of the country's youth who had heeded Kennedy's call to help eliminate poverty around the world but had returned from their experience abroad critical of U.S. foreign policy (Hoffman 1998).

Supporters of the NACLA project had widely divergent visions of its mission; they ranged from advocates of nonviolence to supporters of armed struggle. Some viewed the organization as a way to appeal to officials to change government policies, while others prioritized educating the public as a means of creating a "radical alternative to present attitudes and policies" (Tyson 1967, 4). Some saw their role as building alliances and supporting Latin American revolutionaries, while others argued, "the Latin American revolution is largely contingent upon some form of revolution in the United States" (Tyson 1967, 5).

NACLA's Brazilian connection was not limited to Brady Tyson's participation. Paulo Singer, a Brazilian sociologist who would be forcibly retired from the University of São Paulo by the military regime two years later, attended the February 11, 1967, meeting of New York–East Coast supporters of NACLA. There he argued that North American scholars needed to develop a general theory about imperialism instead of "pro-

ducing monographs dealing with specific and limited aspects of the overall problem" (quoted in Tyson 1967, 5). Writer John Gerassi, who had close personal and political links to Brazil, headed the fundraising campaign to develop a magazine that would "encourage in-depth research and journalism conducive to analysis and action" (NACLA 1967). Timothy Harding, an expert on Brazilian labor history and assistant professor of Latin American history at California State University, Los Angeles, represented political activists on the West Coast who shared the goals of combining research and action related to Latin America. His presence at the meeting exemplified the continuing relationship between Latin American "specialists" and political activists that had its roots in the opposition to the U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 (Harding 1999).

NACLA's daylong conference closed with an evening talk by Dom Hélder Câmara, the Archbishop of Recife, Brazil, who was targeted by the military as an enemy of the new regime and who represented the growing influence of progressive ideas in the Latin American Catholic Church. Dom Hélder's allegiance to Brazil's poor also paralleled the initiatives of Maryknoll missionaries and other Catholic activists from the United States who were committed to working among the lower classes in Latin America and bringing back news of these social struggles to a broader North American audience.

The NACLA project, with funding from the Latin American Department of the National Council of Churches, ended up focusing on research about Latin America. The *NACLA Newsletter* quickly grew from a modest, eight-page mimeographed circular to a publication that included detailed articles about such topics as U.S.-owned multinational corporations with heavy investments in Latin America, military aid to the region, and national political processes throughout the continent. NACLA's importance should not be underestimated as a national coalescing force of solidarity activists. By providing a continual flow of information about the economic, political, and military relationships between the United States and Latin America, the *NACLA Newsletter* and the collective's other publications provided students and activists with comprehensive analyses of the mechanisms of U.S. imperial domination.

NACLA encouraged activists to engage in research and investigation in order to be able to draw the links between U.S.-owned companies' operations abroad and their impact in the United States (NACLA 1970). The move to Berkeley by some members of the collective staff in 1970 offered greater access to West Coast activists, and NACLA served as an especially important resource for Latin American solidarity groups in the San Francisco Bay area. In the early 1970s, NACLA West developed a close collaboration with the American Friends of Brazil that produced the *Brazilian Information Bulletin*. It also worked

with the American Friends of Guatemala and with Non-Intervention in Chile, among other groups.

Over the next four years, more than a dozen additional organizations formed that shared the initial impulses of NACLA's original founders, political action and education (NACLA 1972). These groups generally comprised the same disparate coalition of returned volunteers, radicalized students, Latin Americans residing in the United States, left-wing graduate students, and young professors at universities with Latin American studies programs. Some focused on a specific country, such as American Friends of Guatemala, while most raised issues about Latin America as a whole. They usually had limited resources, with no more than a few dozen active members at a given time. Most operated collectively and produced a simple newsletter that linked issues of Latin America to political or labor struggles going on in the United States, as well as to the ongoing war in Vietnam.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE IN BRAZIL

In 1968 the political climate in the United States was charged with student protests, massive mobilizations against the war in Vietnam, and an increasingly militant U.S. civil rights movement, along with the emergence of radical feminist organizations and the suggestion of an incipient politicized gay and lesbian movement. Similarly in Brazil, 1968 began with student protests, not against the war in Vietnam but against the military dictatorship. Brazilian oppositionists shared a growing optimism about the possibility of a return to democratic rule. But the year ended with new, harsh governmental decrees that included the temporary closing of Congress, the suspension of constitutionally guaranteed rights, and the revocation of many elected officials' mandates. Additional restrictive measures followed in early 1969, including the forced retirement of almost 70 professors from the nation's top universities.

In response, members of several Brazilian leftist organizations, who hoped to topple the military government, stepped up guerrilla activities. After the unified commandos of two such groups kidnapped the U.S. ambassador to Brazil in September 1969, the generals authorized the banishment of government foes and the death penalty for subversive activities. The following month, the military reopened a purged Congress in order to install hardline General Emílio Garrastazu Médici as president. Fear and pessimism descended on the country, and the government stepped up its relentless campaign to wipe out all militant opposition to the regime.

Torture, as a means to extract information from detainees in order to dismantle the revolutionary resistance, became routine. It also seemed to

be a means to discourage widespread opposition to the regime, because the military did not resort to the use of electric shock, beatings, and other measures only against those who had taken up arms. People involved in a wide array of legal activities critical of the government, from organizing discussion groups to participating in community development projects, were also subjected to violence by the military and police (Alves 1985; Archdiocese of São Paulo 1985; Skidmore 1988).

The first reports of torture against opponents of the military regime began to leak to the Brazilian press in mid-May 1964 (Alves 1973, 78). A year later, Candido Mendes, the left-wing Catholic intellectual, "organized a private meeting at his home between Robert Kennedy and leading Brazilian intellectuals to discuss human rights violations in Brazil" (Serbin 2000, 91). In 1966, the journalist Márcio Moreira Alves compiled accounts of the torture of political prisoners based on his own investigative reporting and published them in the book *Torturas e torturados* (Alves 1966). Contemporary U.S. journalistic accounts of the political situation in Brazil, however, while condemning the arbitrary nature of military rule, did not mention torture as part of the Brazilian government's arsenal of antiopposition weapons (Lens 1966, Tyson 1969).

In early 1969, amid this intensified atmosphere of repression, several Brazilians came to the United States to encourage the development of an international campaign to respond to the growing terror. They met with a small group of U.S. citizens and a few Brazilian exiles. While the group was diverse in political ideology and background, all its members had a deep commitment to social justice in Latin America, and had become profoundly disturbed by the escalating levels of repression in Brazil. It included Brady Tyson, now an associate professor of Latin American Studies at American University; and Ralph Della Cava, a young history doctoral student from Columbia University who had recently finished research in Northeast Brazil and would soon find employment at Queens College.

Jovelino Ramos, another member of the group, had been a Brazilian Presbyterian activist and had left Brazil after the coup. He ended up studying at Columbia University while working part-time for the Rural-Urban Ministries of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States and later for the Commission on Justice and Liberation of the National Council of Churches. Thomas Quigley brought his experience as the associate director of the Latin America Bureau of the U.S. Catholic Conference. William L. Wipfler, one of the former missionaries in the Dominican Republic, had served as director of the Latin America Department of the National Council of Churches. Both Wipfler and Quigley held important positions in their respective national religious organizations and had international connections through the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church. Tyson retained strong

links with friends in Brazil, as well as with religious leaders in the U.S. civil rights movement (Della Cava 1999; Wipfler 2000). Della Cava, too, had developed close personal ties with progressive Brazilians while living there in the 1960s; he also had links with progressive Catholics in the United States.

In the late 1960s, Quigley, Wipfler, and other staff working for national religious organizations created an informal network called the U.S. Strategy Committee on Latin America to pool information and gather resources in response to the growing number of human rights violations in Brazil and other Latin American countries (Cleary 1979, 141–43; Schoultz 1981, 77, 87).

The Brazilian opponents of the regime who passed through New York gave this network of activists extensive documentation of the systematic torture of political prisoners taking place in Brazil. The Brazilians were convinced that undermining U.S. government support of the military regime through a widespread dissemination of information on torture was essential for weakening the military's hardline approach to the opposition. Della Cava translated the documentation, which had been written by victims themselves and then smuggled from prison by visiting family members or priests (Della Cava 1999). "Several [accounts] were scrawled on scraps of filthy paper, paper bags or wrinkled envelopes, and were difficult to decipher," Wipfler recalled, years later. "Another was transcribed in minute lettering on a single square of toilet paper; reading it required a magnifying glass" (Wipfler 1986). The New York group, with the support of other opponents of the military regime, adopted a behind-the-scenes strategy to raise public sentiment against the mounting political repression in Brazil.

The April 1969 forced retirement of 68 professors from the University of São Paulo and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro provided a dramatic issue around which to mobilize. Many of these professors were renowned international scholars. Some of them had supported the left; others merely had participated in university discussions about higher education reforms. Philippe Schmitter, at the time an assistant professor of political science at the University of Chicago, happened to be in Brazil when the government issued the forced retirement decree. He immediately wrote a report to "officials of the Latin American Studies Association and other scholars interested in Brazil" about the situation and suggested several ways to show support for the affected professors. His report, which fell into the hands of the Brazilian intelligence agencies, was later expanded and published in a social science journal (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1969a; Schmitter 1970). Almost immediately, members of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) responded by drafting a protest letter signed by prominent yet politically moderate scholars, such as Professor John J. Johnson, chairman of the Committee

on Latin American Studies at Stanford University, and Professor Charles Wagley of Columbia University.

Internal Brazilian government documents indicate that the military was particularly concerned about this protest action. In a communiqué dated December 17, 1969, Celso Diniz, the chargé d'affaires stationed in Washington, sent Foreign Minister Mário Gibson Barboza a copy of Schmitter's May 15 report, along with several published reports about LASA. In the memo attached to the copied documents, the Brazilian embassy official noted that the April protest statement was supported by "professors from the liberal wing, like Thomas Skidmore . . . as well as from the conservative wing, such as Charles Wagley." Brasília requested that the embassy also provide background information on Schmitter (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1969a).

The *New York Times* picked up the story of the academics' protest. It emphasized that the former U.S. ambassador to Brazil, Lincoln Gordon, who had closely followed (and, some have argued, advised) the generals' maneuvers to seize power in 1964, had joined three hundred other signatories of the statement (*New York Times* 1969). In the same article, Gordon explained his reasons for criticizing the regime he had once wholeheartedly supported: "My objection to the removal of the professors is part of my general feeling of grave concern over the arbitrary use of power in Brazil since December."

Soon thereafter, in another collective protest, U.S. artists decided to pull out of the São Paulo Biennial international art exhibition (Glueck 1969). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was quite disturbed about this, and it sent numerous cables instructing the Brazilian ambassador to exert influence to reverse the artists' decision (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1969b, c, d, e, f, g). Brazilian government officials frantically tried to cobble together some kind of U.S. delegation in order to contain the negative publicity, but ultimately were unsuccessful.

Although the mainstream press reported the arbitrary public measures of the military regime, especially after the passage of Institutional Act No. 5 on December 13, 1968, which suspended virtually all constitutional rights and protections, news of the escalating torture of political prisoners had not yet reached the U.S. media. Della Cava (1999) recalled that initial attempts to get the *New York Times* to report on torture in Brazil met with resistance. Therefore, he and members of the New York group decided to place simultaneous articles in different religious and progressive magazines as a way to pressure the news industry as a whole to pick up the story. The strategy worked; by 1970, periodicals such as *Christianity and Crisis*, *The Christian Century*, *Commonweal*, *Christianity Today*, *The Nation*, and *The Progressive* were joined by mainstream weeklies such as *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *Look* in reporting sophisticated excesses in human sadism (Wipfler 1970; Bolton

1970; Della Cava 1970; *Christianity Today* 1970; *Newsweek* 1970; *Nation* 1970; *Time* 1970; Alencar 1970). As a result of this press campaign, by the early 1970s Brazil was associated in the press and in the public mind with torture and repression (Alves 1973; Page 1971; Barnet 1972). In addition, international legal scholars presented Brazil as a prime example of a country whose government engaged in systematic torture of its opponents (Farer 1974, 626; Shestack and Cohen 1974, 676).

Despite the international connections their positions afforded, both Quigley and Wipfler worked for religious organizations that were hesitant to take a high public profile in the campaign against torture. The group therefore decided to set up an independent committee, the American Committee for Information on Brazil, which put together a pamphlet, "Terror in Brazil: A Dossier" (American Committee 1970; Wipfler 2000). This 18-page document presented a chronology of events in Brazil since the 1964 coup. It also published the statement of female political prisoners held at Ilha das Flores, Rio de Janeiro, describing their inhumane treatment, and highlighted Brazilian Catholic Church opposition to the regime's policies. Prominently placed on the second page was a statement, "We Cannot Remain Silent," signed by religious, civil rights, and academic leaders. The declaration stated, "We cannot remain silent in the face of the overwhelming evidence of the flagrant denial of human rights and dignity coming to us from Brazil. . . . To do so would make us accomplices of those who are the authors and perpetrators of this repression." Tyson, who had participated in the U.S. civil rights movement, collected the names of important civil rights figures, while Wipfler, through his contacts with the National Council of Churches, gathered support among its constituent members (Wipfler 2000).

Remembering the campaign some 30 years later, Ralph Della Cava remarked that for Latin Americanists, and particularly those who studied Brazil, the signature of Charles Wagley, the distinguished anthropology professor at Columbia University, lent credibility to the contents of the dossier. This was partly because he was not considered to be leftist (Della Cava 1999). At the time, history professors Richard Morse of Yale, Stanley Stein of Princeton, and Skidmore of the University of Wisconsin were among the most important scholars in the field of Brazilian history, and their support also added to the impact of the statement.

Although these names carried weight among academics who studied Brazil and Latin America, equally important was the inclusion of prominent African-American figures such as Ralph Abernathy and Andrew Young. They represented the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., and their political position on issues related to Latin America set a precedent for wider response by civil rights leaders to the Chilean coup three years later and opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America in the

1980s. The signatures of many representatives of mainstream Protestant denominations, including those doing missionary work in Latin America, as well as representatives of the Catholic hierarchy added an additional tone of solemnity and political breadth to the statement. After the publication of "Terror in Brazil," supported by so many religious figures, the press took the allegations about torture much more seriously (Della Cava 1999; Wipfler 2000).

The dossier was widely distributed at LASA's Second National Conference, in April 1970 in Washington, and had a tremendous impact (Della Cava 1999). During the business meeting a unanimous resolution, sponsored by Skidmore, a member of LASA's Executive Committee, protested the Brazilian regime's violation of academic rights. It also registered concern about the frequent reports that the government was systematically practicing torture on intellectuals and other individuals. The resolution concluded by authorizing LASA's Government Relations Committee to organize a mission to Brazil, if necessary, to prepare a report on the situation there. To curtail this effort, the Brazilian government subsequently denied Skidmore, who was also chairman of the Government Relations Committee, a temporary visa in July 1970 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1970c, d).

According to Ralph Della Cava (2001), the presence of Márcio Moreira Alves at the LASA conference brought home the severity of political repression in Brazil. Alves, the journalist who had first documented torture in Brazil through a series of newspaper articles published in 1964 and 1965, became a congressman in 1966 and used his congressional immunity to deliver speeches against the generals. By the end of 1968, the turbulent political mobilizations against the government had pushed hardliners in the regime to institute new measures to silence the opposition. Using one of Alves's congressional speeches denouncing the military as a pretext, the military executed a clamp-down. Under Institutional Act No. 5., Alves lost his political rights on December 13, 1968, and went into exile. Much to the chagrin of the Brazilian embassy, Alves managed to enter the United States in 1969 in order to mobilize opposition to the Brazilian government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1969h, i). He slipped into the country again in 1970 to attend the LASA conference, even though the military government had canceled his passport. His presence helped to consolidate support for the campaign against the Brazilian military regime (Della Cava 1999).

BUILDING A SOLIDARITY NETWORK IN THE UNITED STATES

Another key Brazilian opponent of the military dictatorship who spoke out in the United States was Marcos Arruda. The former geologist and

political activist had been arrested in São Paulo in 1970 while organizing in a working-class neighborhood. Brutally tortured, he escaped death in captivity only by the intervention of relatives with links to high-ranking military officials and by a campaign waged by Amnesty International and others to obtain his release (Sattamini 2000).

Amnesty International first mentioned the issue of torture in its 1966–67 annual report, when it announced a new policy to “cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross to establish the right to investigate alleged cases of torture.” It also said that “national sections should give the problem of torture special attention” (AI 1967, 5). The May 1967 right-wing military takeover in Greece offered Amnesty International the opportunity to implement this new policy almost immediately, as the generals in that country arrested thousands of political prisoners and subjected hundreds to torture (Clark 1995, 94–104).²

One of Amnesty International’s first widely publicized campaigns against torture in Latin America focused on Marcos Arruda’s case. His detailed account of imprisonment, as well as his emotional letter to Pope Paul VI, published in Amnesty’s reports and in the proceedings of a U.S. Senate hearing, drew public attention (AI 1973, 19; U.S. Senate 1971a). While Arruda was still imprisoned in Brazil, *Washington Post* political columnist Jack Anderson wrote about the case (Anderson 1971). Arruda’s release was a success for the faithful groups of Amnesty letter writers. In 1971 Arruda moved to Washington to join his mother, who was living there. Soon after his arrival, Dan Griffin, a *Washington Post* assistant foreign editor, who himself had spent three years in Brazil working for the Catholic bishop in Natal, ran a full-length exposé of Arruda’s arrest and torture that detailed his prison ordeal (Griffin 1971a). A week later, the *Post* published a scathing editorial denouncing the Brazilian government’s refusal to allow independent investigators to verify charges of torture and citing the Arruda case as an example of the military regime’s excesses (*Washington Post* 1971).

Arruda, along with a cluster of Latin Americans residing in the Washington area and U.S. political activists interested in Latin America, formed the Committee Against Repression in Brazil (CARIB). Another group, the American Friends of Brazil, began publishing the *Brazilian Information Bulletin* in Berkeley in February 1971. These groups became the two foci of support for Brazilian solidarity activists (Padilha 1997; Goff 1999; Reeks 1999). The *Brazilian Information Bulletin* was founded by a small group of San Francisco Bay Area residents that included returned Peace Corps volunteers, church activists, and Brazilian students and political exiles, including Anivaldo Padilha, a Methodist church youth leader who, like Marcos Arruda, had been arrested and tortured in Brazil in 1970. The 12-page newsletter was mailed to university libraries, journalists in the mainstream press who covered Brazil

or Latin America, and a list of subscribers. An official list of sponsors, including many university professors, gave the publication an academic tone (*Brazilian Information Bulletin* 1972b, c, 1974a).

After the Nixon administration's invasion of Cambodia, opposition to the war in Southeast Asia expanded significantly. The March on Washington of April 24, 1971, was perhaps the largest antiwar demonstration in the history of the nation's capital; the massive civil disobedience activities the following week flooded the city's jails. Solidarity activities related to Latin America nevertheless remained confined to small groups of activists. For example, the Common Front on Latin America, which grew out of Brazil protest work in Washington, comprised a scattering of children of foreign diplomats, peace activists, concerned clergy, and political exiles from diverse Latin American countries (Strharsky and Strharsky 1999). There were no large Latin American immigrant communities in the Washington area that could provide a constituent base for political organizing. As Loretta Strharsky, a former Catholic Church youth volunteer in the Dominican Republic and a leading worker in Washington-area Latin American solidarity activities, remembered many years later, "There were no body bags coming back from Brazil with American boys in them . . . so what was the concern? And with Vietnam all over the front pages of the newspapers, where did [coverage of] Brazil go? Someplace else. The same was true with Africa" (Strharsky and Strharsky 1999).

The Committee Against Repression in Brazil and the *Brazilian Information Bulletin* provided information and political direction to the other Latin American solidarity collectives sprinkled throughout the country. They also organized national speaking tours. Anivaldo Padilha, with the support of the Frontier Internship in Mission, a program sponsored by the United Methodist and United Presbyterian churches in the United States to aid political exiles, traveled extensively between 1971 and 1974, speaking to different audiences at universities, colleges, trade unions, local churches, and regional and national church conferences (Padilha 2001).

Marcos Arruda also toured U.S. campuses, supported by local Latin American solidarity groups or by sympathetic university professors. Activists for human rights in Brazil also sponsored a 1973 tour for Jean Marc Van der Weid, a former president of the União Nacional de Estudantes (National Union of Students), who had been arrested, tortured, and then freed along with 70 other political prisoners in exchange for the release of the kidnapped Swiss ambassador in January 1971 (Committee Against Repression in Brazil 1973a).³ Their experience as torture victims and their political analyses of the links between social injustice and government violence captivated audiences and won support for the human rights campaign.

Some of those 70 released prisoners went into exile in Chile, where they were interviewed for the documentary film *Brazil: Report on Torture* (Landau and Wexler 1971). The film, which graphically detailed the Brazilian regime's torture methods, was shown on college campuses and in other venues, much to the annoyance of the Brazilian embassy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1971a).

Although news of the torture now appeared in the press, the Nixon administration, whose Latin American foreign policy favored anticommunist military regimes, dismissed the reports as excesses of individuals and not a part of sanctioned government strategy to silence the opposition. During the State Department press briefings on April 21, 1970, for example, press spokesman Carl Bartch responded to a journalist's question about torture in Brazil by stating, "we've been assured in conversations with high Brazilian officials that the Brazilian Government does not condone torture" (U.S. Senate 1971a, 292).

In a 1973 House hearing, Steven Low, the country director for Brazil in the State Department, reiterated the position that the Brazilian government knew about excesses but did not condone them (U.S. House of Representatives 1973, 201). State Department and White House officials consistently argued that the question of human rights violations was an internal Brazilian affair in which the U.S. government had no right to interfere. During the 1971 Senate hearing on U.S. aid to Brazil, U.S. ambassador William M. Roundtree insisted that ultimately it would be up to "the Brazilians themselves to take whatever action is appropriate to end the basis for this criticism" (U.S. Senate 1971b, 201–2).

To call attention to what it considered the U.S. government's indirect complicity with torture through its backing of the Brazilian regime, the Committee Against Repression in Brazil chose as its first campaign a protest demonstration in front of the White House during President Médici's trip to Washington in December 1971. The Brazilian government originally had scheduled a five-day diplomatic tour of Washington and New York, highlighted by a meeting with Nixon, but the visit was cut down to two days, with no official explanation. Just before Médici arrived, the Brazilian government announced that he would not speak before the National Press Club or participate in any press conferences. Brazil's leading mainstream opposition newspaper, *O Estado de São Paulo*, reported, "This attitude is being interpreted as a means of avoiding a focus on themes such as repression in Brazil" (1971). Likewise, the idea of addressing Congress was dropped, quite probably, according to the *Washington Post*, "to avoid the possibility of a hostile demonstration" (Griffin 1971b).

Médici did not get off so easy, however. Thirty-three prominent U.S. clergy and lay officials "sent a letter to the dictator at his Blair House residence in Washington, calling for an impartial international team of

observers to be permitted to investigate the innumerable reports of torture and repression coming from Brazil" (*Brazilian Information Bulletin* 1972a). The *Washington Post's* Dan Griffin posed three "awkward points that will probably not be asked of Médici." They included the negative effects of the near-double-digit annual GNP growth over the previous three years (Brazil's "economic miracle") on the poor and the working class, the country's continuing lack of democracy, and the excessive concentration of power in the hands of the presidency (Griffin 1971b).

While the Brazilian military government was battered in the press, the Committee Against Repression in Brazil staged its White House demonstration. The *Brazilian Information Bulletin* reported,

Wherever Médici appeared, he was met by protesters: at the White House, at the OAS, at the Brazilian Embassy, and at his Blair House residence. Customarily, a foreign head of state receives a Presidential welcome in an elaborate ceremony at the secluded south lawn of the White House, sheltered from any protest demonstrations. But since December 7th was a rainy day, the dictator received a soggy short-order welcome on the White House north porch, in direct view of a 10-foot by 30-foot banner erected across the street in Lafayette Park. The banner, which read "Stop U.S. Dollar Complicity with Brazilian Torture," was erected by a group of Brazilian and American citizens called The Committee Against Repression in Brazil (CARIB). Though they were directly facing it, neither Médici nor Nixon gave any indication that they saw the banner. However, after the Brazilian and U.S. national anthems were played, they both were ushered into the White House and U.S. Secret Service officials promptly erected several large green room dividers on the White House porch in front of both the doors and the windows, thus blocking any view that either Nixon or Médici had of the demonstrations across the street. Immediately afterwards, a Secret Service agent approached the demonstrators and told them to move their banner and poster display, or else his men would do it for them. Rather than have the agents destroy the banner, they took it down and moved it back 500 feet. As they were disassembling the display, the agent radioed the police on the White House porch who then removed the green blinders. (*Brazilian Information Bulletin* 1972a)

Médici also received another unwelcome criticism during his speech to the Organization of American States when a Brazilian student "rose and shouted '*Viva o Brasil livre*' in Portuguese and then in English, 'Down with torture in Brazil'" (Arruda 1998; Sattamini 2000).

The victims of repression also used the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, housed at the OAS headquarters in Washington, as another forum to isolate the Brazilian military regime (LeBlanc 1977, 122–38). The Inter-American Commission operated independently of any direct lobbying influences, but the

increasing number of news stories in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* probably influenced some of its members who were charged with evaluating the veracity of alleged atrocities committed by Brazilian authorities in the aftermath of Institutional Act No. 5. Although Dr. Carlos A. Dunshee de Abranches, Brazil's representative on the commission, systematically attempted to stonewall any investigation of the cases submitted for review, in two instances the Brazilian government's efforts were stymied.

One case involved the June 1970 petition on behalf of Olavo Hansen, a São Paulo trade unionist who had been arbitrarily arrested, tortured, and murdered in prison the previous month (Buergethal and Sohn 1973). The Brazilian government denied Dr. Durward Sandifer, the commission's U.S. representative and rapporteur for the petition, the right to visit Brazil to investigate the case. This decision, which in effect refused independent verification of human rights violations, also tarnished the generals' international image, as a *Washington Post* editorial pointed out (1971). The Inter-American Commission subsequently passed a resolution recommending that those responsible for Hansen's death under torture be brought to justice and that his family be granted reparations (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1973, 11–13; OAS 1974, 38–52).

The second case concerned numerous individual persons and alleged violations of their rights to life, liberty, and personal security, protection from arbitrary arrest, and due process throughout the country since the implementation of repressive legislation in December 1968 (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1972, 15–22). Once again the Brazilian government dragged its feet in assisting any investigation of the charges, insisting that there were no human rights violations in Brazil. In reaction, the commission stated in its annual report the conclusion that “in Brazil serious cases of torture, abuse, and maltreatment have occurred to persons of both sexes while they were deprived of their liberty” (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1974, 32). These cases also set the precedent for the flood of denunciations that reached the Inter-American Commission after the military takeover in Chile in 1973 and the Argentine coup d'état of 1976.

While Brazilian political prisoners appealed to such international bodies to pressure their government, the denunciation of abuses in the U.S. press picked up steam in mid-1973, when Jack Anderson published a series of scathing attacks on the regime. His column not only detailed the torture tactics employed by the military and police but also named Brazilian army officers identified as having been involved in these human rights abuses. He also lambasted Washington's military aid to the regime (Anderson 1973a, b).

BROADENING THE FOCUS

During the December 1971 White House banquet in General Médici's honor, President Nixon greeted his guest with the toast, "We know that as Brazil goes so will go the rest of that Latin American continent" (Novitski 1971). Whatever the President's meaning behind this comment may have been, the growing campaign against torture and repression in Brazil was setting a pattern for solidarity activism with popular struggles in Latin America.

Most committed activists in the small political collectives working around the country in the period before the Chilean coup generally agreed politically with the left-wing or socialist goals of the revolutionary or opposition movements in Brazil and elsewhere. As participants in the February 1967 NACLA conference had maintained, moreover, a key task was challenging official U.S. government policy that backed the Brazilian military and other regimes with economic and military aid and thus facilitated the repression of local opposition forces. The principal strategy the activists employed, however, was to build a broad-based movement by appealing to issues that the general U.S. public could either identify with or understand. The emphasis on human rights, although the term was not yet widely used, spoke to a generalized abhorrence of government behavior that violated hegemonic notions of justice, equality, and democracy. This partly explains the successful use of the issue of torture as an initial means of bringing together liberal and moderate figures, especially academic and church leaders.

Brazilian solidarity activists, however, attempted to educate those they could reach about broader political or social issues that they considered a direct result of the politics of repression. These included the impact of the military's economic policies on the working class and poor, the role of Washington's aid to the police and military in sustaining the regime, and the Brazilian government's treatment of the indigenous population.

For example, in 1972 the Committee Against Repression developed a slide show, "Brazil: Miracle for Whom?" (Committee Against Repression in Brazil 1972), which was used as an organizing tool among church, community, and progressive groups to draw the link between the repressive military regime and its regressive economic policies. Senator Frank Church's May 1971 foreign relations subcommittee investigation of U.S. policies and programs in Brazil added fuel to the fire as he criticized federal support of the Office of Public Safety programs that funded Brazilian police involved in torture (Huggins 1998, 187; U.S. Senate 1971b).

In 1974 the *Brazilian Information Bulletin* collaborated with the Los Angeles theater production of *Savages*, a play by Christopher Hamp-

ton about the Amazonian Indians, by providing background information for the play's program (Padilha 1997; Center Theater Group of Los Angeles 1974). That same year, INDIGENA: Information on the Native Peoples of the Americas, a Berkeley-based group formed to defend indigenous rights, in collaboration with the American Friends of Brazil and anthropologist Shelton H. Davis, published a 70-page pamphlet, the first comprehensive report in the United States on the Brazilian government's policy toward its indigenous people (INDIGENA/American Friends of Brazil 1974; Davis 1977; Padilha 2001).

All these issues received consistent coverage in the pages of the *Brazilian Information Bulletin*; and, as a result of a persistent information campaign by the activists, critiques of these issues became more and more common in the mainstream press (Dinguid 1972; Greenwood 1973a, b; Halliday 1974; Hovey 1974). Some of these articles seem directly influenced by left-wing critics of the military regime. *Newsweek*, for example, wrote about Brazil's economic influence over its neighbors, presenting arguments quite similar to those of Ruy Mauro Marini's Marxist criticisms of what he termed Brazilian subimperialism (*Newsweek* 1973; Marini 1972).

The Brazilian government's effort to counter its negative image abroad with an international public relations campaign also met protests. For example, the January 1973 issue of the *Brazilian Information Bulletin* published an article about the Brazilian military government's "worldwide campaign to neutralize the image of cruelty and terror that the dictatorship had acquired in international public opinion." To achieve this goal, the publication charged, the government "utilizes different means, such as advertising campaigns in the media, special trips abroad by dignitaries, cultural and artistic exhibitions, commissioned magazine articles, and most recently, the celebration of Brazil's 150th anniversary of its independence." The bulletin also published a letter by Herbert S. Klein, at the time an assistant professor of history at Columbia University, who had withdrawn his participation in a symposium on Brazil organized at Johns Hopkins University because of the involvement of "nonacademic institutions and foundations as well as private American companies," creating a situation in which the "overall aim of the conference is to give support to the current regime" (*Brazilian Information Bulletin* 1973).

Klein was not far wrong. A review of the Itamaraty archives in Brasília reveals that the Brazilian embassy in Washington spent a lot of time and energy correcting the "Brazilian image abroad" through the means alleged by the *Brazilian Information Bulletin*. This included government financial support of trips to Brazil by journalists writing favorably about the regime; placing articles in the U.S. press; surveillance of people in the United States who criticized the regime; and

hiring a U.S. public relations firm to manage Médici's visit (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1970a, b, 1971b, 1972).

THE BERTRAND RUSSELL TRIBUNAL

The last major campaign developed by the activists was to support the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on Repression, an international effort to disseminate information about torture and repression in Brazil. In 1966, the philosopher Bertrand Russell created a committee to investigate war crimes committed by the United States in Vietnam. This committee denounced Washington's aggressive policies in Southeast Asia. The Russell Tribunal played an important role in building international opposition to the conflict at a time when the U.S. antiwar movement was still in its early stages.

In October 1971, a group of Brazilian exiles in Santiago, Chile, contacted Lelio Basso, an Italian independent socialist senator who had been the rapporteur for the Russell Tribunal on Vietnam, to persuade him to organize a similar tribunal for repression in Brazil. Basso approached the Russell Peace Foundation to obtain its sponsorship. The newly constituted body retained the Russell name and some of the earlier participants, but also expanded to include other international celebrities.

As conceived by its organizers, the tribunal's goal was to go beyond merely denouncing the most apparent manifestations of repression in Brazil "to investigate the causes and the consequences of this situation . . . [by analyzing] the social, economic, political, and cultural situation of Brazil, internally as well as internationally, because it is the only way to alert public opinion to what is actually talking place" (Common Front/CARIB 1973). Thus the body would critique Brazilian capitalist development as well as U.S. imperial hegemony in the region.

As lofty as these goals seemed, support for the idea of a tribunal floundered throughout 1972 and early 1973 as Brazilian exile opposition groups disagreed on the formula for convening the body. By mid-1973, however, most left-wing exile groups had endorsed the proposal, as had the Brazilian Information Front, a group with centers in Algeria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Sweden, and Switzerland. An international group of prestigious figures known for their commitment to progressive causes, such as Gabriel García Márquez, Jean-Paul Sartre, Noam Chomsky, and Pablo Neruda, lent legitimacy to the idea. Nevertheless, the tribunal still faced serious financial and organizational difficulties. The *Brazilian Information Bulletin* published news about planning efforts, and in early September 1973 the Committee Against Repression in Brazil organized a Brazilian-American Conference in New York to broaden support (Committee Against Repression 1973b).

A week later, the events in Chile caused the tribunal organizers to rethink their exclusive focus on Brazil as people around the world responded to the massive arrests and repression in the aftermath of Pinochet's coup. Renaming itself the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on Repression in Brazil, Chile, and Latin America, the body held its first session in Rome, March 30 to April 5, 1974. After hearing testimony from Brazilian, Chilean, and other Latin American torture victims, the tribunal issued a provisional verdict condemning the repressive regimes of the region.

Although the tribunal's proceedings received little coverage in the U.S. press, events in Chile had sparked a national solidarity movement. What had begun as an isolated effort by a handful of clergy, academics, and exiles focusing on Brazil now shifted gears, becoming a much broader movement around issues of human rights and Washington's complicity with the overthrow of Latin American governments.

The issue of torture in Brazil surfaced again in the U.S. press after the September 30, 1974, arrest and torture of Fred Morris, a U.S. citizen who had worked in Recife as a Methodist minister and missionary while occasionally serving as a stringer for *Time* magazine. The incident led to a House subcommittee hearing and dovetailed with the expanded human rights activities related to Chile (U.S. House of Representatives 1974).

Just as the Bertrand Russell Tribunal had broadened its scope after the military coup in Chile, U.S. activists who had been working on Brazil had to adjust their agenda. A national conference originally planned for spring 1974 to focus exclusively on Brazil, sponsored by the Madison, Wisconsin-based Community Action on Latin America, was renamed "Conference on Repression and Development in Brazil and Latin America." Hundreds of students, professors, and activists came together at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The keynote speaker was the former Swedish ambassador to Chile, Harold Edelstam, who was expelled after the coup for helping hundreds of Chileans and other Latin Americans to obtain political asylum in various embassies (Conference on Repression and Development 1974). U.S. solidarity activities with progressive movements in Latin America had entered a qualitatively different phase.

THE MOVEMENT'S BROADER CONTEXT

A superficial reading of the activities of the Latin American solidarity movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s might merely suggest an evolutionary progression as its impact grew over time. Indeed, from small clusters of committed religious leaders, scholars, and others who had some link with a given country, by 1974 a broader movement had developed that managed, by the end of the decade, to popularize the notion of human rights and to involve thousands of activists in the cause. Many participants had been veterans of the civil rights and peace

movements of the 1960s, and brought their energy and commitment to issues related first to Brazil and then to Chile.

Events in Brazil, especially the stepped-up repression in 1969, occurred precisely at the time that opposition to the Vietnam War escalated dramatically in the United States. The dynamic nature of the antiwar movement and the political cynicism about U.S. foreign policy that the war engendered created a propitious political climate for educating the public about other countries where U.S. tax dollars were supporting authoritarian and repressive governments. Thus, the 1969 São Paulo Biennial boycott and the "We Cannot Remain Silent" declaration of 1970 sprang out of a political awareness created in confrontations with racism and war.

Likewise, the shift in newspaper coverage of the Brazilian political situation cannot simply be explained as the result of the valiant efforts of a small cluster of activists who had learned how to place information strategically in the press. Journalists and editors who published articles or editorials about torture in Brazil reflected the same sentiments as those questioning U.S. foreign policy, and their willingness to report on the excesses of the Brazilian regime revealed how much the Cold War anticommunist discourse that had heralded Goulart's overthrow in 1964 had weakened in light of the Vietnam War. Washington's support for a regime that tortured its opponents confirmed the notion that U.S. involvement in Vietnam was not merely the result of State Department blunders but a part of wider foreign policies gone astray.

George McGovern's defeat in the presidential election of 1972 and the winding down of U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1973 took the steam out of the antiwar movement. Brazilian solidarity activities also seemed to plateau that year. This may have been partly because the political situation in Brazil had reached an impasse. The Médici government had decimated virtually all the left-wing guerrilla groups, and the legal opposition was effectively silenced. The campaigns against torture won international support and linked the Brazilian government to repressive actions but did not seem to have a palpable effect on the military's policies. The regime was not about to introduce political liberalization, and the opposition was still reeling from the aftershocks of the previous four years. (It would regain the offensive in late 1974, with the significant electoral victories by the legal opposition.)

In the United States, torture in Brazil had been denounced, and then men and women of good will had moved on. Even the phrase *Brazilian solidarity group* has a clumsy, inauthentic ring to it, because many signatories of petitions against Brazilian torture and repression were reacting against an inhumane situation and not necessarily in favor of a program or a political current in Brazil. The handful of Brazilians with leftist leanings in the United States did not articulate a unified vision that went beyond denouncing the regime's excesses with regard to the three

issues of torture, treatment of the Indians, and social inequality caused by the military's economic policies. Moreover, most of the reduced numbers of Brazilians studying at major research universities, usually on government-sponsored fellowships, hesitated to become involved in any political activities for fear of repercussions when they returned to Brazil (Dagnino 1999).

Pinochet changed the dynamic of the dissipated Latin American solidarity movement. The Chilean solidarity movement managed to pick up and go where activists for Brazil had not. Senator Frank Church's 1971 hearings about programs and policies toward Brazil were an isolated gesture, although they managed to help torpedo Washington's support for training Latin American police. With Chile, however, efforts escalated both in grassroots organizing and in high-level government lobbying. Small solidarity collectives scattered around the country gained new life. Many new groups formed, building on the experiences forged by the Brazil activists. Soon the Watergate hearings and Senator Church's further investigations of Washington's efforts to destabilize the Allende government revealed the Nixon administration's depths of corruption and depravity and provided a broader political space for a policy discussion about human rights in Latin America. The work related to Brazil had laid the groundwork for all this.

Why, then, did organizing against the military regime in Chile spark so much more activity than previous solidarity work regarding Brazil? Partly because the Goulart government and the events leading up to the 1964 military coup took place at a very different political moment than that of the early 1970s for Allende's Unidad Popular government and Pinochet's subsequent takeover. Most U.S. students and other enthusiastic legions working in the Chile solidarity movement in the mid- to late 1970s were barely in high school when Goulart was overthrown. A critical mass of students and other activists had not yet coalesced in the early days of the Alliance for Progress, the Peace Corps, and other Kennedy-Johnson initiatives for the continent.

The Goulart government's ambiguous program, moreover, never clearly declared itself in favor of a radical restructuring of Brazil's economy and society. It did not offer a clear-cut model for change, nor did it manage to capture the imagination of the newly forming generation of activists. In the early 1970s, in contrast, these activists, fueled by the antiwar and civil rights movements, embraced the Allende government's progressive socialist agenda, debated its tactics and strategies, and became outraged when that "experiment in socialism" was so brutally quashed by the military. The excesses of the Pinochet regime galvanized a significant segment of former antiwar activists; and the human rights campaigns against the dictatorships of the Southern Cone contributed to the Central American solidarity movement during the Reagan years.

NOTES

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1. I wish to thank Lars Schoultz for bringing this interaction to my attention.

2. The impact of this campaign forced Greece to withdraw from the Council of Europe in December 1969, under threat of expulsion. Because the U.S. government backed the Greek military regime, prodemocracy activists in the United States, along with the Greek actress Melina Mercouri, emphasized the issue of torture as a way to mount opposition to Washington's policies.

3. In September 1969, two Brazilian revolutionary organizations orchestrated the kidnapping of the U.S. ambassador, who was residing in Rio de Janeiro, and demanded his release in exchange for 15 political prisoners from diverse tendencies who had been subjected to torture under arrest. The Japanese consul and the German ambassador were abducted in similar schemes. On December 7, 1970, revolutionaries kidnapped the Swiss ambassador and demanded an exchange for 70 political prisoners. In early 1971 these were given political asylum in Chile, where Landau and Wexler interviewed 18 of them for their film documentary.

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