

“The Theater of Formidable Battles”
The Struggle for Nationalism in Modern Brazil, 1955-1985

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Curriculum Vitae

Born in the United States and raised in Brazil, Andre Ricardo Pagliarini completed a B.A. in history at the University of Maryland, College Park in 2012 and a Master's Degree at Brown University in 2013. His research interests include the Cold War in Latin America, nationalism, the politics of economic development, radical ideologies, and social movements. He has received research support from the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, the Global Mobility Program (Brown Graduate School), the Cogut Center for the Humanities, and the Brazil Initiative. At Brown, he has served as leader of Opening the Archives, an ambitious project to digitize and index thousands of U.S. government records related to Brazil from the 1960s through the 1980s. He has also served as a lead researcher for the Liberated Africans Project, an undertaking originally sponsored by the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research that brings together data on over 200,000 Africans rescued from the illicit transatlantic slave trade between 1808 and 1868. His first scholarly article, entitled “‘De onde? Para onde?’ New Social Movements and the Debate over Brazil’s ‘Civil’-Military Dictatorship,” was published in *Latin American Research Review* in 2017.

For my parents, Arsenio and Maria Carmen, who got me here

&

For Katie, Benjamin, and Delia, who made the journey worthwhile

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Introduction

What sane man likes to be called unpatriotic?

— Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, 1966¹

Where there is no nationalist spirit what there in fact exists is a colony, formally and informally.

— General Afonso Augusto Albuquerque Lima, 1975²

“Nationalism,” Eric Hobsbawm wrote in 1995, “is a topic of urgent academic interest in many parts of the world, because it is also a subject of urgent political interest.”³ This remains the case. Reactionary movements, truculent and nationalistic, have found remarkable success in recent years from North America to Eastern Europe. Peddling resentment and nostalgia, they call for stronger national borders and concrete steps to stem the tide of immigration and demographic change. Nationalism has become virtually synonymous with jingoism and insularity.

In Brazil, a reactionary strain of nationalism was noticeable during the run-up to the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Many of the protestors who took to the streets to demand her ouster characterized the Workers’ Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, or PT) era, which began under former metalworker and union leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (b. 1945, president 2003-2010) and continued with Rousseff (b. 1947, president 2011-2016), as an insidious plot to subvert the fabric of Brazilian society and align the nation with international pariahs like Iran and Venezuela. Impeachment apologists demanded that Dilma’s defenders—progressives, generally—move to Cuba, that withering redoubt of Latin American leftism. Rejecting the color of the PT banner and its historical associations, protestors exhumed a chant from previous anti-communist demonstrations, proclaiming, “our flag will never be red!” The PT’s thirteen years occupying the

¹ Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966): 3.

² “Soberania não está em jogo dessa vez,” *Veja*, July 16, 1975, 90.

³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Viva la Revolución: on Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethel (London: Little, Brown, 2016): 417.

presidency apparently revived the specter of an expansionist, conspiratorial internationalist Left. That being the case, the massive protests that precipitated Rousseff's fall claimed what is arguably the country's greatest emblem of contemporary Brazilian nationalism: the bright yellow uniform of the national soccer team. Clad in gold, anti-Dilma demonstrators clogged the arteries of Brazil's major cities to demand an end to an administration they saw as hopelessly and uniquely corrupt.

By claiming nationalist symbols and associating the leftist ruling party with corruption and ideological subversion, these protestors were activating a dynamic with deep roots in the history of twentieth-century Brazil.⁴ Brazilians on the Left and Right have recurrently fought over what the nation is and ought to be, claiming for themselves the mantle of nationalism with seesaw-like results. Nationalist arguments could at one moment be invoked in service of a social justice agenda and to justify dictatorial repression in another. When claimed by the Left to promote reforms, nationalism has elicited aggressive ideological and even military pushback, with considerable civilian support in the case of the 1964 coup. Such retaliations stemmed in part from "the felt experience of having power, seeing it threatened, and trying to win it back," which Corey Robin defines as the essence of conservative political action.⁵ It is true that right-leaning forces did not have the presidency in 1964, but they controlled important levers of power in the media, finance, industry, the Catholic Church, and the military. Furthermore, a broadly reformist agenda seemed to endanger the inherently conservative hierarchy of day-to-day relations for individuals in these professions and civic associations. Invested in a social order characterized by hierarchies of race and class, they fretted over the political appeal and heuristic logic of a progressive nationalist vision that did not hesitate to

⁴ For an overview of anti-leftist rhetoric expressed in nationalist terms, see Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, *Em guarda contra o "Perigo Vermelho": o anticomunismo no Brasil (1917-1964)* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2002): 29-37.

⁵ Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 4.

characterize (or demonize) the nation's elites as enablers of foreign exploitation. The stakes of the global Cold War only escalated the simmering panic.

As this dissertation seeks to demonstrate, postwar Brazilian history presents a discernible pattern concerning the link between nationalism and broader economic debates: attempts to define and claim what is "legitimate" nationalism flare up at moments of high inflation and unemployment—periods of social unrest like the 1960s and the late 1970s. That is because these tend to represent inflection points when the nation struggles with itself to determine the path forward, points of acute political dispute. As economic progress stalls, those with power and those seeking to attain it cast about for culprits. For conservative forces, the responsible party has most commonly been the popular demagogic leader or the gullible masses too unsophisticated to resist his (or her) siren song. The national interest, according to this thinking, was best served by austere political elites and dispassionate unelected technocrats. The masses needed to be divested of political influence over the nation's affairs in order for Brazilian development to proceed.

For leftists, the most consistent targets of opprobrium have been domestic elites aligned with foreign interests. Among those who became involved in nationalist campaigns in the 1950s, nationalism fostered an incipient sense of political agency and faith in the transformative potential of collective action. They wanted more influence over public policy, not less, as the post-1964 regime would have it. The conservative and progressive approaches to nationalism represent largely irreconcilable notions of Brazilian history, economic development, and social organization that remain in tension today. While "right-wing nationalism tends to be antidemocratic and prone to elitist doctrines of national greatness," as Luiz Alberto Bahia observed in 1980, progressive nationalism has generally called for democratic control of the development process and greater

distribution of wealth.⁶ Leftists have fought for greater equality and redistribution of wealth while the Right has favored order, predictability, and hierarchy.

Following an overview of crucial developments between the 1920s and early 1950s, this study analyzes the political applications of nationalist discourse from the 1955 election of Juscelino Kubitschek (b. 1902-1976, president 1956-1961) through the end of military rule in 1985. More specifically, I trace how understandings of nationalism and the nationalist label have shifted over time. This is also a history of the contest to claim the mantle of legitimate nationalism. I am less interested in adjudicating the merits of self-avowed nationalist claimants than in analyzing the processes by which certain actors seek to present themselves as the true guarantors of the national good while dismissing opponents as either naïve or complicit in foreign exploitation. My intention is to trace the ways in which distinct understandings of Brazil's self-interest informed both the reformist aspirations of progressives dissatisfied with the inequalities of Brazilian society and anti-communist Cold Warriors invested in maintaining close ties with the United States, essentially a proxy position for ensuring much of the status quo.

As I demonstrate, the latter consistently sought to discredit the political appeals of the former, characterizing progressive nationalists as pawns of international communism. This reaction from the Right stemmed in no small part from the fact that nationalism had proven a potent mobilizing discourse for mass movements in the decade before the military coup of 1964. Indeed, leftist nationalism elicited a range of responses from political actors. Some officials reiterated elements of this critical discourse; others dismissed its proponents as enemies of the state. But no matter their reaction, they were responding on nationalists' terms. The nationalist movement succeeded in framing the country's political debate beginning in the second half of the 1950s.

⁶ Luiz Alberto Bahia, "Nacionalizações," *Folha de São Paulo*, March 14, 1980, 2.

This does not mean, however, that the efforts of leftists to define and claim what it meant to be a nationalist went uncontested. As Boris Fausto has observed, nationalism in Brazil has always been a multivalent phenomenon.⁷ Rather, I argue that while conservative forces also frequently sought to present themselves as authentic nationalists, progressives in Brazil during the period in question tried more clearly and assiduously to attach the general notion of nationalism with a specific agenda they imagined would ameliorate endemic poverty and aid Brazil's development. This entailed a proactive reformist agenda with considerable popular appeal. Indeed, leftists employed nationalist rhetoric to advance their policy prescriptions with a greater sense of urgency than their opponents. Thus, while Ludwig Lauerhass has lucidly described four main types of Brazilian nationalism—(1) liberal-democratic, (2) centralizing authoritarian, (3) progressive-conservative, (4) pragmatic—I believe, for the purposes of clarity and efficiency, that these can be profitably collapsed into two enduring traditions of nationalism, one essentially conservative and one reformist (or progressive).⁸

As it relates to purportedly nationalist policies, this dissertation is particularly interested in what has been called "revolutionary reformism," a concept introduced by André Gorz but developed in Brazil by Carlos Nelson Coutinho to refer to a strategy that aims to radically transform society through a "consequential and realistic policy of structural reforms."⁹ An agenda that broadly fit this description came close to becoming law in 1964 under President João Goulart (b. 1918-1976, president 1961-1964). Soon after committing to such a set of policies, referred to as *reformas de base* in the political debate of the time, Goulart was removed from office in a coup d'etat sanctioned by the U.S. government. While the term *reformas de base* is usually translated as base reforms, I find that the measures contained in that agenda are better described and understood as structural reforms

⁷ Boris Fausto, *O pensamento nacionalista autoritário (1920-1940)* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2001): 16.

⁸ Lauerhauss Jr., *Getúlio Vargas e o triunfo do nacionalismo brasileiro*, 29.

⁹ Carlos Nelson Coutinho, *Contra a corrente: ensaios sobre democracia e socialismo* (São Paulo: Cortez, 2000): 86.

since their stated goal was to alter, if not fundamentally remake, the basic structures of Brazil's political economy, like the banking, housing, and rural landholding sectors. But even before Goulart had been in a position to translate reformist aspirations into reality, at its height in the late 1950s, the nationalist movement had come to represent the promise of revolutionary reformism for a great many Brazilians. Such transformation was what the nationalist agenda entailed, as even its opponents acknowledged. The military regime (1964-1985) would devote considerable discursive energy to defusing the association between nationalism and revolutionary reformism.

Indeed, the transformational zeal of reformist nationalism, deemed necessary by leftists for Brazil to achieve its natural potential, was lacking in the nationalist discourse of the Right, which sought to modernize the national economy while leaving untouched structural mechanisms of social exclusion. Thus, the conservative newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* was slightly off when it praised the fall of Goulart as a victory for democracy, a definitive repudiation of the dictatorial Estado Novo regime (1930-1937) of Getúlio Vargas (b. 1882-1954, in power 1930-1945, president 1951-1954).¹⁰ The military regime was indeed a reaction to Vargas, but more pointedly to his elected presidency when economic nationalism suddenly became the central ingredient of Brazilian political discourse. After Vargas' dramatic suicide in 1954, nationalism—specifically the notion that Brazil was being exploited by foreign interests and that this demanded a set of forceful policy responses—became the default position of a broad swath of the population, a development that progressive forces sought to exploit for their own political purposes.

The intersections of leftist nationalism and anti-imperialism troubled Washington as well as many conservative Brazilians. This is because, as Jan Knippers Black rightly observes, since “nationalism in a dependent or client state virtually by definition takes the form of resentment against the paramount or hegemonic power, nationalism itself has often been viewed by U.S.

¹⁰ “Dez anos de revolução,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 31, 1974, 3.

decision-makers [and domestic elites] as a manifestation of foreign influence, or as essentially anti-American."¹¹ I argue, however, that the anti-imperialist rhetoric embraced by the Brazilian Left beginning in the 1920s is best understood as a form of nationalism rather than merely a denunciation of (primarily) American (mis)deeds. Anti-imperialism in this context reflected a deep concern over Brazil's inability to achieve its potential given constraints imposed from abroad. In this thinking, Brazil had all the ingredients to be a great power, including natural resources, a diverse and youthful population, and friendly relations with its neighbors, but was consistently rebuffed by the overwhelming forces of imperialism. Foreign interests and a servile national elite blocked the structural changes needed for broad-based development and social justice, according to this view. From the 1920s through the 1980s and beyond, the outlook of the Brazilian Left vis-à-vis the United States was clear: adherence without influence did not serve the national interest.

Readers may be surprised by the Brazilian Left's attraction to nationalism. After all, in the United States, for example, such discourse has often carried exclusionary ethnic or racial connotations. Ross Poole has ably described much of the popular skepticism of nationalism, observing that "large numbers of otherwise decent people have carried out unbelievable atrocities for no better reason than their nation required them to." He also correctly notes that historically, "the rhetoric of national identity is used to stand in the way of civilized policies towards refugees and immigrants."¹² Yet nationalism has appealed to both progressives and conservatives in various places around the world. While in some settings they have paved the way for tyranny, invocations of the nation and the national interest have also enabled social progress to inch forward in other contexts.¹³ The reason for the latter is simple, according to philosopher Richard Rorty, who argues that "national pride is to countries what self-respect is to individuals: a necessary condition for self-

¹¹ Jan Knippers Black, *United States Penetration of Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977): 8.

¹² Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999): 1.

¹³ Ibid.

improvement.” Countries, like people, benefit from an impulse toward self-improvement that cannot exist without introspection and a sense of self-worth. Only emotional investment in the life of one’s nation can produce an “imaginative and productive” political debate. “Such deliberation,” he concludes, “will probably not occur unless pride outweighs shame.”¹⁴

Rorty comes close to positing nationalism as essentially synonymous with patriotism. While most Brazilian leftists during the period surveyed in this dissertation dismissed patriotism as a superficial and passive love of country, it was in this direction that the military regime sought to pull the popular understanding of what nationalism meant. Reflecting differing understandings of nationalism with the armed forces, the avowedly nationalistic General Afonso Augusto Albuquerque Lima, a former minister of the interior (1967-1969) who came close to seeking the presidency during the dictatorship, expressed a dynamic view of nationalism, suggesting that a country that did not assert itself could hardly expect to better itself. “Nationalism as I understand it is essentially the attitude of a nation that does not accept remaining in a secondary position, that knows that national interests are worth much more than expressions of friendship. It does not mean isolationism, but it also should never mean dependence,” he explained. “Where there is no nationalist spirit what there in fact exists is a colony, formally and informally.”¹⁵ The fact that Albuquerque did not prevail in the constant power struggles that defined the military during the dictatorship suggests, at least in part, that his proactive nationalist vision did not move a majority of men in uniform.

Despite its enduring currency in Brazil and elsewhere, however, critics often suggest that nationalism is a hollow concept, “a bundle of inchoate sentiments, elaborated by more or less florid rhetoric,” in Anthony D. Smith’s words.¹⁶ But rather than dismiss it as hopelessly imprecise, I suggest

¹⁴ Richard Rorty, *Achieving our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 3.

¹⁵ “Soberania não está em jogo dessa vez,” *Veja*, July 16, 1975, 90.

¹⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001): 24.

it is more useful to think of nationalism as a flexible political force whose content is determined by the character of those who claim it and that can be plausibly be placed in the service of myriad political projects. In the case of the Brazilian Left during the late 1950s and 1960s, the discourse of nationalism was placed in the service of a democratizing project that at least purported to address historical injustices. In his magisterial history of the European Left, Geoff Eley argues that “it doggedly and courageously constructed the foundations for democracy [and] consistently pushed the boundaries of citizenship outward and forward, demanding democratic rights where *anciens régimes* refused them, defending democratic gains against subsequent attack and pressing the case for ever-greater inclusiveness.” When they could not win elections, progressives mobilized beyond the halls of power to press for reforms.¹⁷ I argue that Brazilian leftists for much of the twentieth century used nationalist discourse toward precisely the same ends, pairing rhetorical attacks on imperialism with an inward-looking critique of Brazilian elites. Nationalism served as the primary basis for reformist platforms during the period in question here, a common denominator around which diverse groups could organize and with which they could identify. Despite differences in tactics and organizational priorities, the Brazilian Left shared an egalitarian ideal that, according to Norberto Bobbio, is at the heart of any leftist project.¹⁸ Jorge Ferreira and Daniel Aarão Reis add to Bobbio’s formulation by including a transformational zeal—whether through reform or revolution—in service of greater equality.¹⁹ Such was the thrust of the progressive nationalist movement in Brazil.

This is not to say that post-war Brazilian nationalism was always understood as a grassroots ideology. A haunting 1967 profile in the weekly newsmagazine *O Cruzeiro* told the story of an

¹⁷ Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 10.

¹⁸ In practical terms, this ideal usually means “encouraging policies which aim to make those who are unequal more equal, rather than a utopian society in which all individuals are equal in every single thing.” Norberto Bobbio, *Left and Right. The Significance of a Political Distinction*, trans. Allan Cameron (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997): 71.

¹⁹ Jorge Ferreira and Daniel Aarão Reis, eds. *A formação das tradições (1889-1945); As esquerdas no Brasil*, vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007): 11.

educated young homeless man contemplating suicide. Recounting his political formation, he explained that his youthful ideological fervor had been informed by “popular nationalism,” a theory that promised “opportunity for underdeveloped countries like ours so that, using all the forces of the people, they can achieve what they call progress on the terrestrial plane.” At the time of the man's youth, this discourse would have been intimately linked with the political persona of Getúlio Vargas in a loose doctrine eponymously referred to as *varguismo*. But the subject of the article became disillusioned because, as he said, “the nationalism that exists in Brazil is not popular. It is the product of a bourgeois culture” whose flaws became evident “the moment that class struggle begins.”²⁰ The nationalist movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s had indeed been led primarily by intellectuals and politicians and was often removed from the ranks of the poor. Yet the nationalism wielded by the Left constituted an accessible ideological basis to assert one's dignity and to link individual claims to a broader political vision. Without a doubt, there was an elite nationalist vanguard, but its appeal was unmistakably popular.

In key respects, connotations lie at the heart of this dissertation, for example, what did people think of nationalism? What did it mean to them in different moments? Did the term evoke solidarity with other countries weighed down by poverty and great power politics or the patriotic triumphalism of sustained economic growth? For that reason, it makes sense to briefly consider how scholars have talked about the question of Brazilian nationalism. In a book that still merits close attention by anyone interested in the topic, E. Bradford Burns presented a comprehensive general history of Brazilian nationalism, essentially from discovery through the 1960s.²¹ More often, however, the existing literature on nationalism in English can be sorted into three admittedly sweeping categories,

²⁰ Carlos de Freitas, “Data certa para morrer,” *O Cruzeiro*, March 25, 1967, 124.

²¹ E. Bradford Burns, *Nationalism in Brazil: A Historical Survey* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1968).

emphasizing culture, race, and debates over industrial policy. I have attempted to lump notable works into capacious categories in order to make clear what this dissertation does and does not do.

An extensive historiography exists on the relationship between cultural nationalism and the state in the twentieth century, with notable works by Daryle Williams and Bryan McCann. In *Culture Wars in Brazil*, Williams analyzes how the Vargas regime sought to foster a particular national identity (*brasilidade*) through state mediation of sites and iconographies it deemed central to a specific accounting of the nation's history.²² McCann, for his part, focuses on popular music and nationalist actors including the central state between the 1920s and 1950s as an arena of national contestation and affirmation, a crucible in which key parts of the country's contemporary identity was formed.²³ Both historians recognize the Vargas Era, defined narrowly as the period from 1930-1945 or more expansively as 1930-1954, as a seminal period of cultural self-definition, a moment when the state set about establishing the nation's character in concrete and enduring ways. Ludwig Lauerhass Jr. acknowledged as much in the title of his 1996 study, *Getúlio Vargas e o Triunfo do Nacionalismo Brasileiro*, a deeply insightful work that considers much more than just Vargas himself.²⁴ This strain of scholarship has looked at how music, images, regions, historical sites, buildings, and other elements, have shaped the formation of a distinctly Brazilian national culture.²⁵

Another way that scholars have engaged with Brazilian nationalism is through the question of race. Thomas Skidmore's seminal *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* is the classic work in this regard, with Barbara Weinstein's more recent *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo*

²² Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

²³ Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

²⁴ Ludwig Lauerhauss Jr., *Getúlio Vargas e o triunfo do nacionalismo brasileiro* (Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia; São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1986).

²⁵ See also Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Jr., *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, translated by Jerry Dennis Metz (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Seth Garfield, *Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil: State Policy, Frontier Expansion, and the Xavante Indians, 1937–1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil also standing out as an instant classic.²⁶ Both authors study how whiteness has historically been posited as a racial ideal toward which the nation should strive. Both, in other words, identify race at the center of debates over the national character in the twentieth century and beyond. Jeffrey Lesser, another leading scholar in this field, has looked closely at the role of immigrants in the formation of national identity, arguing that the experiences of immigrants from Europe, Japan, and the Middle East cannot be separated from the broader history of race relations in Brazil.²⁷ Finally, most recently, Marshall Eakin has written an important study of how and why the idea of racial admixture came to figure so prominently in Brazil's self-conception during the twentieth century, focusing particularly on the widespread currency of ideas most associated with Gilberto Freyre.²⁸ These scholars have analyzed the phenomenon by which Brazilian intellectuals, policymakers, artists, and average people have understood the character and identity of their nation in terms of race and demography.

A third broad grouping of scholarship on Brazilian nationalism touches on the policies and intellectual disputes regarding economic and industrial development. Excellent pieces on how leftists engaged with these themes can be found in the collection *As Esquerdas no Brasil*, edited by Jorge Ferreira and Daniel Aarão Reis, particularly the second volume on nationalism and radical reformism.²⁹ More recent work by Rafael Ioris has refocused scholarly attention on the swirling debates in the postwar period over development as a process to be guided and sustained by the state versus one that should rely near exclusively on market principles.³⁰ Although not looking exclusively

²⁶ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

²⁷ See Jeffrey Lesser, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Brazil, 1808 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

²⁸ Marshall Eakin, *Becoming Brazilian: Race and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁹ Jorge Ferreira and Daniel Aarão Reis, eds. *Nacionalismo e reformismo Radical (1945-1964)*. Coleção As Esquerdas no Brasil, vol. 2. (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007).

³⁰ Rafael Ioris, *Transforming Brazil: A History of National Development in the Postwar Era* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

at Brazil, Kathryn Sikkink considered similar questions in her *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Brazil and Argentina*.³¹ Ronald Chilcote's *Intellectuals and the Search for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* is another notable work in this field, closely analyzing the intellectual foundations and policy implications of nationalist thought.³² Another essential volume is *Brasileiros Contra o Brasil*, an edited volume from 1958 compiling essays from influential members of the progressive nationalist movement. This "nationalist anthology" offers an effective primer on the issues and strategies that guided the actions of self-avowed nationalists in the years after the death of Getúlio Vargas.³³ Finally, Thomas E. Skidmore, in his foundational *Politics in Brazil*, dismissed much of the nationalist movement that figures centrally in this dissertation, distinguishing between a "developmentalist-nationalist" strategy for growth and an unproductive "radical nationalism." The former, he argues, "was put forward more in the spirit of political polemics than as a carefully reasoned strategy for development." Proponents of those ideas, according to Skidmore, "attributed Brazil's underdevelopment to a natural alliance of private investors and capitalist governments within the industrialized world. Their conspiracy sought to limit Brazil forever to a subordinate role as an exporter of primary products whose prices were kept at a minimum level, and an importer of finished products whose products were set at an exorbitant level by monopolistic corporations." For these nationalists, Skidmore explains, Brazil would never industrialize by relying merely on the goodwill of advanced economies.³⁴ Taken together, these works exemplify a line of inquiry that considers the impact of academic and intellectual disputes, which often occurred beyond the direct purview of the state, on concrete policies embraced by the government.

³¹ Kathryn Sikkink, *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Brazil and Argentina* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

³² Ronald H. Chilcote, *Intellectuals and the Search for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³³ *Brasileiros contra o Brasil; antologia nacionalista*, presented by the Movimento Nacionalista Brasileira (São Paulo: Editora Fulgor, 1958).

³⁴ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967): 89-90.

The aforementioned categories are, of course, imperfectly schematic, bleeding into one another and leaving several important works unmentioned (see bibliography for more). Weinstein, for example, considers racialized ideas together with regionalism—indeed, she sees them as largely inextricable—and the aspirational whitening discussed in Skidmore’s work cannot be understood apart from debates taking place within intellectual and academic circles at the time. Nevertheless, while I will delve deeper into the complexities of the topic in a future iteration of this project, my focus here is on nationalism as a distinctive label and "nationalist" as a disputed position on the political landscape. In other words, I focus less on understanding the composition of Brazil’s national identity through particular cultural manifestations, racial tensions, or academic infighting than I do on explaining what it meant to be called or to call one’s self a nationalist at given points of time between 1955-1985. This is akin to what Roberto Bitencourt da Silva accomplished in his biography of Brazilian congressman Sergio Magalhães, published in 2017. Da Silva minutely analyzed the policy implications and discursive aspects of anti-imperialism and nationalism, two themes that dominated Brazilian political discourse after World War II and that were closely associated with Magalhães, a leading nationalist in Congress.³⁵ I engage with similar themes but with a broader scope. How and why did popular understandings of what constituted a nationalist agenda shift during this period? How did individuals and groups seize and cede the mantle of a supposedly legitimate nationalism? These are the questions that animate this study.

Another clarifying point regarding my terms: in this project, I define the Left broadly to capture both those actors who believed that social injustice could be eased incrementally (the majority) and those who agitated for drastic measures that sometimes included violence (the minority). In short, I employ the terms Left, leftism, and leftist as the average reader would

³⁵ Roberto Bitencourt da Silva. *Sergio Magalhães e suas Trincheiras: Nacionalismo, Trabalhismo e Anti-imperialismo* (São Paulo: Paco Editorial, 2017).

understand them, “with the meaning of everyday language, journalism and political oratory,” to borrow from Jacob Gorender.³⁶ By the late 1950s, the moment my analysis begins in earnest, leftists had successfully claimed and defined the contours of Brazilian nationalism while the Right temporarily ceded that banner and further committed itself to its own potent rhetorical weapons of anti-corruption and anti-communism. It was not until after the 1964 coup that conservative forces sought in earnest to claim nationalism for themselves. They succeeded due in equal parts to an auspicious economic narrative and political repression.

With the end of the regime and the return of democracy, the Left largely returned to its reflexive position of classifying Brazil’s elite as *entreguista*, the pejorative term used to identify those willing to hand over or sell out Brazil’s sovereignty and natural wealth to foreign powers, while the Right has wholeheartedly embraced the rhetoric of anti-corruption to tar and disqualify its opponents. It is notable that during the (relatively brief) moments of democracy in twentieth-century Brazil, nationalist discourse redounded to the political benefit of the progressive coalition I discuss in this dissertation. In part, this study attempts to understand why that is. Anti-corruption, on the other hand, has been at the very heart of the political appeal of the Brazilian Right from Carlos Lacerda in the 1950s to Fernando Collor de Mello in 1989 to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016. A socially conscious, reformist nationalism along the lines laid out by the nationalist movement beginning in the 1950s holds an enduring appeal for a great many Brazilians distrustful of financial and business elites while anti-corruption attracts those who see in the State the root of Brazil’s dysfunction. Conceptions of nationalism in Brazil share a sense of thwarted potential, but they differ on where to place the blame. The nationalist Left identified a self-interested elite and imperialist exertions as the reason for endemic poverty while right-wing strains saw an uneducated, impetuous, and unruly underclass willing to embrace any leader who spoke directly to them no

³⁶ Jacob Gorender, *Combate nas trevas. A esquerda brasileira: das ilusões perdidas à luta armada* (São Paulo: Ática, 1987): 7.

matter how unqualified as the reason for the country's underperformance. Both discourses represent fundamentally conflicting diagnoses of the maladies afflicting Brazilian society. Focusing primarily on the former, this introduction presents some of the theoretical considerations of my dissertation before previewing the substance of ensuing chapters.

Nationalism in the early First Republic (1889-1910s)

The fall of the Brazilian monarchy in 1889 was both an apotheosis and a precipitating event. It represented the culmination of escalating tensions between Dom Pedro II (1825-1891), whose long reign as emperor began in 1840, the military, and slaveholders. Historians disagree over which of these forces contributed most decisively to the demise of the Brazilian empire, but soldiers were the ones who ultimately ousted the elderly monarch and ushered in a new era of political thought and governance.³⁷ For Ludwig Lauerhauss, Brazilian nationalism was a product of the tensions and fallout produced by the Paraguayan War (1865-1870), a conflict that led to a broad reconsideration of the societal role of the armed forces in Brazil.³⁸ Historian Todd Diacon agrees, noting that “influential Brazilians traced their country’s problems during the war to a lack of civic spirit or national pride . . . The nation, then, would have to be built, or at least refashioned, into something new and modern.”³⁹

For Augusto Buonicore, on the other hand, distinctive nationalist visions became discernable only after the fall of monarchy. The first of these was espoused by radical republicans, referred to as Jacobins after the ruthless partisans of the French Revolution. These men criticized the legacies of Portuguese colonization, especially the role of the Bragança dynasty (of which Dom Pedro II was a

³⁷ See Barbara Weinstein, “Postcolonial Brazil,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American History*, ed. Jose C. Moya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 219.

³⁸ Lauerhass Jr., *Getúlio Vargas e o triunfo do nacionalismo brasileiro*, 35.

³⁹ Todd A. Diacon, *Stringing Together a Nation: Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon and the Construction of a Modern Brazil, 1906-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004): 11.

member), the influence of the Catholic Church, and the violent tactics of the elite. In 1897, Gonzaga Duque argued in a book entitled *Revoluções brasileiras* that the prevailing monarchist literature elided popular uprisings that sought the “possession of the government of the people by the people.” The Proclamation of the Republic (November 15, 1889), he wrote, was a seminal development in the process of Brazil’s national emancipation. Buonicore asserts that writers like Duque naturally looked to the United States as a model of independence and national assertiveness.⁴⁰ Such thinkers dreamed of a strong, self-sufficient, and confident nation responsive to the will of the majority.

The countervailing view, offered by monarchist intellectuals in the late nineteenth century, was that Portuguese colonization had been beneficial and even ennobling for the masses. In this assessment, “the history of Christian imperial Brazil was a virtuous cycle as opposed to Latin American republics marked by violence and *caudilhismo* [rule by strongmen].” Such writers were often anglophiles, a predilection that engendered a deep skepticism of the United States.⁴¹ During the First Republic (1889-1930), the so-called Jacobins lost ground to more moderate republicans “tied to the interests of coffee producers, financiers, and exporters from São Paulo,” many of whom were erstwhile monarchists.⁴² This allowed a more conservative orientation to endure at the highest levels of government, one that resisted ideological reformulations of the nation along more democratic lines. The values of the slave society that existed until abolition in 1888 were allowed to survive into the twentieth century.

In the early 1900s, the government set about consolidating its hold on the far reaches of the national territory and building truly national institutions that could implement centralized policies. This agenda, while not explicitly characterized as nationalistic at the time, carried the seeds of what

⁴⁰ Quoted in Augusto César Buonicore, *Marxismo, história e revolução brasileira: encontros e desencontros* (São Paulo: Anita Garibaldi, 2009): 266

⁴¹ Ibid., 266-267.

⁴² Ibid., 267.

would later blossom into identifiable strains of Left and Right nationalism. For example, the efforts of Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon (1865–1958), a military engineer who sought to link Brazil's extensive interior to its coast by building telegraph lines and roads, reflected both the egalitarian potential of national integration as well as the authoritarian zeal of an unresponsive state bureaucracy. Euclides da Cunha's celebrated coverage of the Canudos War (1893-1897) conveyed an appreciation for diversity and the resilience of ordinary people in the face of neglect, violence, and poverty tempered by the arrogance of a self-proclaimed modernizing vanguard.

The early twentieth century, in short, was a time of swirling ambitions, dreams, and plans for Brazil's national destiny. For some close to the center of power, this involved a modern nation physically and ideologically connected in service of a broader agenda of national self-actualization. Others could only imagine facing the future in the company of a small group of like-minded individuals equally committed to values the government deemed scornful at best and insurgent at worst. Visions of the nation's destiny clashed and periodically flared toward violent resolution, or coexisted uneasily to be resolved by future generations. The big questions that in the twentieth century would consume the energies of the vibrant forces of society—workers, students, soldiers, politicians—first reared their head as Pedro II left the stage of national life in 1889.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation draws primarily from Brazilian periodicals, U.S. government records, personal paper collections, memoirs, and interviews to construct a chronological narrative. Chapter 1 presents a broad overview of developments from the 1920s through the 1950s. Chapter 2, entitled "The Language of Reform," closely analyzes how various progressive forces coalesced, often reluctantly, into a unified movement during the Kubitschek administration that I argue made nationalism into the de facto language of social and political reform at the height of the transnational

Cold War. The popular appeal of this trend alarmed anti-communists in Brazil and the United States who saw such nationalist affirmation as code for Soviet alignment.

“Politics as Solution,” the third chapter, looks at the tumultuous period from the 1960 presidential election to the fall of Goulart in 1964. During this period, the nation came close to enacting a set of structural reforms that, while not nearly as radical as opponents claimed, can be characterized as revolutionary reformism. Indeed, conservative forces deemed Goulart’s reformism, driven by the pronounced nationalism of his party and allies like Leonel Brizola, such a threat that they successfully orchestrated a coup to oust him from office. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the years of military rule. The first is primarily interested in understanding how the dictatorship went about disqualifying the nationalist reputation that progressive forces had accrued in the postwar period and in redefining nationalism for a new sociopolitical order while the latter looks at the moment from the 1974 oil shocks through the end of military rule in 1985 when the regime’s economic policies were discredited and the claim to the mantle of legitimate nationalism was once again up for grabs. Veterans of the earlier nationalist movement, many linked to the defunct Brazilian Labor Party (PTB, f. 1945), wanted to revive the rhetoric of the past while less conciliatory activists in the new Workers’ Party (PT, f. 1979) considered the reformism of that era a failure. For its part, while the dictatorship sided with the United States in the Cold War, its repeated attempts to assert a nationalist identity bespoke an ideological ambition and a desire to engage with a broader history spanning the 1920s-1950s.

Ultimately, this dissertation hopes to elucidate how nationalism in Brazil could at one moment be invoked in service of a social justice agenda and to justify dictatorial repression in another. This seemingly bewildering ideological paradox helps us understand the modern Brazilian state and the enduring tensions of Brazilian society. My overarching argument is that the contest to define and claim legitimate nationalism has served since the 1950s as a proxy for debates over the proper role

of the Brazilian citizenry in pursuing democracy and economic development. In a sense, the driving force of Brazilian political debate in postwar Brazil has been the recurring race to establish a fixed definition for nationalism which could then be grafted onto a specific policy agenda. Not every issue has been defined in light of this question, but it has informed combustible animosities concerning the direction, character, and self-conception of the nation, which I examine in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 1

Decisive Days

Reform, Revolution, and the Nation from the 1920s to the 1950s

Don't paint nationalism red!

— Vladimir Lenin⁴³

Anglo-American imperialism has its eyes on us. It notices, with its keen sense of smell, that this immense semicolonial country contains contradictions that will produce revolutionary conditions and make of it the theater of formidable battles.

— Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) May Day declaration, 1929⁴⁴

On July 6, 1935, Luiz Carlos Prestes (1898-1990) issued a manifesto encapsulating the mixture of nationalism and reformism that defined leftist discourse in Brazil for much of the twentieth century. Prestes, a former army officer, emerged by the mid-1930s as the face of the Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunista do Brasil, or PCB, f. 1922) and a popular mass leader. In his statement, he proclaimed that “decisive days” for the nation were at hand, calling for a broad union of political forces against the status quo. The movement, known as the National Liberating Alliance (Aliança Nacional Libertadora, or ANL), stemmed from “struggles for general objectives, which are the struggles against imperialism and landed estates [*latifúndio*].” Prestes then recounted the uprisings of young military officers in 1922 and 1924 “against the tyrants, who go on selling Brazil to foreign capital.” That fight continued “because victory has not yet been reached . . . because the objective to meet is the national liberation of Brazil, its national unification, progress, and the well-being and freedom of its people.”⁴⁵ In this way, Prestes, known to supporters as the Knight of Hope, linked

⁴³ Cited in M. N. Roy, *M. N. Roy's Memoirs* (Bombay et al.: Allied Publishers, 1964): 395.

⁴⁴ “Decorreram animadissimas as comemorações de 1º de maio,” *Diário Carioca*, May 2, 1929, 1.

⁴⁵ Cited in Edgard Carone, ed., *O PCB (1922-1943)* (São Paulo: Difel, 1982): 172-174.

social justice in Brazil to anti-imperialism. He made explicit the link between nationalism and reformism.

Prestes' views during that period, indeed, the essence of the ANL, fits neatly within a schematic chronology of Marxist thought in twentieth-century Latin America. The first period lasted from the 1920s through 1935, when leftists generally advocated a sweeping revolution that would be both anti-imperialist and socialist in nature. Next, from the mid-1930s to the late 1950s, came the Stalinist orientation: the revolution would occur in stages, thus Latin American communists should focus on building popular fronts in pursuit of national-democratic revolutions. Finally, the success of Marxist revolution in Cuba encouraged more radical perspectives that embraced the socialist character of revolution and the need for armed struggle.⁴⁶

This chapter presents both a historiographical and a narrative survey of the relationship between progressive Brazilians and nationalism from 1922 through the early 1950s, a period marked by enormous upheavals that shaped the political landscape of modern Brazil. Two landmark events of this period are the founding of the PCB in 1922 and the PTB in 1945. These parties would both catalyze and reflect the internal debates among progressives—a term I employ broadly to denote politically active individuals scandalized by the injustices and inequalities of Brazilian society—regarding the transformational possibilities of structural change. Between the 1920s and the 1950s, an explicitly reformist nationalist discourse took shape, concerned with social justice and achieving Brazil's potential to ensure the welfare of all its citizens. That goal, many leftists argued, had been consistently hindered by the interference of foreign economic powers, particularly the United States.⁴⁷ While progressives negotiated the extent of their nationalism and reformism into the 1960s

⁴⁶ Michael Löwy presented these three moments in the history of Latin American Marxism in 1980. Obviously, the Left in Latin America has continued to evolve since then. Michael Löwy, ed., *Marxism in Latin America from 1909 to the Present: An Anthology*, trans. Michael Pearlman (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1992): xiii.

⁴⁷ Alan McPherson correctly notes that the Latin American Left generally embraced an anti-imperialist rhetoric rather than an explicitly anti-American one in the late 1950s. I agree with his assertion that anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism can be seen as “overlapping yet distinct phenomena,” in part because a close look at the latter “goes beyond

(and beyond), the 1920s were seminal in determining the basic contours of a political platform based on those impulses.

The 1920s

Three events in 1922 left indelible marks on Brazilian society. The first was the establishment of the Communist Party, which at the time received almost no attention beyond a tight circle of labor activists.⁴⁸ Scholars of the Brazilian Left trace the origins of the PCB to the radical ideologies that emerged in major cities in the 1910s.⁴⁹ Anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, many of whom were immigrants, represented the most vocal tendencies within the radical milieu seeking to organize a nascent industrial working class.⁵⁰ However, World War I (1914-1918), the Russian Revolution (1917), and the creation of the Comintern (1919) jointly chipped away at the hegemony of anarchist organizers within the Left. By the early 1920s, Astrojildo Pereira (1890-1965), an influential radical intellectual, argued that global events had overtaken anarchism as a viable alternative for Brazil.⁵¹ Communism, not anarchism, seemed the wave of the future. That realization led Brazilian leftists to decide upon a new national party to coordinate their efforts. To that end, as Stanley E. Hilton notes, “nine delegates (including Pereira), seven of whom had been anarchists, representing Communist groups in five states with a total membership of seventy-three, accepted the Comintern’s

anti-imperialism [by] call[ing] on scholars to examine how Washington (in contrast to say, London or Beijing) responded to critics.” While I acknowledge the nuance McPherson is pointing to, I do not draw a sharp distinction between anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism in this dissertation. Alan McPherson, *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003): 4-5.

⁴⁸ Astrojildo Pereira, *Formação do PCB (1922/1928)* (Rio de Janeiro: Vitória, 1962): 48.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, “O proletariado industrial na Primeira República,” in *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, Vol. 2, Tomo 3, ed. Boris Fausto (Rio de Janeiro: Difel, 1978) and John W.F. Dulles, *Anarchists and Communists in Brazil, 1900-1935* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973).

⁵⁰ On the historical significance of Brazilian anarchists, see Edilene Toledo, “A trajetória anarquista no Brasil na Primeira República,” in *A formação das tradições (1889-1945)/As esquerdas no Brasil vol. 1*, eds. Jorge Ferreira and Daniel Aarão Reis (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007): 53-87.

⁵¹ Astrojildo Pereira, *Construindo o PCB (1922-1924)*, ed. Michel Zaidan (São Paulo: Livraria Editora Ciências Humanas, 1980): 21-23.

conditions for admission and launched the [PCB]” in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro in March 1922.⁵² The party was forced underground shortly thereafter when President Artur Bernardes declared a state of siege in July in response to disorder within the military. Over time, the PCB would become accustomed to operating clandestinely, a condition it was forced to endure for much of the twentieth century.

The most fraught and enduringly consequential element of the PCB’s identity was its relationship with international communism. For opponents, the party’s congenital ties to foreign elements—communist parties around the world and the Soviet Union in particular—made its activities suspicious. Brazilian communists from the beginning were depicted as agents of a foreign empire seeking to undermine national institutions. They were considered doubly subversive: not only did they challenge the existing order, they purportedly did so at the behest of a hostile external power. Until the 1950s, this characterization was at least partly accurate. Among other theoretical points, the PCB embraced the vision of revolution put forth at the Second Congress of the Communist International, held in the summer of 1920, calling for a two-stage revolution in so-called underdeveloped countries. In the first step, communists should form a united front with the proletariat, peasantry, and nationalists with the goal of enabling a “progressive” member of the bourgeoisie to take power and challenge the forces of imperialism and the landholding class. The second stage involved overthrowing the bourgeoisie and instituting an explicitly socialist government. Although accepted in general terms, this orientation was constantly debated by Brazilian communists arguing either for moderation or radicalization. In broader terms, however, most Brazilian communists looked to Moscow for direction and saw themselves as part of a shared global struggle.

⁵² Stanley E. Hilton, *Brazil and the Soviet Challenge, 1917-1947* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991): 3. For a brief but thorough history of the PCB’s creation, see Marcos del Roio, “Os comunistas, a luta social e o marxismo (1920-1940),” in *Partidos e organizações dos anos 20 aos 60/História do marxismo no Brasil vol. 5*, eds. Marcelo Ridenti and Daniel Aarão Reis (Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 2002): 17-28.

But this was never the whole story. Some pro-Bolshevik anarchists, many of whom became founding members of the PCB, pledged fealty to the Soviet Union from the start. Octávio Brandão (1896-1980), for example, one of the key figures in the early years of the PCB alongside Pereira, wrote in the anarchist *A Plebe* in March 1921 that “the only program of this paper should be . . . the intense propaganda of Bolshevism, for the glorification of the Russia of the Soviets.”⁵³ Others, however, took issue with the bureaucratic nature of the young Soviet Union. On March 18, 1922, a long editorial in *A Plebe* stated unequivocally that while the undersigned, which included influential anarchists like Edgar Leuenroth, were generally sympathetic to the Russian Revolution, they could not endorse joining the Comintern because, among several stated reasons, it represented the imposition of a statist dictatorship and submission to a “communist-Marxist” faction.⁵⁴ The PCB would become the dominant organization of the Left for decades but it did not represent the breadth of progressive opinion. Despite the simplistic depictions of their adversaries, Brazilian leftists did not uniformly adhere to foreign directives.⁵⁵ Their indignation with the status quo reflected a broader disquiet that was not confined to party politics.

Also in 1922, for example, iconoclastic artists and intellectuals in the city of São Paulo organized a festival that would revolutionize the arts in Brazil. The Modern Art Week lasted from February 11-18 at the Parisian-style Municipal Theater. Organized primarily by painter Emiliano Di Cavalcanti and poet Mário de Andrade, the festival challenged prevailing notions of aesthetic beauty and technical propriety, but the most significant innovation related to subject matter. Modernist painters depicted Africans and their descendants, indigenous peoples, and European immigrants as integral parts of the national fabric. They portrayed the chaotic process of urbanization in vivid colors while ruminating intensely on the essential qualities that made Brazilians Brazilian. The

⁵³ Quoted in Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957): 93.

⁵⁴ “Os anarquistas no momento presente,” March 18, 1922, *A Plebe*, 4.

⁵⁵ Indeed, according to Michel Zaidan, even the link between the PCB and the Comintern has been overstated. See Pereira, *Construindo o PCB (1922-1924)*, 5-8.

modernists did much more than incite “an inoffensive and amusing battle between the old and new literati,” as one scholar flippantly suggested.⁵⁶ They produced an artistic and literary movement that rejected overbearing European influence, drawing on a deliberately essentialized vision of the nation to produce what it saw as a more dynamic and authentic national culture. To capture that sentiment, modernists embraced the metaphor of cannibalism, signifying their desire to consume, digest, and critically reapply foreign stylings rather than copying them outright. The aim of the modernist movement was not “merely to reconcile what is modern with what is national. Much more important was to present the modern as necessarily national,” according to Eduardo Jardim de Moraes.⁵⁷ The notion that Brazilian culture need not slavishly look abroad for inspiration was revolutionary in its time. It would inspire subsequent generations to question the nature of commercial, political, and cultural exchanges between Brazil and the industrialized world, in particular the United States.⁵⁸

The third key event in 1922 foreshadowed the crisis that would befall the First Republic (1889-1930) less than a decade later. In July, a small band of rebellious soldiers tried to seize several military installations in Rio de Janeiro. The uprising was led by members of the lower ranks of the army, referred to collectively as *tenentes*, the Portuguese word for lieutenant. The revolt was quickly put down due to poor communication and cold feet, with only two sites—Fort Copacabana and the Realengo Military School—held briefly by the rebels. But the *tenentes* would remain a thorn in the side of the government, which they saw as hopelessly corrupt and unresponsive to the nation’s problems. As John D. Wirth observed, “along with their superior officers, the *tenentes* distrusted politicians and believed that civilians were administering the Republic badly. They differed, however, from their superiors on the military’s role in national affairs. The *tenentes* would reform and

⁵⁶ José Maria Bello, *A History of Modern Brazil, 1889-1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966): 254.

⁵⁷ Eduardo Jardim de Moraes, “Modernismo Revisitado,” *Estudos Históricos*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1988): 221.

⁵⁸ For a thoughtful examination of Brazilian modernism, see Monica Pimenta Velloso, “O modernismo e a questão nacional,” in *O tempo do liberalismo excluyente: da Proclamação da República à Revolução de 1930* (O Brasil Republicano, vol. 1), eds. Jorge Ferreira and Lucilia de Almeida Neves Delgado (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003): 352-386

regenerate the nation; their seniors would settle for a more active role in a reformed and centralized administration.”⁵⁹ Thomas Skidmore agreed with this assessment, arguing that the heads of the military were dissatisfied with the role of the armed forces in the First Republic, which convinced them to accept the need for reforms by 1930. However, Skidmore writes, “their concern should not be confused with the zeal for change expressed by the *tenentes*. . . the latter were separated from their leaders not only by the gap of years but also by career ambitions and by a different vision of the world.”⁶⁰ The *tenentes*’ political activity emphasized youth, regeneration, but also profound disruption. Indeed, *tenentismo* was both a movement that spanned the 1920s, culminating in the 1930s with the fall of the First Republic, and an ideology that expanded the Brazilian political imagination.⁶¹

On July 5, 1924, two years after their original revolt in Rio de Janeiro, *tenentes* seized the city of São Paulo and held it successfully for about a month. These self-described revolutionaries argued that the republic established by military men in 1889 had been corrupted by civilian elites with no public spirit, corresponding with a broader historical tendency of the armed forces viewing itself as the indispensable bulwark of national interests. They believed that an insulated political class had made a mockery of the republican promise and that only military action could renew the nation’s institutions. Unlike the 1922 uprising, which arguably focused more on internal military matters, the 1924 insurrection in São Paulo—in Rio Grande do Sul and elsewhere as well—gestured toward a

⁵⁹ John D. Wirth, “Tenentismo in the Brazilian Revolution of 1930,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (May, 1964): 164.

⁶⁰ Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 11.

⁶¹ Mário Cléber Martins Lanna Júnior, “Tenentismo e crises políticas na Primeira República,” in *O tempo do liberalismo excluyente: da Proclamação da República à Revolução de 1930* (O Brasil Republicano, vol. 1), eds. Jorge Ferreira and Lucília de Almeida Neves Delgado (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003): 315. For her part, Anita Leocadia Prestes has argued that the *tenentes* were only radical insofar as they were willing to take up arms to defend the liberal political promises of the existing order. In her reading, their insurrectionism was what set the *tenentes* apart, not their ideology. See Anita Leocadia Prestes, *A Coluna Prestes* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1997): 97.

broader national agenda.⁶² After being expelled from São Paulo by federal forces, the tenentes embarked on what would become their most famous endeavor, the Prestes Column.

Named for the charismatic Luiz Carlos Prestes, who became the face of the movement, the Prestes Column sought to topple the government of President Artur Bernardes. More broadly, however, they demanded reforms that resonated with large swathes of the country, including the institution of the secret ballot in elections; improvements in public schools, including mandatory primary education; and an end to public corruption. They also denounced the misery and exploitation of impoverished Brazilians.⁶³ As Wirth notes, the tenentes embraced a pointed nationalism that “ascribed the ills of Brazil to the nation’s latifundio system, monoculture, and economic imperialism.”⁶⁴ Caravanning for almost 15,000 miles through the interior of the country in open defiance of the federal government, the Prestes Column came to symbolize the reformist aspirations of a new generation dissatisfied with the lack of economic and social progress made under the republic. According to one particularly laudatory account of the endeavor, the heterogeneous group of men who made up the column shared “an ingrained sense of respect for their fellow man” and the moral fortitude to act against “the capriciousness, nepotism, and corruption devastating the country.”⁶⁵ In less romantic terms, they believed the nation needed to move past the extreme regionalism of the First Republic and embrace a truly national model of government and economic development.

In the mid-1920s the tenentes’ discourse proved a unifying message, but it would later devolve into factionalisms on the Left and Right; some became communists and others embraced integralism, a Brazilian form of fascism with nationalistic overtones. Significantly, a distinctive anti-

⁶² Nelson Werneck Sodré, *História militar do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1965): 213.

⁶³ Lilia M. Schwarcz and Heloisa M. Starling, *Brasil: Uma biografia* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2015): 348. For more on tenentismo see Vavy Pacheco Borges, *Tenentismo e revolução brasileira* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1992).

⁶⁴ Wirth, “Tenentismo in the Brazilian Revolution of 1930,” 164.

⁶⁵ Domingos Meirelles, *As noites das grandes fogueiras: uma história da Coluna Prestes* (Rio de Janeiro: Brasiliense, 2000): 19.

imperialism was already present in the 1920s. Colonel Frutuoso Mendes, for example, in addition to the standard pronouncements of his peers, denounced the policies of “those who call themselves nationalists, handing us to the Yankees . . . selling us off to them.”⁶⁶ Others added that foreign powers were humiliating the nation and abusing its credit.⁶⁷ For his part, General Isidoro Dias Lopes, instrumental in the 1924 revolt, argued that Brazil was “fantastically rich” yet could not serve the needs of its people due to the “extortion” of a “plutocratic oligarchy” and its allies.⁶⁸ As Nelson Werneck Sodré points out, these were rather vague pronouncements but their thrust was anti-imperialist in nature.⁶⁹ Thus, although these views did not penetrate or further radicalize the tenente movement as a whole, they introduced a vocabulary into Brazilian politics that linked national backwardness to foreign exploitation and posited the need for armed resistance. Of tenentismo’s many ideological contributions to Brazilian political discourse, this would perhaps be the most enduringly appealing for the Left.

In 1927, giving in to exhaustion and internal divisions, the Prestes Column disintegrated along the Bolivian border, its members entering into exile. Prestes himself would join the PCB in the 1930s and become the most prominent Brazilian communist for decades. Indeed, as the opening of this chapter indicates, he later sought to portray the tenente’s activities as inherently aligned with the goals of Brazilian communists. While they did share a transformational impulse, this reading perhaps overstated the leftist character of the tenentes as a unit. Several former tenentes, for example, supported the 1930 revolt that buried the First Republic and placed Getúlio Vargas in the seat of national power while many of their erstwhile allies viewed the move with suspicion. As indicated by the founding of the PCB, the Modern Art Week, and the various tenente uprisings, the spirit of the 1920s was of national affirmation and political tumult. The lesson of the decade seemed

⁶⁶ Cited in Nelson Werneck Sodré, *A Coluna Prestes* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1985): 58.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 58-59

⁶⁹ Ibid., 59.

to be that Brazil needed to change in order to become the great power it had the potential to be and that such change was attainable.

In the final days of 1928 and early 1929, the PCB met for its III Congress. Analyzing the tenente revolts of 1922 and 1924-1926, the party concluded that “a third revolt” was likely. Interestingly, the party situated the turmoil it predicted within the context of imperialist rivalries. Before World War I, it observed, British interests had reigned in Brazil, with deep ties to the “agrarian and conservative bourgeoisie.” As the 1930s dawned, however, “youthful Yankee imperialism” was looking to expand its influence, thus seeking support among the “ostensibly liberal,” younger, more ambitious and daring industrial bourgeoisie.⁷⁰ As the PCB more precisely defined its understanding of imperialism, deciding upon the creation of an Antiimperialist League to assist in drawing attention to the damage of foreign economic exploitation, it also proved prescient in foreseeing events to come.

The 1930s

The 1930s were dominated by Getúlio Vargas, who came to power in a military insurrection launched almost immediately after he lost the presidential election. In the run-up to the presidential campaign, President Washington Luís (1926-1930) nominated a fellow *paulista* (a native of São Paulo state) to succeed him. This upset the traditional arrangement between elites from São Paulo and Minas Gerais that called for alternating the presidency between them. According to this longstanding gentleman’s agreement, the governor of Minas Gerais should have become the official candidate, virtually assured to win by a corrupt electoral process controlled by state machines. Instead, seeking to guarantee the interests of São Paulo coffee planters after the 1929 stock market crash, Washington Luís anointed Governor Júlio Prestes as his heir. The states of Minas Gerais, Rio

⁷⁰ Cited in Eliezer Pacheco, *A formação da esquerda no Brasil* (Ijuí: Editora Unijui, 2008): 102-103.

Grande do Sul (Vargas' home state), and Paraíba immediately declared their opposition to Prestes. By August 1929, a formal opposition coalition called the Liberal Alliance was formed, composed of leaders from the three states opposed to Prestes and, significantly, several tenentes. Their candidate was Rio Grande do Sul governor Getúlio Vargas, a skillful politician adept at navigating competing ideological currents.

Tenentes' support for the Liberal Alliance was not unanimous. As Agildo Barata bitterly recalled, many tenentes were amenable to appeals from the traditional (and thus suspect) politicians of the Liberal Alliance because they desperately wanted to achieve something tangible. Furthermore, he added, "their repeated assertions that 'it was impossible for things to get any worse' and the government's stubbornness in not granting amnesty to the revolutionaries of both July 5's [1922 and 1924] . . . ended up producing the spurious joint action of two political forces with such distinct origins." Despite the fragility of their bond, Barata concluded, the alliance between the formal political opposition and the tenentes meant that "Washington Luís' days were numbered."⁷¹

Communists, still a minor player in national politics, denounced the Liberal Alliance's timidity. The Liberal Alliance, according to a column in *A Classe Operária*, "fears the results of a revolution. It wants a 'revolution' without the participation of the masses or the people." The growing influence of the PCB, the argument continued, had convinced the Liberal Alliance that "any armed insurrection in which the people participate will escape from the hands of liberals—even the 'revolutionary' liberals of the Prestes Column—and pass into the hands of the proletariat and, consequently, the Communist Party." The piece concluded that the Liberal Alliance failed to recognize the stakes of the moment, specifically the crisis of capitalism laid bare by the global depression: "the Brazilian revolution to be a revolution must attack the roots of large rural estates

⁷¹ Agildo Barata, *Vida de um revolucionário* (Rio de Janeiro: Melso, 1962): 86.

and imperialism.” Anything else would simply serve the interests of Washington.⁷² In July 1930, the PCB called the Liberal Alliance “the instrument Yankee imperialism uses to combat British imperialism in the struggle to dominate Brazil.”⁷³ In short, while Brazilian communists dismissed the election as a bourgeois farce, some progressives interested in modernizing the state saw the Liberal Alliance as a means to disrupt the traditional political order. This alone was enough to justify their support.

As expected, Júlio Prestes won the March 1 election with 58 percent of the vote. Supporters of the Liberal Alliance expressed doubts regarding the legitimacy of the results but Vargas himself did not contest the final tally. It had been a heated campaign. By February 15, 1930, when Vargas returned to his hometown of São Borja, Rio Grande do Sul to await electoral returns with his family, fifteen people had already been killed and forty-eight seriously injured in skirmishes between both sides across the country.⁷⁴ In the wake of his defeat, Vargas worried that challenging the outcome might incite a civil war. “If there is anyone who still wishes to fight,” he stated in an attempt to quash talk of an insurrection, “let him go fight in Rio de Janeiro, because here in Rio Grande do Sul the Military Brigade, ever loyal, will block any attempt to sow disorder.”⁷⁵

Things changed on July 26 when Vargas’ former running mate, Paraíba governor João Pessoa Cavalcanti de Albuquerque, was assassinated. Although the motive pertained more to parochial matters than national politics, the killing spurred a general backlash against the federal government. As a column in a major Rio de Janeiro newspaper put it, João Pessoa’s slaying revealed “one more facet of the policy of cruelties, resentments and vengeance that has alarmed [and] oppressed the nation, prey to the voracity of a group of men who command without nobility of spirit.” The crime resulted from “a politics without soul, without ideas and without principles, borne of the

⁷² “O que há de novo na política,” *A Classe Operária*, April 17, 1930, 1.

⁷³ “Aos operários e camponeses, a todos os explorados e oprimidos,” *A Classe Operária*, July 3, 1930, 1.

⁷⁴ Lira Neto, *Getúlio: Dos anos de formação à conquista do poder (1882-1930)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2012): 407.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 435-436.

irresponsibility of every president of the Republic.”⁷⁶ The press linked João Pessoa’s death to the moral bankruptcy of the republic.

With the credibility of the federal government suddenly in tatters, the governors of states aligned with the Liberal Alliance plotted an attack on the national capital. Influential figures in the Liberal Alliance like Oswaldo Aranha, João Neves da Fontoura, and José Antônio Flores da Cunha—all natives of Vargas’ home state of Rio Grande do Sul—decided to embrace an armed revolt with or without their standard-bearer.⁷⁷ As troops descended upon Rio de Janeiro from the north, south, and west, pressure mounted on Washington Luís to step aside. Finally, on November 3, Vargas entered Rio de Janeiro on horseback, playing up his image as the virile *gaúcho* outsider, to become the Chief of the Provisional Government.⁷⁸ The *New York Times* emphasized the rupture, noting that Brazil had seemed “well advanced toward political maturity and stability and a denial that the Latin-American norm in government is insurrection. That reputation is now shattered and will take time to rebuild.”⁷⁹ Foreign observers grasped the importance of this event but not necessarily the significance. The Revolution of 1930, as the coup came to be called, marked the death of the First Republic and the birth of the first Vargas reign, a period that would span fifteen years and remake almost every institution of Brazilian government.

Vargas, who expressed ambivalence in his diary about the extensive powers at his disposal, moved to immediately assert the authority of the new federal government.⁸⁰ He dissolved Congress, claimed the right to rule by decree, and replaced state governors with hand-picked *interventores*, or interventors, loyal to him and the romantic ideal of the Revolution, linked in the minds of many to

⁷⁶ “O assassinio do presidente da Parahyba,” *Correio da Manhã*, July 27, 1930, 4.

⁷⁷ Neto, *Getúlio: Dos anos de formação à conquista do poder (1882-1930)*, 446.

⁷⁸ According to his memoirs, Vargas actually arrived in the city on the evening of October 31 aboard the official presidential train, but decided not to assume his new role for a few more days. Getúlio Vargas, *Getúlio Vargas: Diário*, ed. Leda Soares (São Paulo: Siciliano; Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1995): 21.

⁷⁹ “Brazil Joins In,” *New York Times*, October 8, 1930, 24.

⁸⁰ Vargas, *Getúlio Vargas: Diário*, 21.

the idealistic young tenentes. The provisional government was chipping away at the federalism of the previous regime at the same time as Vargas dragged his feet on the implementation of a new constitution, something the liberals who had supported the 1930 uprising insisted upon. Soon, in 1932, the situation came to a head as the state of São Paulo rose up against Vargas in what became known as the Constitutionalist Revolt.

Historians have long debated the significance and meaning of São Paulo's revolt, which, according to Barbara Weinstein, "had neither radical nor democratic goals," as some partisans suggested.⁸¹ Suffice it to say that the upstarts of 1932 were inspired by a sense of regional superiority that linked São Paulo to morality and efficiency, an outlook with heavy racial overtones.⁸² Federal forces put down the insurgents after only three months, but the paulistas did appear to secure a victory: in 1933, Vargas convoked a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The new charter, ratified in July 1934, was a progressive document that enshrined the secret ballot and woman's suffrage while calling for banks and natural resources to be nationalized (a promise deferred). It also granted Vargas a four-year term.

National integration remained a key early challenge for Vargas, in part because political parties were still essentially regional entities. The Constitutionalist Revolt, for example, had been driven in large measure by the union of São Paulo's two main political forces, the Republican Party of São Paulo (Partido Republicano Paulista, or PRP) and the Democratic Party (Partido Democrático, or PD), which had supported the Revolution of 1930.⁸³ Only communists and the far-right integralists counted on national networks of support, as E. Bradford Burns points out.⁸⁴ In November 1932, A

⁸¹ Barbara Weinstein, "Postcolonial Brazil," in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American History*, ed. José Moya (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 230.

⁸² See Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

⁸³ For a comprehensive analysis of São Paulo politics in this period, see James P. Woodard, *A Place in Politics: São Paulo, Brazil, from Seigneurial Republicanism to Regionalist Revolt* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁸⁴ E. Bradford Burns, *Nationalism in Brazil: A Historical Survey* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968): 75.

Classe Operária, the communist newspaper, excoriated the reformism of numerous “social-nationalist” parties springing up around the country, inspired by tenentismo and the Revolution of 1930. Entities like the Liberal Republican Party in Rio Grande do Sul, the Social-Democratic Party in Pernambuco, and the “tenentista” Socialist Party all “speak of nationalism” but “capitulate to the imperialists, vacillate and carry out the rapacious wishes of foreign capitalists.”⁸⁵ Even Trotskyist leaders like Josias Leão and Plínio Mello, dismissed by members of the PCB as merely the left wing of the Liberal Alliance, were attacked as partisan advocates of a European-style “national-fascist” corporatism.⁸⁶ The proliferation of parties at the state level was a concern for both Vargas and the PCB, for distinct reasons. While Vargas allowed such entities to exist in order to guarantee the support from local elites that he needed to remain in power, he also saw them as kindling for future resistance. Communists viewed these parties as distractions that played into the hands of the pseudo-revolutionary coalition of 1930.

Brazilian communists also worried about the emerging nationalist consensus of the Vargas government. They argued that Vargas’ centralization of power in the federal government served a broader agenda of statist entrenchment that fortified existing elites and facilitated imperialist exploitation. The PCB denounced “class collaborationism” at every turn, discouraging followers from working with non-communist actors, however progressive they seemed. This was a far cry from the broad front strategy that would define the party’s activities only a few years later.

The years 1934 and 1935 marked an important turning point for the PCB and the Brazilian Left more broadly for at least two reasons. Luiz Carlos Prestes was formally accepted into the PCB, at the insistence of the Comintern. Prestes, the former tenente leader, was viewed suspiciously by most PCB members who considered him an interloper with dubious ideological commitments. The

⁸⁵ “A origem da demagogia social-nacionalista e socialisteira do outubrismo-tenentista,” *A Classe Operária*, November 1932, 4.

⁸⁶ Carone, ed., *O PCB (1922-1943)*, 123.

PCB's leadership presented Prestes' affiliation as a way to counter attempts by reactionary forces to claim the image of the popular mass leader. Now, they argued, the anti-imperialist cause had a proven popular figure in its corner.⁸⁷ Prestes had been drifting toward communism for a few years by that point. In May 1930, for example, he issued a manifesto breaking with his tenente peers who backed Vargas and the Liberal Alliance, calling for an agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution—the kind proposed by the PCB. This helped the main ideas of Brazilian communists gain a larger audience, particularly among an urban middle-class generally sympathetic to Prestes. For perhaps the first time, topics like agrarian reform, imperialism, and the political importance of labor were widely discussed.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the PCB rejected Prestes, and he was denounced and abandoned by his former brothers-in-arms, leaving him adrift in exile. Eventually, he accepted an invitation to live in the Soviet Union where he would be guaranteed work as an engineer and where he would be groomed to become a leader of the PCB.

The other reason this proved a seminal moment was that the PCB embraced a broad front strategy, represented by the National Liberating Alliance, the ANL. As the far Right had grown across central and eastern Europe in the early 1930s, Stalin, through the Comintern, mandated that communist parties should focus their rhetorical attacks on competing forces within the progressive camp. "No trace of solidarity was to remain," according to historian Robert Service, as "socialist, social-democratic and labour parties were to be denounced as promoters of 'social-fascism.'"⁸⁹ The implications of this policy were catastrophic. Instead of building a united front against Nazism in Germany, for example, Stalin stoked sectarian intrigue, weakening organized resistance to the

⁸⁷ "A adesão de Luiz Carlos Prestes ao PCB," *Sentinela Vermelha*, October 1934. In Marly Vianna, ed., *Pão, terra e liberdade: memória do movimento comunista de 1935* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional; São Carlos: Universidade Federal de São Carlos, 1995): 25-27.

⁸⁸ Anita Leocadia Prestes, *Luiz Carlos Prestes e a Aliança Nacional Libertadora: os caminhos da luta antifascista no Brasil (1934/1935)* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2008): 53.

⁸⁹ Robert Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007): 171.

escalating fascist threat.⁹⁰ Historians of the Soviet Union and communism in the twentieth century widely view Stalin's position vis-à-vis party politics in the years before World War II as an unmitigated strategic blunder.⁹¹ Finally, in September 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations, a clear strategic shift in Stalin's engagement with the rest of the world. "The implications for Comintern were profound," Service observes. "Instead of haranguing socialists and social-democrats as traitors to the labor movement," he notes, "communists were to seek them as allies. Liberals too were to be approached."⁹² During its final congress in 1935, the Comintern embraced a popular front strategy that would align communists with other enemies of fascism. The ANL in Brazil, imagined as a union of progressive forces to "defend the Liberty and national and social Emancipation of Brazil," as its formal statute put it, took shape along those lines. Any group or individual who accepted that mission could join.⁹³ Although it only lasted legally from March to July 1935, the ANL captured the imagination of former tenentes disappointed by the course of the 1930 Revolution as well as a new generation of militants dissatisfied with the status quo. Luiz Carlos Prestes was central to the organization's success.

In 1935, Prestes returned to Brazil from the Soviet Union with the explicit purpose of leading the ANL. As Francisco Carlos Pereira Cascardo points out, Prestes had hardly been involved in the creation of the ANL, but it served the purposes of both the PCB and the political police to depict him as the main leader. Communists who supported the ANL benefited from its association with a popular leader like Prestes while government agents emphasized the personal ideological

⁹⁰ Ibid., 171-172.

⁹¹ Orlando Figes has argued that "it is debatable whether a united front of German Communists and socialists could have prevented Hitler from coming to power. But there is no question that the Communists aided him to do so by their actions." See Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991: A History* (New York: Metropolitan Books): 208-209. See also Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (New York: Ecco; reprint edition, 2011): 86-87.

⁹² Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism*, 173.

⁹³ Cited in Francisco Carlos Pereira Cascardo, "A Aliança Nacional Libertadora: novas abordagens," in *A formação das tradições (1889-1945)/As esquerdas no Brasil vol. 1*, eds. Jorge Ferreira and Daniel Aarão Reis (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007): 456.

transformation of Prestes from a well-regarded military officer to communist subversive in order to discredit the entire organization.⁹⁴ For better or for worse, Prestes' affiliation with the ANL and the ANL's close ties to the PCB would do much to link communism with the tenente uprisings of the 1920s in the popular imagination. Nationalism and reformism were common denominators for both the ANL and the PCB.

Prestes remained a highly-respected figure upon his return to Brazil even though his intentions were well-known. For example, *Diário da Noite*, a conservative newspaper, lamented the fact that the "unmatched capabilities" of "the brave revolutionary" now served an unworthy cause.⁹⁵ This prestige was central to the ANL's ability to garner support from influential figures within the government and from the mythic tenente revolts of years past, a legacy Prestes himself was invested in preserving. General Miguel Costa, for example, a former tenente, was disappointed by the results of the 1930 Revolution. With tears in his eyes, he declared that if Prestes led the ANL he would join as well, embracing an anti-imperialist orientation.⁹⁶ Several historians contend that Prestes' military experience combined with his ability to attract others from the armed forces to the PCB greatly impacted the nature of the party in subsequent years, producing a kind of synthesis of Stalinism and tenentismo.⁹⁷

While the ANL attracted respect and admiration from a broad swath of the population, the PCB faced internal doubts regarding its course of action. A January editorial in *A Classe Operária* explained unequivocally why the PCB supported the ANL. The focus was on nationalism, depicting Vargas' "passive delivery" of Brazil to "foreign oppressors" as a matter of urgent concern. The PCB pleaded on behalf of Brazilian workers and the masses for the ANL to organize resistance to

⁹⁴ Ibid., 455-456.

⁹⁵ Joseph Kulati, "Como vivem e como agem os comunistas no Rio de Janeiro," *Diário da Noite*, January 30, 1935, 2.

⁹⁶ Cited in Prestes, *Luiz Carlos Prestes e a Aliança Nacional Libertadora*, 46.

⁹⁷ For an overview of this scholarship, see Anita Leocadia Prestes, *Os comunistas brasileiros (1945-1956/58): Luiz Carlos Prestes e a política do PCB* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2010): 16-19.

imperialist exploitation.⁹⁸ In May, however, Lauro Reginaldo Rocha (writing under the pseudonym Bangu) wrote a column skeptical of the ANL. Rocha, a future head of the PCB, began by asserting that the ANL was undoubtedly the most significant step yet taken toward mobilizing the Brazilian masses against imperialism and feudalism. It had become clear, he argued, that imperialist domination negatively affected everyone, not just the working masses. This was reflected in the rhetoric of parties on the Left, as he called them (“socialists, tenentes, etc.”), and the Right. The desire for national assertion was so intense, Rocha posited, that Brazilian fascists could exploit such anxieties by ignoring the actual imperialists in their midst—“Yankee, British, French, Italian, German, Japanese”—to focus instead on a hazy anti-Semitism rooted in primordial animosities.

Rocha’s main concern was that the masses could be diverted from the task of anti-imperialist action by the unscrupulous appeals of competing ideological forces: “The great mass mobilizations for coups and armed movements have been made by exploiting the nationalism of the people with promises of ‘national liberation and salvation’ and of combating the latifúndio system, like the Liberal Alliance which promised (in its speeches) land to peasants.” The bourgeois leadership of the ANL, he continued, in a direct reference to Prestes and his former tenente comrades, did not understand the “zig-zag revolutionary formation of the proletariat” who could at times be swayed by the appeals of the Right. Because of that disconnect, Rocha worried that the ANL seemed to be drifting toward national-reformism, which he defined as the replacement of radical action outside the law with the pursuit of concessions within the existing system. Rocha’s central point was that the forces of imperialism would not relinquish Brazilian resources without direct confrontation—through violence, if necessary.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ “Por que apoiamos a Aliança Nacional Libertadora,” *A Classe Operária*, January 24, 1935.

⁹⁹ Bangu, “Os perigos do nacional-reformismo da A. Nacional Libertadora,” *A Classe Operária*, May 1, 1935, 6, 11.

The ANL successfully disseminated anti-imperialist ideas among its broad base of support. In May, for example, it was a driving force behind the Committee for the United Front Against Imperialism and Integralism, an entity dedicated both to stoking awareness of foreign economic exploitation and to confronting Brazil's version of fascism. One entity in that united front was the Center for the Defense of Popular Culture, formed in April, which sought to bring together the "worker who studies and the intellectual who works."¹⁰⁰ That organization stands out for the future importance of one of its founders: Carlos Lacerda, at the time a young communist journalist, would go on to become a leading voice of the Brazilian Right. In the 1950s he would contest the association of nationalism with the Left, as discussed in the following chapter.

The Brazilian Left's antifascist patriotism during this period, as Eric Hobsbawm noted of the British case, "could legitimately be seen as the triumph of a kind of internationalism."¹⁰¹ Communists battled Integralists in Brazil with an eye toward like-minded fascists in Europe. As both groups clashed in the streets, each with distinctive nationalist visions, Vargas hastened to sign a National Security Law that outlawed such subversive acts as civil servant strikes, provoking dissension within the military, inciting hatred among classes, and disrupting the social order. The act, which communists immediately dubbed the "Monster Law" for its repressive character, took effect on April 4, 1935. Turmoil on the Left and Right allowed Vargas to strengthen his hand, positioning himself as the guarantor of national harmony against the competing nationalist narratives of the communists and integralists.

Prestes' July 5, 1935 manifesto that opened this chapter called on the masses to quash fascism and rise against Vargas, echoing numerous similar incitements in the pages of the communist

¹⁰⁰ "Inaugurou-se, ante-hontem, no Rio, o Centro de Defesa de Cultura Popular," *Correio Paulistano*, April 30, 1935, 3.

¹⁰¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 146.

press.¹⁰² Marking the date of the tenente revolts of 1922 and 1924, the ANL leader encouraged the nation to reject the regionalism inherited from colonial times that benefitted local elites and facilitated imperialist exploitation. The masses had nothing to lose, he argued, and the immense natural wealth of Brazil to gain, reiterating a common theme of leftist nationalism, which held that Brazil had the potential to be a great power but was prevented from making use of its resources by foreign intervention. Also significant was Prestes' explicit insertion of the tenente revolts within a tradition of popular uprisings. This cooptation of tenentismo by a PCB leader who would continue to grow in stature linked the upstarts of the 1920s to communism in an effective but somewhat disingenuous way. There had indeed been a progressive component of the tenente movement, which explains why some members came to embrace the explicitly reformist ANL, but it was far from hegemonic. The tenente legacy was more complicated than Prestes suggested. In the end, the ANL was not explicitly a vehicle for tenentismo, but it did catalyze the last revolt of the tenente movement.¹⁰³

Prestes' call to arms was the justification Vargas needed to shutter the ANL. The organization could no longer hold public rallies or build on the support that had been mounting in its short existence. It was forced underground to join the PCB, illegal since the year of its creation in 1922. Then, on November 23, after months of planning, revolts carried out in the name of the ANL erupted in the cities of Natal, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro. The putsch, known ever after as the *Intentona* (loosely translated as a grand attempt), was easily put down by government forces who had anticipated a communist insurrection. The failed uprising, according to Stanley E. Hilton, "vindicated the fears and warnings of liberals and conservatives, and in so doing shouldered much

¹⁰² See, for example, B.B.B., "Todas as nossas forças pela instauração de um governo popular-nacional-revolucionário no Brasil," *A Classe Operária*, June 20, 1935, 4 and Miranda, "Como os trabalhadores do Brasil resolverão a crise: lutando e pegando em armas contra os esfomeadores do Brasil," *A Classe Operária*, March 11, 1.

¹⁰³ José Augusto Drummond, *O movimento tenentista: intervenção militar e conflito hierárquico (1922-1935)* (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1986): 263.

of the responsibility for the subsequent closing of the political system and for making anticommunism a permanently active and credible force in Brazilian politics.”¹⁰⁴ By directly attacking the government, the ANL had stepped into Vargas’ trap. He now had an inexhaustible pretext to abridge democratic rights.

For the next two years, Vargas and a pliant press ensured that the threat of communist subversion loomed over Brazilian political discourse. This served as a convenient foil Vargas constantly invoked to prolong a legal state of emergency first established in the aftermath of the Intentona. Thousands of former ANL members and communists were swept up in raids carried out by the political police, even though the uprisings had had little direct coordination from the PCB leadership. Prestes himself was thrown in jail in March 1936. As Vargas made use of his expanded powers to stifle dissent, observers began to wonder whether elections would be held in January 1938 as mandated by the 1934 constitution. Armando Salles de Oliveira, the opposition candidate from São Paulo, and José Americo de Almeida, the government’s preferred successor, had already begun positioning themselves for the contest. Their efforts were obviated by the emergence of another purported communist plot in September 1937. Forged by the integralist army colonel Olympio Mourão Filho, the so-called Cohen Plan—vaguely exotic and deliberately Jewish-sounding—served as the pretext for Vargas to finally shutter congress, replace the 1934 constitution with a more authoritarian one, and install a dictatorship that would come to be known as the Estado Novo.

The Estado Novo (1937-1945) figures centrally in the historiography on Brazil.¹⁰⁵ It was a regime that transformed the political landscape, reshaping labor rights, cultural production, and industrialization in profound and enduring ways. Vargas used the extraordinary powers at his disposal to centralize the Brazilian state and make it into a more interventionist and aggressively

¹⁰⁴ Hilton, *Brazil and the Soviet Challenge*, 53.

¹⁰⁵ For a brief overview of the field and how it has developed, see Weinstein, “Postcolonial Brazil,” 233-239.

nationalist entity. The interests of individual states were subsumed to the broader national good. This new orientation was symbolically displayed during a quasi-fascistic public ceremony on November 27, 1937 that involved the cremation of the various state flags. During his speech at that event, known as the *Queima das bandeiras*, or Burning of the Flags, Minister of Justice Francisco Campos (1891-1968) pointed out the historical significance of the date. As Brazilians commemorated National Flag Day, an observance of patriotism and civic virtue, they were also called upon to remember the anniversary of the 1935 Intentona and the noble soldiers purportedly murdered in their sleep by communist rebels. Campos emphasized the sedition of the act, characterizing it as everything the national banner stood against. The flag represented harmony, he asserted. Any political group that would sow discord—he did not explicitly mention the PCB but he did not need to—was thus anti-nationalist by definition.¹⁰⁶

One of the most debated aspects of the Estado Novo is the extent to which it can be considered a fascist regime. Fascism, “the major political innovation of the twentieth century,” according to Robert O. Paxton, is in many ways a phenomenon particular to Europe between the 1910s through the end of World War II in 1945.¹⁰⁷ During that period, authoritarian governments used racialized and traditionalist appeals to concentrate power and, in the case of Nazi Germany, carry out atrocities against minority groups blamed for the ills of the nation. There is only some overlap between the Estado Novo and the fascist dictatorships of continental Europe, perhaps most notably its corporatist framework which replaced the normal mechanisms of liberal democracy with representation by class or professional category. Another similarity is the reliance on an aggressive nationalist discourse intertwined with the cult of personality. But similarities should not be overdrawn. As Ângela de Castro Gomes points out, the first Vargas era (1930-1945), and the Estado Novo in particular, arose

¹⁰⁶ “As grandes demonstrações cívicas de hontem nesta capital,” *Correio da Manhã*, November 28, 1937, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage, 2004): 3.

from a specifically Brazilian state of affairs, defined by the perceived backwardness and contrived nature of the First Republic.¹⁰⁸ While not eminently fascist, the Estado Novo was undoubtedly authoritarian. Vargas portrayed his regime—and, by extension, himself—as the agent of Brazil’s harmonious modernization, the strong state required for the nation to meet its potential.

The 1940s

However much Vargas may have flirted with the trappings and policy innovations of European fascism, he sided with the Allies in World War II, contributing troops to the war effort and allowing U.S. military bases in the northeast.¹⁰⁹ The Brazilian Expeditionary Force (Força Expedicionária Brasileira, or FEB), as the Brazilian contingent was called, was Latin America’s only direct involvement in World War II, a fact that filled many Brazilians with pride and a sense of investment in the fight against fascism. Even the PCB shifted from unequivocally denouncing the Estado Novo to embracing a strategy of national unity to combat fascism in Europe. Communists supported the war effort while pushing for a return to democracy. Furthermore, during World War II, the United States increased its cultural, economic, and political influence over Brazil in enduring ways.¹¹⁰ This relationship would endure after the war, resulting in increased U.S. investment in Brazil from both public and private sources.

By 1945, with the war coming to an end, Vargas’ role as dictator became more difficult to sustain. The world was a much different place than 1930 when the Liberal Alliance had capitalized on a wave of discontent with the First Republic and its handling of the global depression. Brazilian industry had taken a major leap forward with the creation of the Volta Redonda steel plant (1943),

¹⁰⁸ Ângela de Castro Gomes, “Autoritarismo e corporativismo no Brasil: o legado de Vargas,” in *A Era Vargas: desenvolvimentismo, economia e sociedade*, eds. Pedro Paulo Zabluth Bastos and Pedro Cezar Dutra Fonseca (São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2012): 78.

¹⁰⁹ German aggression against Brazilian civilian ships was also an important factor in solidifying Vargas’ stand against the Axis.

¹¹⁰ See Antonio Pedro Tota, *The Seduction of Brazil: The Americanization of Brazil during World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

while urbanization attracted ever greater numbers of migrants to the cities. Liberal democracy was ascendant in Latin America and elsewhere. Vargas, an astute politician who remained nimble after more than a decade in power, sensed the shift. He began to shed the quasi-fascistic overtones of his early Estado Novo rhetoric, focused on harmony and order, to embrace a more explicit economic nationalism, a move John D. French refers to as Vargas' "populist gamble."¹¹¹

Vargas stopped short of calling for Brazil to pursue economic development entirely on its own, but, as French notes, he "saw Brazil's new future being constructed primarily by its own people as opposed to foreign investors [and] his speeches warned constantly against allowing foreigners to take control of key industries and the strategic minerals necessary for military defense."¹¹² Vargas would champion the notion of Brazilian control of important resources, like steel and later oil. The economic nationalism that defined the final years of the Estado Novo and Vargas' elected presidency (1951-1954) differed from previous expressions of Brazilian nationalism by associating the national good with industrial development as opposed to mere exaltations of the nation's natural resources.¹¹³ This discursive move created the basis for the future collaboration between Vargas' political heirs and the PCB.

As Vargas faced mounting pressure to open the political system, including from the military, he issued a law in February calling for the popular election of a new president. It remained unclear whether he would foist himself upon the population once more, but he worked assiduously to establish two of the three major parties that would dominate Brazilian politics for the next two decades. In May 1945, as multiparty politics officially returned, the Brazilian Labor Party (*Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro*, or PTB) emerged from within the Ministry of Labor, a clear sign of its varguista

¹¹¹ John D. French, "The Populist Gamble of Getúlio Vargas in 1945: Political and Ideological Transitions in Brazil," in *Latin America in the 1940s: War and Postwar Transitions*, ed. David Rock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994): 141-165.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 143.

¹¹³ Pedro Paulo Zahluth Bastos, "A construção do nacionalismo econômico de Vargas," in *A Era Vargas*, 255.

imprimatur. Aimed at the growing urban electorate, the PTB represented Vargas' bet on a laborite discourse to appeal to industrial workers and forestall communist appeals, the latter never far from his mind. While Vargas was clearly attempting to coopt workers and many of the arguments of the PCB, the PTB in fact offered real opportunities for the industrial proletariat to have an impact on national politics.¹¹⁴ Vargas also encouraged the creation of the Social Democratic Party (*Partido Social Democrático*, or PSD), a political home for the rural bosses and state oligarchies that had supported Vargas during the Estado Novo. In addition to the PTB and PSD, an opposition party formed beyond Vargas' control, composed of various forces that had opposed him during his time in office. The National Democratic Union (*União Democrática Nacional*, or UDN) embraced an economically liberal and moralizing discourse that accused Vargas of gross corruption and inveterate authoritarianism. The party would be a thorn in the side of Vargas and the Brazilian Left for the next two decades. Vargas' strategy regarding parties was indicative of his approach to politics more broadly: with one foot in the PTB, he could appeal to labor unions and harness their capacity to mobilize large numbers in the streets; with another foot in the PSD, he could negotiate with the entrenched leaders who controlled resources and political appointments in predominantly agrarian states. His bases were covered.

From its creation in 1945 to Vargas' suicide in August 1954, the PTB would gradually drift from a personalistic attachment to the former dictator toward a more ideologically-driven reformism, a process contested by the party's leadership and rank-and-file.¹¹⁵ Lucilia de Almeida Neves Delgado argues that despite the stated intention of some of the party's founders to draw inspiration from the British Labor Party, since Labor's lack of a domineering charismatic leader was particularly appealing to these *petebistas* (members of the PTB), the PTB's platform and identity would ultimately be

¹¹⁴ Lucilia de Almeida Neves Delgado, *PTB: do Getulismo ao Reformismo, 1945-1964* (São Paulo: Marco Zero, 1989): 35.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

defined by the legacy of Vargas. This included preserving important yet problematic labor legislation from the first Vargas era (1930-1945) that created unions tied to the Ministry of Labor; combating poverty; resisting imperialism, especially from the United States; and perpetuating the cult of personality around Vargas as a means of enhancing the party's appeal to poor and working-class voters. Although never willing to fully exchange electoral viability for ideological purity, the PTB in the 1950s would "increasingly commit itself to projects of social reform and economic nationalism." In other words, the PTB evolved from a party focused on urban workers to one fully engaged, as a former PTB politician put it, in "the great national causes."¹¹⁶

Also in 1945, a campaign involving communists and petebistas demanded that Vargas remain in power beyond the Estado Novo. The *Queremista* movement (from their slogan, "Queremos Getúlio!" or "We want Getúlio!") mobilized in the streets for a new constitution with Vargas staying on as chief executive. Even the PCB, for years persecuted and held up by Vargas as the enemy within, rallied to the dictator's defense, claiming that his opponents represented the most reactionary elements of Brazilian society. According to Carlos Marighella, writing in *A Classe Operária*, the PCB had learned to appreciate "order and tranquility, the peaceful fight," in its pursuit of legal status, which it obtained in October 1945.¹¹⁷ During the war, Amarillo Vasconcelos argued, communists had served loyally in the "patriotic battle against Nazi-fascism."¹¹⁸ In the post-war moment, the PCB was committed to "deepening the process of the democratic-bourgeois revolution in our land, Marighella concluded, a movement Vargas now seemed poised to lead.¹¹⁹ The notion that Vargas might offer amnesty for Luiz Carlos Prestes, who had been in prison since 1936, and restore the PCB's legal charter also undoubtedly factored into the party's maneuvering.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 84.

¹¹⁷ Carlos Marighella, "O 1º de maio e a luta pela paz," *A Classe Operária*, May 1, 1946, 2.

¹¹⁸ Amarillo Vasconcelos, "1º de maio de luta pela paz e contra o imperialismo," *A Classe Operária*, May 1, 1946, 3.

¹¹⁹ Marighella, "O 1º de maio e a luta pela paz," *A Classe Operária*, May 1, 1946, 2.

Even as the PCB continued to denounce the demagogic and authoritarian Estado Novo regime in the pages of the communist press, its willingness to engage in the electoral process and build coalitions reflected a strategic shift by the Comintern for how communism would take hold around the world. The dictator's overt nationalism suddenly seemed of a piece with the PCB. In 1946, for example, the PCB argued that American forces should immediately abandon their military bases on Brazilian soil. The bases constituted a "threat to our sovereignty," language Vargas himself was employing with greater assertiveness.¹²⁰ Assessing the state of the Brazilian economy at the end of World War II, the communist newspaper observed that the Brazilian economy, as it always had, primarily served the interests of foreign markets rather than its own people.¹²¹ Vargas had picked up on this theme as well. The broad front strategy demanded an alliance between communists and their erstwhile tormentor.

When U.S. ambassador Adolph Berle pleaded publicly that officials—clearly referring to Vargas—adhere to the electoral schedule and results, Vargas tried to denounce foreign intervention in Brazilian politics, stoking nationalist sentiment against the United States. His followers responded. In October, a Queremista rally was barred by the police chief of the Federal District, prompting Vargas to seek to replace the official with his own brother, Benjamin Vargas. Mere days later, Minister of War Pedro Aurélio de Góis Monteiro presented Getúlio Vargas with an ultimatum: resign or be forcefully deposed. The armed forces, many of whom had ties to the liberal constitutionalists in the UDN, worried that Vargas might find a way to extend his time in office. With no room to maneuver, Vargas stepped down and retreated to his ranch located on the southern border.

¹²⁰ "Ameaça à nossa soberania," *A Classe Operária*, March 9, 1946, 3.

¹²¹ "A economia nacional na conjuntura do após-guerra," *A Classe Operária*, March 9, 1946, 7.

The election to determine Vargas' successor came down to two military men, despite a surprisingly strong showing from Yedo Fiúza of the PCB. General Eurico Gaspar Dutra of the PSD had served as Vargas' war minister from 1936 to 1945 and counted on Vargas' tacit endorsement as well as support from entrenched state oligarchies. His opponent was air force brigadier Eduardo Gomes of the UDN. Gomes' political identity was defined, in many ways, by opposition to tenentismo and Vargas: he had resisted and survived the 1922 tenente revolt at Fort Copacabana, fought to put down the 1935 Intentona, and pushed back against the imposition of the Estado Novo in 1937. In a sign of Vargas' enduring appeal, Dutra prevailed with 55 percent of the vote to Gomes' 35 percent. The PCB, in its first election as a legal party, elected an impressive number of representatives to the constituent assembly, including Luiz Carlos Prestes (released from prison and amnestied under Vargas); Claudino Silva, the only black representative; the acclaimed author Jorge Amado; and future guerrilla leader Carlos Marighella, who argued that the party need to combine "the parliamentary struggle with the extra-parliamentary struggle."¹²² In other words, communists needed to leverage the clear standing they enjoyed among the ranks of urban voters outside the halls of power to pressure for structural change from within the government.

By September 1946, a new constitution had been ratified along liberal-constitutional lines that nevertheless allowed corporatist elements of the Estado Novo to endure. The PCB flourished in the democratic opening. It grew in influence and numbers, reaching between 180,000 and 200,000 members in 1946. Yet, Senator Luiz Carlos Prestes, now secretary-general of the PCB, pointed out that party remained in a delicate position. In a May 1946 speech marking one year of the party's legalization, he pointed out both internal and external reasons for official anti-communism. Domestically, he argued, "fascists" fought to preserve their powerful positions and "exploit the people ever more to safeguard the interests of large imperialist corporations," like the Canada-based

¹²² Carlos Marighella, "A Assembléia Constituinte e o Partido Comunista," *A Classe Operária*, March 16, 1946, 6.

Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Company, known simply as Light, and British-Brazilian railroad corporation Companhia Estrada de Ferro Leopoldina. For their part, foreign powers wanted Brazil to remain a quasi-colony, providing raw materials and “soldiers for the bellicose adventures of imperialism,” he asserted.¹²³

As the Cold War took shape, Brazilian communists once again became the objects of government repression. On May 7, 1947, the PCB had its legal charter revoked, and in another display of creeping Cold War animosity, Dutra severed diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union, reestablished two years earlier during the final months of the Second World War. Then, in January 1948, every member of the PCB in elected office was removed from power, prompting the PCB to declare Dutra an agent of North American imperialism and the head of a “government of national betrayal.”¹²⁴ The pages of the communist press warned constantly of the threat of a new war, spurred on by the forces of (U.S.) imperialism, this time against the Soviet Union.¹²⁵ Communists claimed the mantle of peaceful coexistence against the bellicosity of the United States and its clients in the Brazilian government. Dutra had forced the PCB back underground, but the party’s strong showing during its brief window of legal activity suggested that the issues it raised and the solutions it proposed to national problems were not so easily ignored. The PTB, linked intimately to Vargas, seemed poised to capitalize on that appeal as the 1950s began.

The 1950s

Over the course of the 1950s, a generation of Brazilians came to embrace nationalist policies as the means to overcome underdevelopment. The unprecedented rate of urban and industrial growth that began in earnest in the 1940s continued reshaping the country’s political landscape.

¹²³ “Prestes define a posição do partido em face da proposta de Truman,” *A Classe Operária*, May 11, 1946, 1.

¹²⁴ *A Classe Operária*, January 7, 1948, 4.

¹²⁵ See, for example, Luiz Carlos Prestes, “A luta pela paz – nossa tarefa central e dever de honra de cada comunista,” *A Classe Operária*, May 21, 1949, 1, 4.

Furthermore, the seedlings of democratic promise that emerged with the fall of the Estado Novo dictatorship (1937-1945) bloomed as new organizations on behalf of rural workers, university students, and progressive Catholics sprouted or grew stronger. Political parties reappeared and, despite their often-murky ideologies, found ready support, reigniting partisan debate in the cities and countryside. It was as if Brazilians had come to know themselves better through mass media and successive waves of migration and decided that they already possessed the necessary ingredients to become a global player. They need not wait for permission from foreign powers to develop their own economy.

This sentiment carried over into the military. In 1950, the election for the leadership of the Clube Militar, an important site of recreation and socialization for the armed forces, presented a turning point in the ideological formation of Brazilian service members, according to General Gustavo Moraes Rego Reis, military chief of staff to President Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979). “Motivated by the Korean War and the candidacy of Getúlio Vargas,” he recalled, the Clube Militar elections “became fertile ground for the radicalization of both the so-called nationalist Left and the conservatives and liberals, dubbed *entreguistas*.”¹²⁶ Essentially, from that point on, writes historian Shawn Smallman, “the Brazilian military [was] divided by a bitter contest that escalated even to the point of violence.”¹²⁷ Notably, Reis concluded, many of the military men who at that time called themselves nationalists and embraced communist positions would turn violently on their erstwhile allies in 1964.¹²⁸ The legacy of the second Vargas period would long remain at the center of national political debate.

¹²⁶ *A volta aos quartéis: a memória militar sobre a abertura*, eds. Maria Celina D’Araujo, Gláucio Ary Dillon Soares, Celso Castro, 94.

¹²⁷ Shawn C. Smallman, *Fear & Memory in the Brazilian Army and Society, 1889-1954* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002): 120.

¹²⁸ *A volta aos quartéis: a memória militar sobre a abertura*, 94.

Twenty years after the election that launched him onto the national stage, Vargas invoked a sense of unfulfilled national potential in his bid to return to the presidency. During the 1950 campaign, he pledged to conquer “the myopia of rulers wedded to existing monoculture and to the simple extraction of primary materials” without sacrificing “national unity” in the process.¹²⁹ He committed fully to the economic nationalism first outlined in the final years of the Estado Novo. While many communists distrusted Vargas, his victory, secured with more votes than the combined total achieved by his two opponents, helped cement a nationalist outlook in Brazilian political discourse. As democratically-elected president until 1954, he hewed to what Robert M. Levine dubbed a “moderately progressive” nationalism that “assailed trusts, monopolies, and, increasingly, foreign meddling in the Brazilian economy, although his own government a decade earlier had avidly courted foreign investment.”¹³⁰ Most emblematically, the creation of Petrobras in 1953 established state control over domestic oil production, a move that pleased the nationalist Left, who held that such a pivotal resource should be the exclusive purview of the state. Critics decried the statist impulse as a lark by “despicable nationalists” but Vargas remained committed to a nationalist political identity during his presidential resurgence.¹³¹

The most dramatic example of this was his suicide note. On August 24, 1954, with political crises looming, Vargas fired a bullet through his heart in a final act of political calculation (and desperation). The ghost-written letter he left behind was laced with accusations that linked his demise to sinister forces from abroad, lending the nationalist policies he had become associated with an air of hard-fought legitimacy, even a kind of secular divinity among his supporters.¹³² Vargas’ vice

¹²⁹ Cited in Brian P. Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999): 196.

¹³⁰ Robert M. Levine, *Father of the Poor? Vargas and His Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 83-84.

¹³¹ Cited in Lira Neto, *Getúlio: De volta pela consagração popular ao suicídio (1945–1954)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014): 265.

¹³² For more on Vargas’s suicide note, see Thomas D. Rogers, “‘I Choose This Means to Be With You Always’: Getúlio Vargas’s Carta Testamento,” in *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives*, ed. Jens R. Hentschke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan,

president João Fernandes Campos Café Filho would serve out the remainder of the term in what the PCB decried as an “American dictatorship.”¹³³

This reflected a drastic shift in communists’ opinion of Vargas almost immediately upon his suicide. In 1951, they had accused him of being no better than the “reactionary” Dutra. His government served the interests of imperialism, “selling the country’s riches” and “the blood of our people to North American trusts and monopolies,” they proclaimed.¹³⁴ Two years later, a weekly newspaper claimed to have obtained secret testimony from a military colonel close to Vargas that the former president had killed himself after being coerced into selling ten thousand tons of thorium to the United States on deeply unfavorable terms.¹³⁵ The unsubstantiated story presumably confirmed, in the eyes of many, that Vargas had martyred himself for the nationalist cause.

Vargas would also be remembered as a bulwark against radical ideologies. In 1955, PTB senator Agnaldo Caiado de Castro was asked if “trabalhista formulas” could alleviate Brazil’s many afflictions. Caiado de Castro first observed that part of trabalhismo’s importance was in countering “the communist idea that Moscow’s disciples incessantly seek to inculcate in the people’s spirit.” Trabalhismo was a “step in social evolution occurring naturally” out of respect for “human dignity and the rights of man.” The senator pointed out that many Scandinavian countries had benefitted from labor-inspired programs of government and that such an agenda had been on Vargas’ mind even before his supporters formally established the PTB in May 1945. Therefore, he concluded, “I believe a trabalhista government would have the opportunity to solve the great problems afflicting our country, within the nationalist precepts that guide the actions” of the PTB.¹³⁶

2006): 227-255. See also Daryle Williams and Barbara Weinstein, “Vargas Morto: The Death and Life of a Brazilian Statesman,” in *Death, Dismemberment, and Memory: Politics of the Body in Latin America*, ed. Lyman Johnson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 273-316.

¹³³ Cited in Daniel Aarão Reis, *Luiz Carlos Prestes: um revolucionário entre dois mundos* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014): 263.

¹³⁴ “Manifesto do Comité Nacional do Partido Comunista do Brasil,” *A Classe Operária*, May 1, 1951, 1.

¹³⁵ “Porque Getúlio se matou,” *O Semanário*, April 27–May 3, 1956, 3.

¹³⁶ “O sentido do trabalhismo,” *Última Hora*, March 25, 1955, 4.

But nationalism was not always seen as neutrally as Caiado de Castro's comments would suggest. As historian Thomas E. Skidmore observes, "the stridently negative tone of the radical nationalists [that emerged in this period] easily led to the conclusion that at least some were primarily interested in providing the economic rationale for a strategy of political revolution. Seen from this standpoint, radical nationalism was aimed, not at revising Brazil's strategy for development, but at discrediting the political elite as a prelude to a radical reordering of the social order." At the same time, however, Skidmore rightly points out that this view was politically appealing beyond the ideological fringes of the dedicated communists. "Unless the heterogeneity of the radical nationalist position is kept in mind, there is a danger that any analysis of subsequent Brazilian politics will overemphasize the influence of communism and Marxism as an explanation for the appeals of economic nationalism."¹³⁷ This is a key point to underscore: as the 1950s began to give way to the 1960s, nationalism was a galvanizing ideology that fueled a legitimately grassroots movement. As far as major political parties were concerned, nationalism and social democracy were the PTB's prescriptions. Deference to the Soviet Union and communism were not part of the *trabalhista* plan. Over the next several years, however, the PTB emerged as the country's fastest-growing political party, in large part by embracing the energy of the nationalist movement. The implications of that protagonism would have profound implications for Brazilian democracy.

¹³⁷ Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 90.

CHAPTER 2

The Language of Reform

Nationalism and the Left under Juscelino Kubitschek (1955-1961)

The true nationalist is one who seeks to accelerate economic development without which the nation will remain feeble and poor.

— **Juscelino Kubitschek, 1956**¹³⁸

Nationalism is loving and knowing what is ours, being aware of the intrinsic value of our riches, it is the desire to treat our problems according to our own needs, without disregarding the rights of other peoples. Nationalism is attempting to solve our crises and social challenges . . . instead of allowing ourselves to be debased or enslaved by policies and interests that only benefit those who impose their will on us. Nationalism is to be a citizen aware of his duties to the Fatherland and to serve as a model of peace and tranquility for future generations.

— **Adalgisa Nery, 1957**¹³⁹

In March 1952, celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), Carlos Marighella wrote a column praising the party's steadfast commitment to "proletarian internationalism," the belief that capitalism could only effectively be challenged if workers around the world organized collectively. Marighella, later a prominent guerrilla leader, declared that "all of those who fight for peace and their own emancipation, combatting the yoke of imperialism, can count on the sympathy and solidarity of our proletariat and our people." The author denounced politicians like then-president Getúlio Vargas and key figures in finance like Horácio Lafer and Ricardo Jafet as "national traitors [who] embrace a bourgeois nationalism and an empty cosmopolitanism to better justify the domination of our people by Yankee imperialism." In contrast,

¹³⁸ "Foge aos seus propositos em materia de emprestimos a ação do Banco Internacional de Reconstrução e Fomento," *Folha da Manhã*, September 27, 1956, 13.

¹³⁹ *Brasileiros contra o Brasil*, 3.

Marighella insisted, proletarian internationalism and patriotism went hand in hand, “like the beating of the heart and life itself.”¹⁴⁰

Marighella’s column reflects the thinking of a large part of the Brazilian Left in the early 1950s vis-à-vis the nation on the world stage. Most communists considered nationalism a diversion from the urgent task of cultivating a shared consciousness among workers across the globe. Just as they traditionally rejected reformism in favor of revolution, Brazilian communists had always fought against “bourgeois nationalism, national isolation and chauvinism, [and] denationalizing cosmopolitanism,” according to communist leader Luiz Carlos Prestes. In 1952, he pledged ongoing support for proletarian internationalism, the Soviet Union, and the larger “cause embodied by the great [Joseph] Stalin.”¹⁴¹ The party had long placed anti-imperialism at the center of its discourse, denouncing foreign exploitation of Brazil’s labor and natural resources.

Despite its protestations, however, the PCB was effectively a nationalist entity by the early 1950s. Brazilian communists deployed the discourse of anti-imperialism in an inherently nationalistic way, arguing that the country was kept from fulfilling its potential by external forces. Communists insisted upon proletarian internationalism for tactical reasons, to differentiate themselves from Vargas and what they saw as the compromised platform of the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), but the PCB was undoubtedly claiming to be the only party attuned to the legitimate concerns of the Brazilian people—in short, the national interest.

The PCB’s insistence on international socialism created challenges for the party. It provoked fissures within the Brazilian progressive camp and inflamed conservative ire about the supposedly insidious threat of communist subversion. As Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta notes, even reformists on the moderate Left were suspicious of the PCB’s position, fearing that it undermined national unity.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Carlos Marighella, “O internacionalismo é uma tradição do nosso partido,” *Voz Operária*, March 22, 1952, 5.

¹⁴¹ “Mensagem de Luiz Carlos Prestes aos militantes e amigos do PCB,” *Imprensa Popular*, March 26, 1952, 1.

¹⁴² Motta, *Em guarda contra o “Perigo Vermelho,”* 31.

These progressives held that broad consensus would be required if social and political reforms were to move forward. Nationalism offered precisely the kind of broadly appealing framework needed for structural change to occur. The discourse of proletarian internationalism was seen as an obstacle. Over the course of the 1950s, the PCB's views on nationalism would shift due to political events in Brazil and abroad. As it became more willing to associate with self-avowed nationalists in the PTB and other parties, the party's influence and reach grew. The PCB's evolving discourse was a seminal development in a political landscape being reshaped over the course of a decade.

Looking at the period from the election of Juscelino Kubitschek as president in 1955 to the start of the campaign to determine his successor in 1960, this chapter examines how the leftwing of the Brazilian polity effectively claimed the mantle of nationalism and gradually expanded its definition of the national interest to include an agenda of social and political reforms. Although nationalism remained a concept disputed by both the Left and Right, beginning in the mid-1950s nationalist discourse was most dynamically employed by a progressive coalition intent on confronting the chronic afflictions of Brazilian society. Conservatives, for their part, argued that leftist ideologies were anathema to the country's cultural heritage. True to their nature, rightwing politicians and intellectuals rejected transformational proposals, presenting measures like land reform and universal suffrage as destabilizing and dangerous. To the extent that conservatives articulated a nationalist position, it was traditionalist and largely beyond the scope of political debate while communists, laborites (*trabalhistas*), and their allies embraced an aspirational discourse of structural change that would enable the country to live up to its potential. Whether such results would actually have materialized is debateable, but the national vision contained in this discourse proved attractive to students, rural and urban workers, intellectuals, and segments of the military in

the two decades after World War II in Brazil as well as Latin America more broadly, as Aragorn Storm Miller has observed.¹⁴³ This era can thus justifiably be understood as a nationalist moment.

Under the elected Vargas (1951-1954) and Kubitschek governments, nationalism became the country's most salient political language. For leftists who emphatically seized its mantle, nationalism was a discourse as much about development as it was about self-affirmation. The period from Kubitschek's election in 1955 to the 1964 coup was not the first (or last) time Brazilians would fiercely debate the essential character of their country. However, given the stakes, perceived potential, and backlash ultimately elicited by a sweeping reformist wave, it was undoubtedly the most vividly contested period of national definition in the twentieth century. Nationalism, and disputes over what the nation was and ought to be, was a central ingredient in that tumultuous milieu.

As political priorities and social realities shifted in 1950s Brazil, groups on the Left seized upon the quandary of nationalism in ways that challenged the status quo while the Right generally tried to deflate any conceptions of the national good that entailed broad reforms. In their idealizations of the nation, Right and Left thus appealed to different imagined communities, to use the terminology coined by Benedict Anderson. For Anderson, the nation "is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."¹⁴⁴ The Brazilian Left in the decade and a half after World War II embraced an anti-imperialist discourse that sought to forge political comradeship from a shared sense of being exploited by foreign economic interests. Almost always referring to the United States, this anti-imperialist perspective was inherently nationalistic. It located the cause of Brazil's economic, political, and social backwardness in the machinations of foreign powers and their

¹⁴³ Aragorn Storm Miller, *Precarious Paths to Freedom: The United States, Venezuela, and the Latin American Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016): 31.

¹⁴⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983): 7.

collusion with a willing anti-national domestic elite. The latter were not considered to be part of an authentic Brazilian polity by nationalists who held that their country could become the great power it was destined to be if it would only pursue its interests without constantly giving in to pressures from abroad. Conservatives who opposed this reasoning believed that development could only come from close collaboration with wealthier countries. Brazil's interests might not always overlap with the priorities of policymakers in Washington, but, according to this logic, long-term incremental gains would only accrue from a close alignment with the United States.

Brazilian conservatives in the late 1950s also expressed a philosophical aversion to the nationalistic discourse embraced and defined by the Left. Political scientist Umut Özkırımlı identifies a general “tendency to locate nationalism on the periphery, seen by many as the seedbed of atavistic feelings and primordial hostilities.” If this is true in a broad international sense, it is certainly true for rightwing Brazilians during the period in question when “nationalism, in this view, becomes the property of ‘others,’ not ‘us.’ ‘Our’ nationalism is ‘patriotism,’ a benign and necessary force.”¹⁴⁵ Time and again those who opposed leftist political causes sought to explicitly denigrate nationalism while positing patriotism as a more genuine and laudable contrasting sentiment.

This chapter focuses on two key developments that proved central to the evolution of nationalist discourse in Brazil and the process by which it became associated with a broader agenda of reforms. First, the establishment of the Nationalist Parliamentary Front (*Frente Parlamentar Nacionalista*, or FPN) six months after Kubitschek's inauguration helped bring nationalist rhetoric and proposals to the center of political debate even if it could never quite agree on the specifics of a unified project. As a multiparty agglomeration that would endure until the 1964 coup, the FPN played a key role in disentangling nationalism from the personalistic Vargas mystique to which it

¹⁴⁵ Umut Özkırımlı, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 4.

had been attached since earlier in the decade. It was not the only entity of its kind, but it was by far the most effective at distilling nationalist sentiment and articulating those views into policy positions. It also helped propel a shift from populism to other forms of political expression and organization.

Publications associated with the nationalist Left followed the FPN's actions closely and sympathetically, especially *O Semanário*, a weekly nationalist newspaper founded in April 1956, which American consular officials called "an extremist nationalist mouthpiece."¹⁴⁶ Communist newspapers like *Voz Operária* and *Imprensa Popular* also reported consistently on the FPN. The former, founded in 1949, was the official publication of the PCB, presenting items for members to debate and consider as well as layout innovations, beginning in 1952, designed to appeal to a broad audience.¹⁴⁷ The latter appeared in 1948 and represented an attempt to reach a mass readership, though it reflected, according to Jorge Ferreira, a more radical strain within the PCB. Its pages contained calls for swift revolution.¹⁴⁸ It also reported more consistently on international affairs and communist movements around the world.

The daily *Última Hora*, the most prominent newspaper supportive of Vargas and his political legacy, also provided consistently favorable coverage of the FPN, although by the late 1950s the paper had lost much of the influence it once enjoyed. The FPN's trajectory reveals how nationalism as an abstraction drifted increasingly into reformist territory, alienating conservative members of congress who had been inclined to support the FPN in the past. As leftists gained confidence, garnered popular support, and increased their political representation, they came to embrace an expansive vision of the national interest that included a series of structural reforms that did not appeal to those

¹⁴⁶ Eric Wendelin, Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs, "Marshal Lott's Political Pronouncements," July 22, 1959; Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Political and National Defense Affairs of Brazil 1955-1959 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1511, roll 3); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

¹⁴⁷ Jorge Ferreira, "Novos Rumos: Jornal do Partido Comunista Brasileiro," *Locus*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2013), 206.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

who favored only a narrow form of economic nationalism—essentially the implementation of some protectionist policies and limited government support for industrial development. The FPN's character would change over the course of its existence to reflect the ferment on the Left, especially during the presidency of João Goulart (1961-1964). It is a useful indicator of what was formally considered to be, even by its foes, the nationalist agenda at any given moment.

The second crucial development is the PCB's decision to revise its strategy along reformist, strictly nationalistic, lines in 1958. Stemming from the recognition that the party's influence and power, not to mention that of the class they sought to represent, was bound up more with the stability and prosperity of the nation than with vague notions of proletarian internationalism, this move allowed the party to reinvent itself and increase its sway over the direction of the Brazilian Left. Beginning in 1956 and culminating in 1958, communists sought to reconcile their long-standing embrace of proletarian internationalism with nationalism, an ideology it had long considered to be bourgeois and reactionary. While it produced vocal dissenters, the new party line committed the PCB, with its historic clout among workers and progressive forces, to the cause of national reformism. The party's new approach made it more accessible to new militants even as it remained barred from electoral competition, allowing it to grow exponentially after 1958. The shift also enabled the PCB to deepen its collaborations with the Brazilian Labor Party (Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro, or PTB), the fastest-growing party during the period studied in this chapter. Communists could now assume leadership roles in unions and worker federations, culminating eventually in the creation of the General Command of Workers (Commando Geral dos Trabalhadores, or CGT) in 1962, an entity that would lead the push for structural reforms ahead of the 1964 coup.¹⁴⁹ Both the creation of the FPN and the new communist line were crucial in strengthening the political appeal

¹⁴⁹ Jorge Ferreira, "O Partido Comunista Brasileiro e o governo João Goulart," *Revista Brasileira de História*, Vol. 33, No. 66 (Jul/Dec 2013): 115.

of nationalism and in the longer-term process by which nationalist discourse became synonymous with a program of structural reforms.

No discussion of nationalism during the Kubitschek years would be complete without mentioning the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies (*Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros*, or ISEB), the respected think tank devoted to spurring industrial development through state action. Linked to Kubitschek's Ministry of Education, ISEB played a critical role in establishing an intellectual basis for economic nationalism. Works by Rafael Ioris, Ronald Chilcote, and Kathryn Sikkink have covered ISEB amply and ably.¹⁵⁰ While ISEB does come up in this chapter, I have chosen to focus attention on political parties and popular movements instead. Suffice it for our purposes to say, as Chilcote does, that it "set a standard for nationalist theorizing that strongly influenced subsequent writing on nationalism both in content and in style."¹⁵¹ It was the institutional conduit through which the nationalist impulse gaining popularity in the 1950s found its way into concrete policymaking. ISEB intellectuals defended the notion that the state could and should spur industrial development.¹⁵²

Of course, none of these events can be fully understood absent a discussion of the United States, the hemispheric giant suspicious of anything that looked or sounded like communism in Latin America, particularly after the success of the Cuban Revolution on January 1, 1959. Such considerations perforce figure into my analysis as well. As Alan McPherson has noted, "from the days of independence to the middle of the twentieth century, anti-U.S. sentiment has touched every major social group in Latin America, especially in the Caribbean." For McPherson, the animosity

¹⁵⁰ See Rafael R. Ioris, *Transforming Brazil: A History of National Development in the Postwar Era* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Ronald H. Chilcote, *Intellectuals and the Search for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Kathryn Sikkink, *Ideas and Institutions: Developmentalism in Brazil and Argentina* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2012).

¹⁵¹ Chilcote, *Intellectuals and the Search for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil*, 60.

began when the young American government refused to assist Latin American colonies struggling for their own independence in the 1820s, as creole elites imagined they would. As decades passed, “social divisions and ambivalence largely inhibited cross-class alliances among Latin Americans, who were left to resist U.S. imperialism in atomized, isolated groups.” As U.S. influence reached into increasing facets of political, economic, and social life in Latin America in the twentieth century, however, “anti-Americanism seeped down from the literary and other elites into the political consciousness of ordinary people as it also percolated up from the poor to shape mainstream politics.”¹⁵³ My objective in this chapter is to understand how nationalism—and its corollary, anti-imperialism—became the defining feature of the Brazilian Left during the Kubitschek presidency, evolving into a potent vocabulary for social justice demands that would characterize progressive discourse until the 1964 coup and beyond.

Juscelino Kubitschek, a Vargas ally, governor of the state of Minas Gerais, and leader of the centrist PSD prevailed in the 1955 presidential election only to confront a momentary obstruction of his inauguration by rightwing sectors of the military and the press who deemed him too close to the Vargas machine (as governor of Minas Gerais from 1951-1955, Kubitschek had indeed been an important ally for the president). Quickly, however, nationalist members of the armed forces forced their dissenting colleagues to stand down and uphold the constitution, which mandated that Kubitschek be allowed to take office. JK, as he was and is still widely known, was sworn in on January 1956 after nationalist members of the armed forces made other sectors of the military retreat and obliged them to uphold the constitution agreed to uphold the constitution.¹⁵⁴

What followed was a period of cultural and economic ebullience that drew international attention and generally favorable historical assessments. Carlos Bojunga, in a glowing biography of

¹⁵³ Alan McPherson, *Yankee No! Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003): 11.

¹⁵⁴ See Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 151-158.

JK, argues that during the second half of the 1950s, “Brazilians suddenly became cheerful, confident, imaginative, inspired by a joyful and cosmopolitan president who established for Brazil the destiny of an industrialized nation . . . Brazilians turned their back on defeat and experienced the intense dream of becoming viable, modern, pioneering—even envied.”¹⁵⁵ Another biographer underscores the transformational nature of Kubitschek’s presidency, asserting that “there was one Brazil before the JK administration and another, very different one, after . . . Whether or not one likes Kubitschek and his government and what he did, one must recognize his efficiency, creativity, vision of the future, confidence, audacity and importance in the democratic construction of the nation.”¹⁵⁶ Between 1956 and 1960, the economy grew at an average annual rate of 8.1 percent and, as Brian Owensby observes, “middle-class job and educational opportunities expanded, and a full-blown consumer culture came of age.”¹⁵⁷ Kubitschek used the apparatus of the state to foster rapid industrial development, enabling the nation “to make a sudden and successful leap into modernity,” as historian Joel Wolfe notes.¹⁵⁸ JK mastered what Sheldon Maram calls “a politics of exuberance, designed to enhance his popularity while convincing Brazilians that they could build a modern, industrial society.”¹⁵⁹ While not all studies of the Kubitschek presidency are laudatory, as Barbara Weinstein reminds us, it is safe to say that after campaigning on the promise of fifty years of progress in five, Kubitschek could point to several achievements, including remarkable economic growth and a gleaming new capital city—Brasília—in the country’s interior.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Claudio Bojunga, *JK: o artista do impossível* (Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2001): 16.

¹⁵⁶ Ronaldo Costa Couto, *Brasília Kubitschek de Oliveira*, 6th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2010): 351.

¹⁵⁷ Owensby, *Intimate Ironies*, 245. Growth figure cited in Jorge Ferreira, *João Goulart: uma biografia* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2014): 199.

¹⁵⁸ Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 143.

¹⁵⁹ Sheldon Maram, “Juscelino Kubitschek and the Politics of Exuberance, 1956-1961,” *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Summer, 1990): 33.

¹⁶⁰ Weinstein, “Postcolonial Brazil,” 239.

Under Kubitschek, the Brazilian government chased foreign capital and sought closer ties with the United States, much to the chagrin of fervent nationalists who saw any such relationship as inherently exploitative and stifling. During a tour of Europe after the election but before his inauguration, Kubitschek declared it his mission to “try to attract foreign capital to Brazil to help in the installation of essential industries.”¹⁶¹ His government would oppose “any tendency toward blind or narrow economic nationalism,” he explained, subtly distancing himself from the policies of the Vargas administration and signaling to other countries that he would welcome their investments.¹⁶² In August 1956, Kubitschek secured a \$151 million loan from the United States Export-Import bank, most of it to update Brazil’s railways, hydro-electric infrastructure, and ports, on the condition that he work to attract private capital.¹⁶³ The decision to pursue foreign investments should not be made emotionally, Kubitschek argued, but rather on the basis of need. “The true nationalist,” he said, “is one who seeks to accelerate economic development without which the nation will remain feeble and poor.”¹⁶⁴ This echoed a statement made in congress by Senator Othon Mader that the “excesses of nationalism” could only hinder the nation’s development.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, concern over what constituted legitimate nationalism appeared frequently in political debates of the day and seemed a particular preoccupation for the president. Ironically, even though Kubitschek sought to convey a pragmatic, un-emotional style in courting foreign investment, implicitly contrasting himself with Vargas and varguismo (especially at the moment of Vargas’ death), he would become widely identified with effusive displays of exuberance and optimism.

¹⁶¹ “Tour by Brazil’s President-Elect,” *Financial Times*, December 21, 1955, 2.

¹⁶² “Governo de homens capazes,” *O Jornal*, January 20, 1956, 5.

¹⁶³ “New Attitudes in Brazil,” *The Economist*, September 15, 1956, 892, 895.

¹⁶⁴ “Foge aos seus propositos em materia de emprestimos a ação do Banco Internacional de Reconstrução e Fomento,” September 27, 1956, *Folha da Manhã*, 13.

¹⁶⁵ “Sessão sem novidades realizada ontem pelo Senado da República,” September 18, 1956, *Folha da Manhã*, 5.

Despite overtures to foreign investors that displeased the nationalist Left, Kubitschek did try to navigate a middle course in Brazilian political debate, at times tapping into the grandiose nationalist discourse that Vargas embraced during his final years in power. In September 1956, for example, commemorating Brazil's Independence Day, Kubitschek stated that "the economic emancipation of Brazil is the task, the cause, the national campaign of our generation."¹⁶⁶ His strategy on that front involved courting foreign companies to import the technology and technical experience Brazil would need to foster continued industrial development. Ultimately, according to this logic, the domestic economy might one day reach a level of autonomy that would free it from external economic pressures. Thus, although many on the Left denounced Kubitschek as a traitor of Brazil's political and economic sovereignty, Miriam Limoeiro Cardoso classifies his ideology as a fundamentally patriotic, internationalist, and anti-communist form of nationalism.¹⁶⁷ In practical terms, his presidency projected confidence and gave many Brazilians reason to expect their country's standing in the world to rise.

Kubitschek's vice president, João Goulart, more avidly embraced what would by then have been referred to as nationalism, a political outlook that recognized that some confrontation with foreign financial power would be necessary for Brazil's development to proceed. Conservatives distrusted Goulart, Vargas' former labor minister and president of the PTB, but he was popular among working-class Brazilians, earning more total votes than Kubitschek in the 1955 presidential election (the positions of president and vice president were at the time elected separately, not on a joint ticket). The PTB's support for Kubitschek in 1955 deeply divided the party, creating internal pressure to shore up its ideological foundations and move away from the personalistic tendencies

¹⁶⁶ "A emancipação econômica do Brasil é a tarefa, a causa, a campanha nacional da nossa geração," September 7, 1956, *Folha da Manhã*, 2.

¹⁶⁷ Miriam Limoeiro Cardoso, *Ideologia do desenvolvimento – Brasil: JKJQ* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978): 259.

that defined its leadership since the days of Vargas.¹⁶⁸ The PSD-PTB alliance implied that Kubitschek would preserve Vargas' nationalist democratic achievements—state-owned enterprises, national development of mines and petroleum, and a measured commitment to social justice. This he did, but as Cibilis da Rocha Viana points out, appealing to the organized nationalist movement was relegated to second-tier status, a priority for the vice president rather than the chief executive himself.¹⁶⁹ Consequently, during the Kubitschek administration, Goulart oversaw his party's gradual evolution into an increasingly progressive entity, which included a more forceful approach to nationalism and structural reforms. In 1956 he earned plaudits from a communist newspaper for his defense of an “enlightened, pragmatic, and constructive nationalism” that could raise awareness about the problems facing the country while pushing for solutions based on domestic, rather than foreign, interests. Goulart argued that the masses and the armed forces were united by a sense of nationalism.¹⁷⁰ This discourse proved tactically useful in the short term but carried hidden costs for events later on. By assuming that nationalists like General Henrique Teixeira Lott, who had played a decisive role in guaranteeing Kubitschek's inauguration, would continue to prevail in internal military disputes, Goulart was issuing a tacit invitation for the armed forces to continue weighing in on political matters, thus contributing to a dangerous historical precedent of military involvement in civilian politics. As illustrated by the words and deeds of Getúlio Vargas, his one-time ally, Kubitschek, and his protégé, Goulart, Brazilian political discourse in the 1950s was determined by nationalist preoccupations.

Upon returning to Brazil in 1957 after a sojourn abroad, the celebrated progressive economist and intellectual Celso Furtado was struck by this heated clash of ideas. “Rio de Janeiro had become

¹⁶⁸ Maria Celina D'Araujo, *Sindicatos, carisma & poder: o PTB de 1945-65* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1996): 112-115.

¹⁶⁹ Cibilis da Rocha Viana, *Reformas de base e a política nacionalista de desenvolvimento: de Getúlio a Jango* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1980): 72.

¹⁷⁰ “Definição de uma política nacionalista,” November 17, 1956, *Voz Operária*, 1.

an ideological battlefield,” he wrote in his memoirs. One was either an *entreguista* or a nationalist. Gilberto Amado, a politician, diplomat, and future member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, expressed a similar sentiment, remarking from New York City that “everyone is afraid in Brazil. Afraid of the United States, Russia, afraid of imperialism, afraid of communism, afraid of Light [the Canadian utility company in control of much of Brazil’s urban power supply] . . . the armed forces are constantly afraid of one another, [and] the lower house of Congress is afraid of the Senate.”¹⁷¹ Put off by the shallowness of the debate he saw taking place, Furtado criticized conservative economists Eugênio Gudin for dismissing nationalism as sheer stupidity and Roberto Campos for suggesting the dispute boiled down to “reason against instinct.” There had to be a way of discussing national policy without falling into “invective or metaphysics,” he insisted.¹⁷² The former president of the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Brazil’s congress, expressed a similar frustration in 1956 when he bemoaned the “psychological environment” in which national issues were being discussed, torn between exaggerated extremes.¹⁷³

Furtado posited an intriguing reason for the ardor of the nationalist Left. He argued that nationalists knew it would be more difficult for their approach to prevail since powerful interests and the press were consistently on the opposite side of the debate. The latter favored global flows of capital within a nominally free market, which they believed was the only path toward modernity. Nelson Werneck Sodré also strongly criticized these actors, arguing that opponents of the nationalist position were forced by their unpopularity to depend on “varied and repeated attempts to limit the franchise, to restrict opinions, reduce the political game to old formulas decided by a few . . . with characteristic horror to that which is popular.”¹⁷⁴ In turn, nationalists, Furtado reasoned, had to rely

¹⁷¹ “‘O Brasil tem medo’,” January 17, 1957, *Última Hora*, 2.

¹⁷² Celso Furtado, *Obras autobiográficas* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014): 178.

¹⁷³ Samuel Duarte, “Ao compasso da desordem,” *Folha da Manhã*, September 1, 1956, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Nelson Werneck Sodré, *Raízes históricas do nacionalismo brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura; Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros, 1960): 31-32.

on stirring up popular passion against their opponents who disposed of more resources and political clout.¹⁷⁵ This they did, often successfully, on several occasions. But in the name of what exactly? What did nationalism mean to Brazil's self-avowed nationalists? Why did this agenda prove so galvanizing?

A Synonym for Patriotism?

Brazilian nationalism has never been monolithic. Indeed, the same might be said of nationalist discourse throughout Brazilian history as Angélica Lovatto has written of ISEB in the 1950s: "many 'nationalisms' were produced, with points in common, but marked by a general heterogeneity."¹⁷⁶ Indeed, a brand of nationalism that could appeal to individuals across divisions of class and race remained out of reach in a country that, despite its manifest optimism under Kubitschek, could not agree on what the nation ought to be. A 1956 editorial in *Folha da Manhã* lamented that nationalism was an "often maligned passion or sentiment." It argued, with a note of anti-semitism, that "when it expresses the defense of the country, the independence of its policy in the face of fundamental problems, the implementation of its own course in the exploration of its economic potential, whose benefits must be attained by our people and not diverted to nourish the Shylocks of international finance nationalism is a correct position." But nationalism could also produce xenophobia and hostility toward anything foreign, an impulse that supposedly defied the national character.¹⁷⁷ In a basic sense, these were the terms of the debate beginning in the mid-1950s: while the Left embraced an ambitious, emancipatory, and confident nationalism, the Right denounced what it saw as a narrow and exclusionary mindset that only perpetuated Brazil's underdevelopment. Some have classified these strains as positive and negative nationalism, value judgments marked by the logic of

¹⁷⁵ Furtado, *Obra autobiográfica*, 179.

¹⁷⁶ Angélica Lovatto, "A utopia nacionalista de Hélio Jaguaribe — os tempos do Iseb," *Lutas Sociais*, 3 (1996): 59.

¹⁷⁷ "Nacionalismo objetivo," January 27, 1956, *Folha da Manhã*, 4

the Cold War. For example, Lincoln Gordon, the American ambassador to Brazil from 1961-1966, described positive nationalism as one that stressed Brazilian greatness, which “could be enhanced by the suitable use of foreign capital and technology.”¹⁷⁸ Negative nationalism, on the other hand, purportedly viewed most international engagements as stifling to Brazil’s independent development. According to Gordon, this mentality held that “involvement in the world capitalist economy prevented Brazil from undertaking the radical domestic reforms . . . considered essential to social justice.”¹⁷⁹ Brazilian conservatives, along with wary observers in the United States, worried about the association of nationalist rhetoric with leftist political action.

Indeed, one argument against the nationalism embraced by the Left in the second half of the 1950s was that it represented a Trojan horse for Soviet influence. The influential journalist and publisher Assis Chateaubriand, for example, reminded readers that Soviet premier Joseph Stalin himself identified nationalism as a step on the path toward communism, suggesting that something nefarious lay behind the shared discourse of *trabalhistas* and communists.¹⁸⁰ Former Foreign Minister João Neves Fontoura argued explicitly that nationalism did not constitute a form of patriotism but “one of the vehicles of communism.” He concluded ironically that “our nationalists obey only foreign commands.”¹⁸¹

The journalist Claudio de Souza made a similar point at the I Congresso Nacionalista Fluminense, a nationalist symposium held in the legislative assembly of Rio de Janeiro on April 20, 1958. Souza told attendees that he could not understand why the nationalist movement was comprised so heavily of communists “since one cannot work for both things at the same time: Soviet imperialism and Brazilian nationalism.” Souza was shouted down and ultimately expelled from the

¹⁷⁸ Lincoln Gordon, *Brazil's Second Chance: En Route toward the First World* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001): 40.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁸⁰ Assis Chateaubriand, “Nacionalismo e comunismo,” *O Jornal*, January 22, 1956, 4.

¹⁸¹ “A ‘Frente Nacionalista’ e os Falsos Tupiniquins,” *O Globo*, January 3, 1957, 1.

gathering, stating the next day that “we must remove from the hands of the communists the banner of nationalism, because true patriots do not exist, do not act and do not live by the dictates of a country whose philosophy is not that of our homeland.” He concluded his statement by defining nationalism not as a “strategic or tactical and opportunistic thing, but a synonym for patriotism, of real and legitimate love for this land and this people who do not speak Russian, who do not speak English.”¹⁸² Implicit in this critique was the assumption that leftist ideas—in this case, communism—had no tradition in Brazil, that they were by definition tools of foreign manipulation, a persistent argument that historian Eliezer Pacheco and others have challenged.¹⁸³ Souza also suggests that Brazilian communists ultimately sought power in order to cede control to apparatchiks in Moscow.

Such fears were simplistic and overdrawn, failing to recognize divisions within the Left regarding relations with the Soviet Union and positing a uniform opinion where none existed. By the latter half of the 1950s, members of the PCB criticized their leaders for excessive deference to the Soviets in the past and willful blindness to the horrors of Stalinism. Antônio Bulhões, a theater critic, ruefully conceded that, “for too long we fooled ourselves, we were fooled, and worst of all, we fooled others” regarding the reality of life in the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁴ Elsewhere, Maurício Pinto Ferreira bemoaned the fact that many Brazilian communists could not imagine a communist party much different from the Soviet Union’s. “We must convince ourselves,” he wrote in *Voz Operária*, “that throughout history the masses have always created their own [weapons] that could not be identical in every place and at every time.”¹⁸⁵ Quintino de Carvalho also excoriated the lapses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the PCB’s leadership in an editorial entitled “The Party is not Everything.”¹⁸⁶ The notion that leftists needed to adapt their ideological

¹⁸² “Desagradaram aos congressistas as idéias externadas pelo jornalista,” April 23, 1958, *O Fluminense*, 1.

¹⁸³ Eliezer Pacheco, *A formação da esquerda no Brasil* (Ijuí: Editora Unijuí, 2008).

¹⁸⁴ Daniel Aarão Reis, *Luiz Carlos Prestes*, 272.

¹⁸⁵ Maurício Pinto Ferreira, “Reavaliação Que se Impõe,” *Voz Operária*, November 3, 1956, 6.

¹⁸⁶ Quintino de Carvalho, “O Partido Não é Tudo,” *Voz Operária*, November 3, 1956, 7.

prescriptions to fit local conditions inoculated a great many Brazilian communists against complete submission to Soviet authority.¹⁸⁷ The subversive threat of leftists—that they could purportedly embolden and strengthen the Soviet Union by undermining governments friendly to the West—would inform analyses by conservative forces in Brazil and the United States alike, particularly as Cuba drifted into Soviet orbit following the failed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Already by the late 1950s, however, it was flatly incorrect to suggest that the master plan of Brazilian communists involved blind assent to Soviet imperialism. Yet this endured as a criticism of the nationalist Left, much in the way it had regarding the PCB since its founding in 1922.¹⁸⁸

Conservative observers also questioned the intellectual solidity of the Left's nationalism. Augusto Frederico Schmidt, a poet, journalist, and close adviser to Kubitschek, described nationalism as a facile yet unsatisfactory response to legitimate concerns over Brazil's underdevelopment. "Brazil's conscience is unsettled," he told an interviewer in 1959. "It is not getting a fair return on its inherited resources. It knows it must explain this crisis, blame others for this crisis, blame the United States and other countries. There is a movement in search of a guilty party."¹⁸⁹ The noted orthodox economist Roberto Campos referred to this movement in his memoirs as the "nationalism industry," a way of designating the supposedly inorganic association and dogmatism of nationalist forces.¹⁹⁰ Schmidt's conclusion dismissed nationalism as a serious ideology: "The nationalist solution, as it is and has been presented [and] explained avoids work . . . it is easily sold, one need not explain anything."¹⁹¹ It was a common refrain among conservatives that the

¹⁸⁷ In late November 1956, Luiz Carlos Prestes explicitly forbade any criticism of the Soviet Union or the CPSU in publications receiving PCB funds. However, this rule does not seem to have been enforced. Luiz Carlos Prestes, "Importante Carta de Luiz Carlos Prestes ao C.C. do P.C.B. sobre o Debate Político," *Voz Operária*, November 26, 1956, 3.

¹⁸⁸ See Stanley E. Hilton, *Brazil and the Soviet Challenge, 1917-1947* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991): xii.

¹⁸⁹ Benedito Coutinho, "Sou, não digo grave, sou sério," *O Cruzeiro*, December 2, 1959, 42.

¹⁹⁰ Roberto Campos, *A lanterna na popa: memórias*, vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1994): 373.

¹⁹¹ Coutinho, "Sou, não digo grave, sou sério," 42.

nationalism in vogue among progressives in the 1950s bordered on xenophobia. Such “pseudo-nationalism,” according to Campos, represented a “deformation in our mindset,” attributable to “those who think that nationalism is demonstrated by fiery speeches, when what the nation needs is results. [Real] nationalism means creating jobs; it is loving your country without hating others.”¹⁹² On that point, he echoed the thoughts of Eugênio Gudin, the influential orthodox economist par excellence, who in 1952 referred to nationalism as “a manifestation of collective idiocy . . . a sad inferiority complex that makes collaboration with foreign capital more difficult.” Tellingly, Gudin posited that the anti-imperialism coloring so much of the Left’s economic nationalism was outdated since in Iran, for example, Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh (1951-1953) could “arbitrarily expel the British, without suffering political reprisals.”¹⁹³ (Gudin’s assertion failed to presage that in the ultimate political reprisal, Mosaddegh was soon thereafter overthrown in a coup orchestrated by the Central Intelligence Agency.) For Brazilian leftists, it was clear that their country’s independent development—the object of which was to transform the nation into an industrial power—was irreconcilable with the prerogatives of United States capitalism and the dynamics of the Cold War. For conservative ideologues, however, nationalism was the language of conspiracy-minded populist demagogues with little commitment to democracy and sound economic policy.¹⁹⁴

Still others argued that while nationalism could be justified in some instances, those who identified as nationalists were often so overzealous that they undermined their own goals and common sense. One such “Jacobin excess,” pointed out in *O Jornal*, was the fact that estimable men like Raul Fernandes, former foreign minister; Eugênio Gudin, the eminent conservative economist; and newspaper directors like Horácio Carvalho Junior and Antônio Calado were barred by law from being shareholders in Petrobras for the mere fact that their spouses were not born in Brazil.

¹⁹² Campos, *A lanterna na popa*, 243.

¹⁹³ Cited in Maria Angélica Borges, *Eugênio Gudin: capitalismo e neoliberalismo* (São Paulo: Educ, 1996): 166.

¹⁹⁴ Campos, *A lanterna na popa*, 295-297.

Meanwhile, foreign oil companies could reap enormous profits by distributing gasoline and other oil derivatives while the national oil company foot the bill for exploration and research. This was an absurd situation that seemed to prove that self-avowed nationalists cared more about making symbolic, if ultimately insignificant, gestures than they did about carefully considering policy details.¹⁹⁵ For non-leftists in the postwar decade, nationalism represented simplistic sloganeering, a populist crutch, or a tool of communist subversion. It did not stand for a set of legitimate policy prescriptions to be debated and taken seriously.

The Left's economic nationalism, which at its core held that the nation's natural wealth was being unduly preyed upon by powerful external forces, may in fact have explained Brazil's stunted development in terms a layperson could easily grasp. A great many Brazilians, after all, understood in their bones what it was to be exploited. But the embrace of nationalism hardly signaled a lack of intellectual rigor on the Left. Progressive journalists, politicians, activists, and thinkers resented the condescension of orthodox economists who viewed nationalism as either dangerous or childish.

Domingos Velascos, writing in *Última Hora*, rejected the notion that nationalism tended inevitably toward xenophobia. Rather, he argued, it represented the awakening of people tired of seeing their natural wealth and labor exploited by powerful economic interests. Hinting at the ideological defensiveness of leftist nationalists, Velascos argued that "in Brazil, nationalism unites all that is most elevated in the country's intelligence and culture."¹⁹⁶ Along the same lines, a January 1958 editorial in *Diário Carioca* posited a clash between "classical" economists on one side and nationalists on the other, arguing that the insights of the former ceased to be convincing when they claimed sole possession of scientific reason and "when they accuse the nationalists of being neophytes and dangerous for—they say—mangling the interpretation of the facts." The editorial

¹⁹⁵ "Pseudo Nacionalismo!," *O Jornal*, January 22, 1956, 3.

¹⁹⁶ Domingos Velasco, "Ainda o nacionalismo," *Última Hora*, June 21, 1956, 4.

insisted that nationalist economists represented “a modern technical analysis with adequate theoretical principles and formulations.” The author pointed to the example of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA, or CEPAL in its Latin American acronym), a United Nations-sponsored body of scholars and intellectuals committed to the notion that economic nationalism and industrial development were not inimical to each other. The author could also have referenced ISEB. The editorial’s central point was that, “like ostriches,” classic economists buried their head in the sand rather than acknowledge that economic nationalism, “once considered a socializing doctrine, is today accepted as the basis for the economic emancipation of less-developed countries.”¹⁹⁷ This perhaps overstated the consensus surrounding the potential of economic nationalism, but the editorial correctly identified the cleavage between a classic, or orthodox, outlook and the nationalist one. It also illustrated the defensive posture of nationalists who seemed compelled to constantly assert the merit of their views while their opponents, much surer of themselves, relied on empiricist language to further self-proclaimed truths. Finally, the editorial neatly captures the impetus for the Left’s nationalist discourse. More than simply a “synonym for patriotism,” as conservatives like Cláudio de Souza would have it, nationalism as embraced by Brazilian progressives was a proactive reformist ideology that sought to undo age-old mechanisms of social exclusion. As the poet, journalist, and future politician Adalgisa Nery put it, defining nationalism as understood by the Brazilian Nationalist Movement, “nationalism is attempting to solve our crises and social challenges . . . instead of allowing ourselves to be debased or enslaved by policies and interests that only benefit those who impose their will on us.”¹⁹⁸ The formation of a nationalist front in congress would prove key to that effort.

¹⁹⁷ “Economistas perigosos,” *Diário Carioca*, January 5, 1958, 3.

¹⁹⁸ *Brasileiros contra o Brasil*, 3.

The PTB moved left in the wake of Vargas's suicide, but other parties also contained reformist factions that embraced the nationalist line. In 1955, upstart congressmen attempting to push their party in a more progressive direction, for example, formed the Ala Moça, or Youthful Wing, of the PSD. This group saw in Kubitschek a modernizing figure that could lead the party to occupy the new political center for years to come while the entrenched conservative majority of the party sensed a threat.¹⁹⁹ Kubitschek tried to have it both ways: he harnessed the enthusiasm of younger progressives in his party early on and then abandoned them when they endorsed agrarian reform, a nonstarter for the rural bosses that formed the powerful core of the PSD. Kubitschek would need support from the political forces that dominated the countryside in the presidential campaign he was already imagining for 1965, when he would be eligible to run for a second presidential term.²⁰⁰ By 1960, segments of the conservative National Democratic Union (União Democrática Nacional, or UDN) also recognized the need for the party to adapt to the changes Kubitschek wrought. They sought to maintain the UDN's traditional combativeness, orthodox economics, and aversion to statism while appealing to the developmentalist aspirations of a changing electorate.²⁰¹ None of this is to say that the PSD or UDN were uniformly nationalist entities. Rather, it is to illustrate how political parties in the post-war era were fractious and ideologically polychromatic. It should not surprise that a fashionable political impulse like nationalism could find support across porous party lines.

The establishment of the FPN on June 6, 1956 indicated the broad appeal of nationalism among policymakers. Abguar Bastos of the PTB announced the formation of the nationalist front

¹⁹⁹ Lucia Hippolito, *De raposas e reformistas: o PSD e a experiência democrática brasileira (1945-1964)* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1985): 184-185.

²⁰⁰ On divisions in the PSD in 1960, see Lúcio Gusmão Lobo, "PSD: duas concepções," *O Semanário*, May 30-June 6, 1957, 2. For a detailed history of the Ala Moça see Hippolito, *De raposas e reformistas*, 139-186.

²⁰¹ "Esperando Jango: Metas para Jânio," *O Cruzeiro*, February 20, 1960, 104-105.

on the floor of congress with a manifesto undersigned by fifty-six of his peers. The next day, some seventy politicians—congressmen, party secretaries, state representatives, and other influential backroom figures—gathered at the home of PSD congressman Orozimbo Roxo Loureiro to convince potentially interested congressmen in attendance to join the FPN. They also considered how to structure the new bloc, deciding on the creation of working groups devoted to topics such as: oil, foreign investment, developing national capital and industry, land reform, revising international agreements, defending national culture, the cost of living, and other issues that were the subject of lively debate among attendees. Members sought to find areas of agreement so that they could work in unison to advance nationalist proposals in Congress. They debated even the definition of nationalism they would use, with participants deciding that they employed the term not to suggest isolationism from world affairs but an aspirational parity with other world powers. In the days immediately after its creation, the FPN counted on some seventy lawmakers—out of 326, or almost a quarter—from the PTB, PSD, and UDN, as well as from smaller parties like the PSB, PSP, PTN, and PR.²⁰²

One structural reason that members of several parties could join forces in a nationalist front, as Lucília de Almeida Neves points out, was that parties generally lacked solid ideological commitments.²⁰³ This meant that they could not effectively hold members to specific positions. Just because a party leader might sign on with the FPN did not mean he necessarily brought along with him support from within his ranks. For that reason, as Neves observes, members of the FPN agreed to push for nationalist policies within their respective parties, an attempt to transfuse the ideological

²⁰² “Discutidos os planos de trabalho da ‘frente parlamentar nacionalista’,” *Imprensa Popular*, June 8, 1956, 1-2. Members of the FPN made up 77.8% of the PSB, 63% of the PTB, 41.7% of the PSD, and 28.6% of the UDN, according to Maria Benevides. See Maria Victoria de Mesquita Benevides, *O governo Kubitschek: desenvolvimento econômico e estabilidade política, 1956-1961* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1976): 139

²⁰³ Lucília de Almeida Neves, “Utopia e cidadania: FPN (1956-1964),” *Novos Rumos*, Ano 8, No. 21 (1993): 48.

concerns of the bloc into decidedly less ideological partisan apparatuses.²⁰⁴ Another reason for the cross-party alliance is that twelve of the thirteen general points in the FPN's first announcement concerned matters of economy and trade.²⁰⁵ This illustrates the extent to which nationalism at the time was understood primarily as an economic project rather than one that necessarily entailed a wholesale revision of political and social rights as I posit it later became. It was therefore able to garner surprisingly broad support. The PTB was identified most closely with nationalist policies; roughly 60 percent of the FPN's members were *trabalhistas*. Nevertheless, it was clear that for the moment the banner of nationalism could unite politicians of disparate ideological hues.

American consular officials saw the FPN as a sign of tension between Kubitschek and communists, a promising indication that the president was planning a definitive break. Formed by "extreme-nationalists, demagogues and 'useful innocents,'" the FPN purportedly represented a broader "confusion in the minds of Brazilians on the question of communism and . . . the tendency of many politicians to associate their names with extreme movements to win popularity." Embassy reports mentioned that politicians of various parties were involved with the FPN but did not explain how they all could fall under the sway of communists.²⁰⁶

In November, the FPN produced a formal manifesto outlining its main objective in eleven points. The daily *Última Hora* reported that the document expressed the opinions of all of those who supported an effective policy of development. The manifesto established the basis for a "broad united movement and sounded a high note for Brazil today."²⁰⁷ Oswaldo Lima Filho of Pernambuco read the statement on the floor of Congress. The animating goals of the FPN, the document began,

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 49.

²⁰⁵ "Para defender os interesses do povo brasileiro e a soberania nacional," *Voz Operária*, June 16, 1956, 12.

²⁰⁶ Robert W. Dean, Second Secretary of Embassy, "Relationship between Communists and Kubitschek Administration," June 21, 1956; Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Political and National Defense Affairs of Brazil 1955-1959 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1511, roll 1); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²⁰⁷ "Arregimentação Necessária," *Última Hora*, November 17, 1956, 3.

was to “preserve the democratic regime” and “promote and assure social progress and economic independence.” The FPN considered to be nationalist “any movement that seeks to move past colonial cycles and methods of production” to allow for a broader “distribution of wealth . . . Lead[ing] the nation to a political and economic position of equality in its relations with other peoples.” The FPN thus favored a policy of industrial development that would produce dividends that could be reinvested in the Brazilian economy. It was not opposed to collaborations with foreign capital, “as long as it could be incorporated into the national economy in a cooperative and reproductive fashion.” To further those overriding principles, the eleven main points proposed measures that once again touched mainly on economic matters but also gestured toward a broader vision of the national interest that included social and political reforms as well as a defense of national culture. Most expansively, it called for “state intervention whenever necessary to accelerate the rate of national development,” a position that placed the FPN firmly at odds with orthodox economic thinkers for whom government intrusion in markets was anathema. The document also excoriated monopolies, particularly those produced by foreign capital. Reflecting its *trabalhista* heritage as well as the widening scope of what it considered nationalism to be, the FPN defended “legislation that improves work conditions in factories and fields; that promote agrarian reform; that restructure our banking system and insurance institutions, imposing on them clearly national characteristics.” Several measures along those lines would be included in the reformist agenda later endorsed by President João Goulart, indicating their resonance and staying power among Brazilian progressives. Finally, the FPN devoted itself to “incessantly combatting pauperism through the economic [and] social recovery of marginalized populations and underdeveloped regions of Brazil, including a greater distribution of wealth to municipalities.”²⁰⁸ This statement, perhaps indicative of an established urban bias in welfare policies, also recognized the shifting face of poverty. As the

²⁰⁸ “Política nacionalista definida em 11 pontos,” *O Semanário*, November 22-29, 1956, 9.

nation inexorably transitioned from an agrarian to city-based economy in the postwar period, the needs of the most vulnerable citizens changed as well. The FPN articulated in policy terms the need to address regional disparities of wealth and endemic poverty wherever it was.

With its economic agenda front and center, the FPN played an important part in strengthening a nationalist perspective in the halls of Congress. Unlike its ideological precursor, the National Emancipation League (Liga de Emancipação Nacional), it was not broadly seen as a communist entity, at least at first, which made it more palatable to a wider swath of elected officials. A motion of support for the FPN by the city council of Volta Redonda, Rio de Janeiro, the site of Brazil's state-owned steel plant, praised the bloc for raising economic issues central to the survival of the "Brazilian family," an institution communists were frequently accused of undermining in Brazil and elsewhere.²⁰⁹ The FPN could thus be hailed as a coalition of legislators attuned to what are often referred to as kitchen-table issues, the day-to-day financial concerns of average people. Furthermore, the president could not unilaterally disband a parliamentary bloc as he did with the National Emancipation League in June 1956, six years after its creation. The lack of constraints from the executive branch meant that the FPN was free to be as active as its members desired, which was quite active indeed, with regular meetings to discuss legislation and political tactics. On December 3, for example, members of the FPN met in the library of the lower house of Congress to discuss an amendment that was to be proposed by PTB congressman Sérgio Magalhães regarding exchange rates for profit remittances—a proposal that "alarmed" foreign companies, according to one newspaper²¹⁰—as well as what the FPN considered to be the "false nationalization" of utility companies in the state of São Paulo. The scope of issues discussed in meetings ranged from individual bills up for debate to the specific matters confronting municipalities across the country.

²⁰⁹ "Pronunciamentos democráticos da câmara de Volta Redonda," *Imprensa Popular*, November 30, 1956, 3.

²¹⁰ "Fatos em foco," *Última Hora*, December 5, 1956, 15.

The FPN's rapid growth and the intensity of its activities required its own office space, secretaries, leadership hierarchy, and administrative assistance.²¹¹ As Lucilia Neves Delgado has pointed out, the FPN's weakness and strength derived from the fact that it never institutionalized itself as a political party.²¹² If the front had to work extra diligently to maintain the unity of its fractious membership, its leaders also recognized that the FPN would be taken more seriously in Congress if it could credibly claim to represent a cross-party agenda. Such influence would be more easily dismissed if the FPN had become just another party among many. Thus, in a political system dominated by parties whose orientations were not always clear, the FPN became a *de facto* party, reliably nationalistic and reformist, constantly striving to preserve its diverse coalition.²¹³

An episode that began to unfold in December 1956 exemplifies the power of nationalists in congress to draw attention to an issue as well as the limits of their influence. That the incident involved the United States government makes for a particularly illuminating case study of how Brazilian nationalist rhetoric shaped political debate. On December 15, Brazil's National Security Council spent three hours debating a request from the Eisenhower administration to build a tracking station for guided missiles on the island of Fernando de Noronha, an archipelago located 220 miles off the coast of northeast Brazil. The United States military deemed such an outpost necessary after a Snark missile was believed to have been lost in the Amazonian jungle soon after being launched from an air force base in Florida. Fernando de Noronha was conveniently located within experimental range so that missiles launched from the United States could be controlled from greater distances. Kubitschek, per the *New York Times*, had no qualms about granting permission, but he was wary of angering members of the Brazilian military who might resent the presence of American troops on Brazilian soil. The council tasked with deliberating whether to allow

²¹¹ "Frente Parlamentar Nacionalista debateu a exportação de lucros," *Imprensa Popular*, December 4, 1956, 3.

²¹² Neves, "Utopia e cidadania: FPN (1956-1964)," 50.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 51.

construction of the base announced only that it was reviewing relevant portions of the Inter-American Defense Treaty of 1947 and the United States Brazilian Military Assistance Agreement of 1952 before making any decisions. One area of disagreement between both parties was the length of the potential agreement. Americans sought a twenty-year lease while Brazilian representatives wanted no firm commitments.²¹⁴ By December 23, it appeared that no resolution would be reached before the end of the year, to the disappointment of American negotiators who claimed the base was needed urgently. José Joffily of the PSD, one of the founders of the FPN and a leader in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Brazil's congress, called for the base to be voted on by lawmakers as opposed to requiring only the approval of the National Security Council. Several members of congress demanded extensive economic and military aid in exchange for permission to move forward with the base.

Leftist Brazilian newspapers firmly denounced the plans. The *New York Times* correctly declared that “nationalists and reds oppose [the] island’s use” but on December 18 noted that their opposition would likely fail after Kubitschek agreed to meet the Eisenhower administration’s request.²¹⁵ The next day, however, the same paper reported that the deal was still pending as “communist and nationalist pressure against the agreement continued to mount.”²¹⁶ Once a deal appeared likely, an editorial in the *Times* denounced Brazilian nationalism, stating that “the interesting feature of these negotiations was that they should have been so difficult and have finally required the personal intervention of President Eisenhower. After all, the defense of the Western Hemisphere is the stake in all such negotiations, not just the security of the United States.” The benefits of the base were self-evident, according to the authors, “but not to those who know the strength of Brazilian nationalism. Its basis is an antiquated fear of ‘Yankee imperialism,’ a

²¹⁴ “Brazil Reviews U.S. Bid for Base,” *New York Times*, December 16, 1956, 26.

²¹⁵ Tad Szulc, “U.S. Missile Base Scored in Brazil,” *New York Times*, December 19, 1956, 22.

²¹⁶ Tad Szulc, “Brazilian Pact Pending,” *New York Times*, December 20, 1956, 23.

determination to keep all Brazil's resources for Brazilians, and the political use of these emotions by politicians, some sincere, some demagogical, especially the Vargas group and the Communists." The editorial then blamed Brazilian nationalism for "pretty well ruining [Brazil's] economy by refusing to allow foreign companies to develop the oil of the country" and for making it so that "the popular and political opposition to foreign oil companies is such that no regime would dare to welcome them today." Furthermore, the editorial observed that Kubitschek, early in his presidency, was on shaky ground after almost being barred from office before being rescued by a small cadre of legalistic members of the military. It argued that "the picture as a whole, economically and politically, is critical, but developments like the agreement on Fernando de Noronha show that the traditional friendship for the United States is still strong and that nationalism is not all-powerful."²¹⁷

The nationalist press in Brazil bristled at the condescension. On December 21, responding to the *Times*' editorial, *Última Hora* published a lengthy open letter stating that the newspaper confused "the interests of a few American monopolies with the real interests that traditionally unite the peoples of Brazil and the United States." The letter lamented the *Times*' misreading of Brazilian political dynamics since it seemed well-informed and well-positioned regarding the constitutional crisis that preceded Kubitschek taking office. It argued that the president's inauguration had not been secured by just a few high-ranking members of the military, as the *Times* suggested, but by the overwhelming majority of men in uniform and the population at large. Counting on the support of the armed forces—which *Última Hora* claimed was committed to the nation's "free and progressive survival," a tacit invitation for the military to continue openly assuming political positions—Kubitschek was hardly a weak head of state. Next, the authors lambasted the *Times*, "a Wall Street organ," for demeaning the political views of the Brazilian people. It argued that "Brazilian nationalism is strong precisely because it does not . . . fear imperialism, be it Yankee or Soviet." The

²¹⁷ "The Brazilian Picture," *New York Times*, December 19, 1956, 30.

proof of this was that the United States had counted on close cooperation from the Vargas government, “the most vigorous expression of Brazilian nationalism to attain power so far.” Like his contemporary Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Vargas fought for the legitimate interests of his people, argued the newspaper that had supported the former president to the bitter end. The letter concluded by addressing the anti-communism imbued in the *Times* editorial: “Americans—with their omnipresent information and intelligence services—know, perhaps better than we do, that communism makes up but an infinitesimal part of national opinion.” The “petty imperialist arguments” of the *New York Times* would not force Brazil off its path of national affirmation.²¹⁸ The communist newspaper *Voz Operária*, for its part, argued that “any country that cedes part of its territory to the installation of foreign military forces always exposes itself to increasing political interference . . . in its internal affairs.”²¹⁹ An editorial by Pedro Motta Lima in *Imprensa Popular*, entitled “Over Fernando de Noronha, only our Flag,” captured the spirit of that newspaper’s coverage.²²⁰ Kubitschek faced pressure to reject the deal from entities like the Movimento Militar Constitucionalista, a group formed within the army to support Kubitschek’s claim to the presidency in 1955 that appealed to nationalist as well as conservative elements; the Grupo de Itatiaia, a think tank composed of intellectuals who would later form the ISEB; the Frente de Novembro, another political group formed from within the military to support nationalist and populist positions; and the FPN.

And yet, after some six months of negotiations and protest, the base on Fernando de Noronha was formally approved. In early January, Kubitschek finally offered his firm consent to the Eisenhower administration. Members of the FPN met in the congressional library to consider legal recourses, perhaps based on the fact that Kubitschek had not submitted the issue to congressional

²¹⁸ “Carta ao ‘New York Times,’” *Última Hora*, December 21, 1956, 1.

²¹⁹ “Nem fortalece a paz nem a defesa nacional,” *Voz Operária*, December 22, 1956, 1.

²²⁰ Pedro Motta Lima, “Sobre Fernando de Noronha, só a Nossa Bandeira,” *Imprensa Popular*, December 18, 1956, 3.

approval. After discussing the matter, however, it was decided no such response was viable since, as a spokesman for Brazil's foreign office later explained, the issue did not involve a treaty or accord requiring legislative consent.²²¹ Nationalists had stirred up popular sentiment against the military outpost but fallen short in determining the outcome of negotiations. Brazilians in favor of allowing the base to be built stressed the global bipolarity wrought by the Cold War, some with heavily Christian overtones. "From Fernando de Noronha, in the middle of the ocean blue," wrote Eduardo Chermont de Brito, "might emerge the new combat post for the great power that will fight for peace on Earth and the defense of the postulates of Christ, which Russia has vowed to destroy . . . It is the beginning of a new era. We should accept and prepare for it."²²²

Carlos Lacerda, the rightwing firebrand who had railed against Vargas and his political progeny, weighed in on the matter with an editorial entitled "The Price of Patriotism." The United States, he argued, was acting legitimately to defend itself, the hemisphere, and the world against Russian aggression. Lacerda then presented the arguments in favor and against allowing the base to be built. Most importantly, Brazil, "as part of the community of nations of this hemisphere," should endorse the plans to ensure its own protection. Arguments against the base included the fear that the United States might simply refuse to give back the territory once the lease expired or that Brazil should refuse out of principle to participate in conflicts in which it was not directly involved. Lacerda argued that the first point was disproven by historical experience; after World War II, for example, the United States had duly observed every military agreement it had with Brazil. Furthermore, it was against the interests of the American government to anger such an important ally as Brazil. On the second point, Lacerda denounced the notion that Brazil could remain neutral in the face of global Soviet domination. He had little confidence in the Kubitschek government to do the right thing,

²²¹ "Opinião do Itamarati: Não cabe mandado de segurança na decisão sobre Fernando de Noronha," *Última Hora*, January 8, 1957, 6.

²²² Chermont de Brito, "Fernando de Noronha," *Jornal do Brasil*, December 21, 1956, 5.

infiltrated as it was “by fifth-columnists inspired by the false nationalism” of “extremist organizations like the [FPN],” which he called a front for the PCB. Trying to extract concessions from the American government actually diminished Brazil’s standing in the world, Lacerda argued, making a kind of nationalist argument of his own. Brazilian patriotism demanded that it live up to its obligations. In this case, that meant cooperating with the United States for the sake of hemispheric security.²²³ Eloy Dutra, a consistent opponent of Lacerda, agreed that Brazil should cooperate for the sake of modernizing its military technology. Defending the national oil supply from foreign trusts, he wrote in *Última Hora*, was an example of “good nationalism.” On the other hand, opposing construction of the base at Fernando de Noronha amounted to “stupid nationalism,” which served the designs of “communists and crypto-communists.”²²⁴ Dutra, a future PTB congressman, shows that there was some enduring disagreement within the progressive camp regarding the base, and the proper flavor of leftwing ideology more generally. For his part, Foreign Minister José Carlos Macedo Soares argued that the base could potentially open Brazil to attack from “any enemy of the United States.” Washington should therefore increase economic aid for projects the Brazilian government deemed crucial to its security. Some U.S. military officials, however, disputed the strategic necessity of such requests.²²⁵ An American congressman passing through Rio de Janeiro told journalists that “our common enemy is communism, and we should concentrate all our efforts against it.”²²⁶ Conservative Brazilians saw their interests interwoven with the West’s in its confrontation with the Soviet Union. At stake were open markets, liberal government, and Christian values. For their part, leftists resented the coercion they felt to choose a side in the dispute, rejecting the notion that national policy should be determined by an agenda set in Washington. The communist press

²²³ Carlos Lacerda, “O Preço do Patriotismo,” *Tribuna da Imprensa*, December 18, 1956, 4.

²²⁴ Eloy Dutra, “Os teleguiados,” *Última Hora*, January 11, 1957, 5.

²²⁵ “Brazil Links Deal on Base to Aid Talks,” *Washington Post*, January 12, 1957, A4.

²²⁶ “Deputado Americano compara Argentina de 1951 e de 1956,” *Tribuna da Imprensa*, December 20, 1956, 5.

unanimously and heatedly declared the base an imperialist imposition rather than a focal point of mutual interest with the United States.

As the dispute over the U.S. military base in Fernando de Noronha carried on into 1957, what had seemed a *fait accompli* became decidedly less certain as nationalist forces in government and beyond continued to vocally contest the agreement. In congress, Dagoberto Sales of the PSD and a founding member of the FPN critiqued the government for ceding Fernando de Noronha, arguing that “we are creating a fortress whose walls will not protect us from danger.” Carlos Lacerda, interrupted the speech to state that Sales was essentially saying that the Kubitschek administration was divided between one faction that wanted to cut ties with Washington and another that wanted Brazil to become a “satellite” for the great power to the north. Sales retorted that such a characterization was overly simplistic.²²⁷ Outside the halls of congress, however, in popular discussions of the matter, the issue indeed seemed to boil down to such a dichotomy.

Members of the FPN met in February at the home of Orozimbo Roxo Loureiro, a PSD congressman from São Paulo, to discuss how to proceed. Bento Gonçalves from Minas Gerais, affiliated with the PR, presided over the meeting while PTB congressman Josué de Castro from Pernambuco kept minutes. The nationalist *O Semanário* described the meeting as spirited yet fair-minded. The conversation reflected the “perfect spirit of unity” that characterized the nationalist bloc made up of members from every political party, some seventy individuals in total. As it did in most of its stories on the FPN, the paper hailed the bloc’s ability to rise above the squabbles of partisan and regional politics to express the genuine interests of the Brazilian people. At the meeting, the FPN decided to call for a review of the policies and charter pertaining to Itamaraty, Brazil’s Department of State. The goal was to make it so that future agreements like the leasing of the base on Fernando de Noronha would require congressional approval as opposed to being decided

²²⁷ “Discurso do Deputado Dagoberto Sales sobre Fernando de Noronha,” *O Semanário*, February 21-28, 1957, 4.

unilaterally by a lone, potentially compromised (in their view), foreign minister. Members of the FPN also discussed the sense of alarm reported among some residents and politicians in the northeast who feared, due to their proximity to Fernando de Noronha, that they were being thrust into the front line of a potential nuclear conflict.²²⁸ A headline adjacent to the report on the FPN meeting proclaimed that locals in the northeast were “apprehensive” over the base and were appealing directly to the president to reconsider his approval.²²⁹ Seixas Dória, a UDN congressman from Sergipe and a leading member of the FPN, stoked such fears, arguing that the base was in fact designed to serve an offensive purpose, not a defensive one as American officials claimed: “Fernando de Noronha would have to be considered, by a possible enemy of North America, as, for example, a center of aggression toward northern Africa or perhaps even—I am not sure exactly—the Middle East.”²³⁰ The communist press argued that it would take a broad-based movement to reverse the decision allowing the base to move forward: “This fight is beginning to develop, although it must be acknowledged that it still has not acquired the rhythm that is necessary and possible. Intensifying it is, now, the first duty of all patriots.”²³¹ Popular demonstrations against the base, and Dória’s alarming assessment of its implications for Brazilian national security, recall Celso Furtado’s analysis, mentioned previously: progressives seemed to grasp the potency of nationalism as a tool for grassroots mobilization. They needed to continue highlighting the ways in which Brazil’s interest was not served by associating too closely with a geopolitical agenda established in Washington.

Beyond the specific case of the U.S. base, the legitimacy of nationalism as a force shaping national politics was still being contested and asserted in different arenas. In São Luís do Maranhão, for example, an influential newspaper joined forces with local schools to organize the state of

²²⁸ “Fernando de Noronha Movimenta a Frente Parlamentar Nacionalista,” *O Semanário*, February 14-21, 1957, 2.

²²⁹ “O Nordeste na Primeira Linha da Guerra Atômica,” *O Semanário*, February 14-21, 1957, 2.

²³⁰ “O Que É uma Base de Teleguiados,” *O Semanário*, February 28-March 7, 1957, 3.

²³¹ “Levar ao Congresso a Vontade do Povo: Anulação do Acordo!” *Voz Operária*, February 9, 1957, 12.

Maranhão's first Nationalist Week devoted to highlighting the struggle against entreguismo. Leading members of the FPN pledged their support and promised to attend.²³² When asked about the FPN's relationship with communists, a nationalist congressman from Maranhão replied that, "the communists have their own ideological points of view and tactical objectives that only occasionally align with ours, since we cannot envision economic development without first improving our representative institutions, which find no support or encouragement in communist ranks."²³³ Neiva Moreira made a similar point in September, arguing that a genuinely nationalist economic policy would rob the communists of the economic strife so crucial to their appeal among workers, those in poverty, and the disenfranchised.²³⁴ In fact, however, for communists, nationalism was increasingly less of a bourgeois diversion, as they had long held, but a legitimate impulse to be harnessed in the service of structural change. It was not a state of mind, as Kubitschek suggested, but a concrete social movement with specific aims.²³⁵ Indeed, the communist *Voz Operária* hailed the FPN for its consistent actions on behalf of the national interest even as some of its members in the PSD and PTB reportedly faced backlashes from conservative elements in their own parties.²³⁶ Luiz Carlos Prestes himself praised the FPN for its progressive and patriotic platform.²³⁷ Thus, while some members of the FPN disavowed communist support for their cause, it was increasingly evident that the PCB was an important part of the nationalist coalition.

By 1957, nationalism was only gaining in support from the different currents of the Left. Beginning in May, the FPN's executive committee organized the creation of nationalist fronts in state legislatures across the country, eventually reaching places as diverse as Minas Gerais, Rio

²³² "Mobilização Nacional Contra o Entreguismo," *O Semanário*, March 28-April 5, 4.

²³³ "Plataforma dos nacionalistas nas eleições de 1958," *Tribuna da Imprensa*, May 18-19, 1957, 3.

²³⁴ Neiva Moreira, "Problemas do Nacionalismo Brasileiro," *O Semanário*, August 28-September 4, 3.

²³⁵ "O movimento nacionalista une todos os patriotas," *Voz Operária*, June 22, 1957, 6.

²³⁶ "Ataque entreguista contra as posições conquistadas pelas forças nacionalistas," *Voz Operária*, February 23, 1957, 3.

²³⁷ Luiz Carlos Prestes, "A situação política e as tarefas do partido," *Voz Operária*, April 27, 1957, 6.

Grande do Sul, Maranhão, São Paulo, Pernambuco, Amazonas, Rio Grande do Norte, and Santa Catarina, where congressman Gabriel Passos of the conservative UDN proclaimed that civilians had to stand with the military, an institution that, he argued, demonstrated its allegiance to the nationalist cause by enabling Kubitschek to take office. The president of the bankers' union of Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais state—which Kubitschek had presided over as governor—stated that he feared for Kubitschek's life: "We are afraid that the current government that we supported, helped to elect and take office will become unpopular with workers if it cedes to the pressure from foreign forces contrary to the interests of the nation . . . we do not wish for another Brazilian president to be driven to suicide by the enemies of the nation."²³⁸ In São Paulo, the issue of the military base on Fernando de Noronha continued to elicit nationalist outcries, with speeches, conferences, and protests. In industrial centers like Santo André and São Caetano, part of the campaign against the base involved creating large billboards designed to illustrate the consequences of leasing territory to the U.S. military.²³⁹

Gabriel Passos proposed a union of these state-level groups to be called the Brazilian Confederation of the Nationalist Movement.²⁴⁰ The National Union of Students (União Nacional dos Estudantes, or UNE) proposed something similar when it organized a meeting with labor leaders and congressmen to discuss the formation of a Nationalist Brazilian Movement to unify like-minded entities nationwide.²⁴¹ Oswaldo Costa praised Brazilian students, and UNE in particular, for their élan, calling them the "vanguard of the Brazilian nationalist movement, which grows and strengthens day by day, enlightening the people about their problems."²⁴² In May, meeting again at the home of Roxo Loureiro, members of the FPN elected a National Executive Committee tasked

²³⁸ "Não queremos que se suicide outro presidente do Brasil," *Imprensa Popular*, January 10, 1957, 3.

²³⁹ "Levar ao Congresso a Vontade do Povo: Anulação do Acordo!" *Voz Operária*, February 9, 1957, 12.

²⁴⁰ "Sob as mais variadas formas cresce o movimento patriótico," *Voz Operária*, May 18, 1957, 3.

²⁴¹ "Desenvolve-se o movimento nacionalista," *Voz Operária*, June 15, 1957, 3.

²⁴² Oswaldo Costa, "Os Estudantes e o Movimento Nacionalista," *O Semanário*, July 25-August 1, 1957, 3.

with coordinating nationalist organizations emerging across the country. The committee was led by Bento Gonçalves, Dagoberto Sales, José Guimarães Neiva Moreira, Abguar Bastos, and Seixas Dória. The FPN comrades also decided upon their congressional leadership team, composed of Sérgio Magalhães and Oswaldo Lima Filho.²⁴³

Nationalism hung in the air in less explicitly political ways as well. Petrobrás, the preeminent symbol of economic emancipation, held an open contest to create an official logo for the state oil company. The winning design, which Petrobras proclaimed would serve as symbol for nationalism, depicted a capital letter “P” as a votive candle inspired by Our Lady of Candelária inset within an oil derrick. The background was to be printed in blue to represent the sky, the derrick in black to symbolize the oil, the candle in gold to evoke mineral wealth, and the flame was to be red, suggesting the nation’s bold steps toward economic independence.²⁴⁴ Much of the national conversation and political agenda was set by nationalist considerations, including what the nation was and how it should represent itself. By 1958, the *New York Times* reported with alarm that the nationalist movement was “unquestionably reaching serious proportions, largely because it is so well organized.”²⁴⁵

There were, of course, enduring concerns over what the long-term effects of an assertive nationalist orientation in Brazilian politics might be. “Brazil has overextended herself and the poison of nationalism is always a crippling factor there,” observed the *Times* in January 1957.²⁴⁶ Ever attuned to the assessments of the most influential American newspaper, progressive Brazilian journalists and commentators responded angrily to another swipe from the *Times*. A column in *Última Hora* pointed out that in fact “those who speak of development [in Brazil], knowing its significance, speak of

²⁴³ “A FPN Elege a sua Comissão Executiva Nacional,” *O Semanário*, May 16-23, 1957, 3.

²⁴⁴ “O ‘emblema da Petrobrás’ é um símbolo do nacionalismo,” *Última Hora*, January 4, 1957, 7.

²⁴⁵ “Nationalist Cry Sounds in Brazil,” *New York Times*, June 8, 1958, 9.

²⁴⁶ “The Western Hemisphere,” *New York Times*, January 4, 1957, 22.

nationalism.” The piece continued: “If there is a political principle that has grown, that has excited public opinion, and has the potential to become the basis for a movement uniting all Brazilians, with no restrictions whatsoever, it is nationalism.”²⁴⁷ In the same newspaper, Adalgisa Nery viewed the *Times*’ assessment as but one indication that “those willing to sell off the country have the game board set for the grand moves of their fatal play.”²⁴⁸

In many ways, nationalism remained a discourse of economic emancipation. The communist newspaper *Voz Operária* defended the FPN against partisan efforts to undermine its activity by pointing out that its agenda constituted a “common denominator for the thinking of the various factions and social layers in our country that, in one way or another, fight for national emancipation [and] against the subordination of the fundamental interests of the Brazilian people to the political and economic interests of large foreign financial groups.”²⁴⁹ In its May 1 statement, the PCB called the Fernando de Noronha base an example of accelerating American efforts to increase “the economic and political dependence of Brazil” and to involve it in Washington’s “aggressive and warmongering plans.” It also criticized Kubitschek’s “antinational and antidemocratic” policies, while praising international proletarianism. The statement captured the PCB’s enduring discursive allegiance to communists and communist regimes everywhere—China, the Soviet Union, as well as workers organizing in capitalist societies—while also presaging the nationalist turn to come.²⁵⁰ As argued in *O Semanário*, the base in Fernando de Noronha was pernicious not simply for its military imposition but because it represented a broader impulse to “strangle the economic life of the country, by liquidating Petrobras . . . [and] through the increasing domination of trusts in core areas

²⁴⁷ “A última batalha,” *Última Hora*, January 7, 1957, 3.

²⁴⁸ Adalgisa Nery, “Capitais estrangeiros,” *Última Hora*, January 7, 1957, 3.

²⁴⁹ “Ataque Entreguista Contra as Posições Conquistadas Pelas Forças Nacionalistas,” *Voz Operária*, February 23, 1957, 3.

²⁵⁰ “Manifesto de 1º de Maio do Comitê Central do PCB,” *Voz Operária*, April 27, 1957, 1.

of Brazil's economy."²⁵¹ Immediately after Maranhão's Nationalist Week, Neiva Moreira emphasized the economic significance of the nationalist agenda: "We fight the trusts not because they are Yankees or British, but because the expansion of their dominion over our country's resources would lead to the strangulation of political liberty following economic control." The Nationalist Week demonstrated, according to the congressman, that "the nationalism we preach is not an academic attitude or an electoral slogan, but a defined ideological affirmation and a battle flag against the backwardness that states like ours can only be rid of through a [nationalist program.]"²⁵²

In August, members of the FPN's leadership team were chosen to head a new Political Action Group in Congress focused on solving problems related to the nation's economic development. With over 100 members of congress onboard, including forty from the opposition, the new group became the largest—and thus nominally most powerful—working group of its kind in Congress, which differed from a front like the FPN in that it was not organized around a singly unifying issue. Avowed nationalists, however, members of the FPN, were in charge. In the same month, UNE's Nationalist Brazilian Front announced new demonstrations and offshoots all over the country.²⁵³ On July 26, some fifteen thousand people stood in São Paulo's Praça da Sé for a five-hour-long nationalist demonstration, the first of its kind, sponsored by the Military Club, a social entity for political debate within the armed forces; industrial associations; the FPN; UNE; and several labor unions.²⁵⁴ If in January the communist newspaper *Imprensa Popular* had expressed concern that the nationalist cause had not seeped into the popular consciousness, there were now encouraging signs

²⁵¹ "O Maranhão Contra a Entrega de Fernando de Noronha," *O Semanário*, August 29-September 4, 1957, 2 (2º caderno).

²⁵² Neiva Moreira, "Um Objetivo Programa de Ação," *O Semanário*, August 1-8, 1957, 3.

²⁵³ "Eleita a direção do GAP," *O Semanário*, August 1-8, 1957, 2.

²⁵⁴ "São Paulo Trouxe para as Ruas a Campanha Nacionalista," *O Semanário*, August 1-8, 1957, 16.

for leftists who hoped to use nationalist discourse to implement a shift in policy orientation.²⁵⁵ The nationalist momentum continued in the halls of Congress and beyond.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the growing political currency of nationalism, the communist press periodically sought to define the relationship between the PCB, its tenets, and the struggle for economic emancipation. As argued in *Voz Operária*, nationalism “arose as a political expression of the anti-imperialist sentiments of the Brazilian people, sentiments forged in the fight . . . against the assaults of American imperialism.” The PCB emphasized the need for a popular front in service of a phenomenon already taking place around the world in the postwar decade, “the march of colonial and dependent peoples for their liberation, [and] the deconstruction of the imperialist colonial system.”²⁵⁶

As 1957 ended, it became less evident that the FPN could sustain the cross-party alliance that defined its influence in Congress. In November, the UDN met to reassess and update its party platform ahead of the 1958 elections. Carlos Lacerda, explicitly eyeing future electoral contests, sought to define the party's nationalism in contrast to what he saw as a nationalist-industrial complex and “nationalist-communism, which with hands held unleash upon the country a kind of ideological terror.”²⁵⁷ On November 27, marking the anniversary of the failed 1935 communist putsch known as the *Intentona*, Lacerda argued that the subversive intentions of communists had not faded with time. Dagoberto Sales, a member of the PSD and a leader of the FPN, interrupted to ask whether Lacerda viewed democracy and the PCB as mutually exclusive. Lacerda, the leader of the conservative UDN, mostly ignored the comment. He urged the military to do more to ensure that “democratic” members be given command posts, most of which were allegedly reserved for communists. Sales

²⁵⁵ Isaac Akcelrud, “A Base de Fernando de Noronha e as Lutas Políticas de 1957,” *Imprensa Popular*, January 3, 1957, 3.

²⁵⁶ “Significação do Movimento Nacionalista,” *Voz Operária*, June 22, 1957, 6.

²⁵⁷ Carlos Lacerda, “O Programa da UDN e a Implantação da Democracia,” *Tribuna da Imprensa*, November 20, 1957, 4.

again interrupted to suggest that Lacerda was inviting McCarthyism into the armed forces. Lacerda retorted by accusing Sales and his allies of practicing McCarthyism in reverse: “Your Excellencies adopt all of the arguments of Russia in Brazil and apply to them a nationalist label that deforms, that falsifies, that adulterates, that corrupts authentic nationalism.” Lacerda was clearly referring to Sales’ role in the FPN and nationalists in congress more generally. For the UDN, the exchange reached a fever pitch when one of its own, Seixas Dória, spoke in defense of Sales rather than stand with Lacerda, the leader of his own party. Dória, a leader of the FPN, accused Lacerda of attacking Sales “in a violent way” that included all nationalists, “implying that the nationalists in this Chamber act in the service, shall we say, of Moscow.” He punctuated his remarks by affirming that Lacerda lacked the “moral authority to make accusations of that nature.”

After this incident of intraparty conflict, Lacerda presented his party with an ultimatum: either he would resign his leadership post or the party would explicitly disavow the “nationalist-communism” espoused by party members like Seixas Dória. The *Tribuna da Imprensa*, founded by Lacerda in 1949, stated that it had been Sales’ intention all along to divide the UDN by getting Seixas Dória to stand with him against Lacerda.²⁵⁸ João Duarte, writing in the same newspaper, made a similar point, observing that with elections nearing Sales and Dória had succeeded in injecting their names into the headlines—this had surely been their intention to begin with. The FPN itself has not realized, Duarte posited, that “it is divided into two wings, one nationalist and one nationalist-opportunist.”²⁵⁹ Whether or not there was premeditation on the part of Sales, the UDN was indeed forced to contend with increased internal pressures regarding the nationalist positions of some of its members.

²⁵⁸ “Renúncia de Lacerda nas Mãos da UDN,” *Tribuna da Imprensa*, November 28, 1957, 2.

²⁵⁹ João Duarte Filho, “Nacionalismo Eleitoreiro,” *Tribuna da Imprensa*, November 29, 1957, 3.

On Friday, November 29, UDN members met to decide on a course of action following the spat between Lacerda and Dória. Herbert Levi, a UDN leader in the lower house of congress, stated that while his party endorsed a “healthy nationalism” in its new platform, it would begin encouraging its members to disassociate from parliamentary blocs that might stray from positions dictated by the party—a clear reference to the FPN. He argued that such entities are either ideologically in sync with the UDN, in which case they are redundant and do not require support from party members, or there would “fatally be shocks, prejudicial to the cohesion of our party.”

Following the party’s directive, there were some immediate defections from the FPN. One of these, a member of the PSD from Goiás, stated that he refused to allow anyone in government to use nationalism “to hide a springboard for a Russophile electorate. I do not share Mr. Carlos Lacerda’s politics, but in relation to communism, I sympathize with the UDN leader.”²⁶⁰ Nationalists in the FPN and in publications like *O Semanário* downplayed the significance of the UDN’s move, stating that the congressmen who left the FPN as a result were hardly key players and that some had never even officially signed on in the first place. In fact, some important members of the UDN—Gabriel Passos and Odilon Braga, for example—resisted the imposition from party leaders to disavow a particular understanding of nationalism. Nevertheless, it was becoming evident that the FPN’s initial hope of disseminating a shared vision of nationalist ideology within the disparate political parties under its umbrella had not come to fruition. In his column in the conservative *Tribuna da Imprensa*, João Duarte wrote cheekily that indeed no one knew how parliamentary fronts like the FPN could pull off the “miracle that is at the same time remaining loyal to a party platform and the bloc’s platform.”²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ “A UDN Repele as Tentativas Comunistas de Envolvimento,” *O Globo*, November 29, 1957, 6.

²⁶¹ João Duarte Filho, “Partidos e Blocos,” *Tribuna da Imprensa*, November 29, 1957, 3.

As nationalism continued to define much of the political conversation, conservatives like Lacerda, Herbert Levy, and most the UDN began moving more aggressively to undermine the FPN as 1958 dawned, suggestively associating its members with communist subversion and reckless legislative work. Nationalists in Congress did end the year with some positive publicity, however: in a year-end poll of journalists to determine the best lawmakers of 1957, several key members of the FPN were selected.²⁶² Associating vocally and aggressively with the nationalist cause did not place one out of the mainstream of political discourse; it very well could earn a legislator accolades from the press corps.

The year 1957 was also marked by widening reformist zeal within the nationalist movement, demonstrated by the activities of various unions, student organizations, and other civic entities. In a year-end retrospective column, Oswaldo Costa, the founder of *O Semanário*, wrote that his paper had consistently defended progressive ideas like religious freedom, expanding the franchise to illiterates, granting political rights to naturalized citizens, reestablishing commercial relations with socialist countries, legalizing divorce, land reform, and an independent foreign policy. Costa concluded by invoking Jesus Christ, whose struggle “against the Pharisees and in favor of the oppressed and exploited, is our fight, the fight in which we must proceed, redoubling our efforts to lead it to ultimate victory, certain that the future is ours and that we cannot be contained by those who crucify Brazil daily on the cross of their selfishness and betrayal.”²⁶³ The association of nationalism with economic emancipation, however, endured. “Brazilians of every class and social layer unite in the aspiration of making our nation economically powerful and independent,” asserted the inaugural editorial for 1958 in *Voz Operária*. Brazilians were increasingly nationalistic and clamoring for deeper democracy, and “those governments that wish not to divorce themselves from

²⁶² “Líderes da FPN entre os Melhores Deputados de 57,” *O Semanário*, December 19-26, 1957, 2.

²⁶³ Oswaldo Costa, “Prestação de Contas,” *O Semanário*, December 26-January 2, 1958, 6.

the people will have to follow them on that path.”²⁶⁴ Nationalist publications ended the year with confidence, buoyed by increasing support for their movement. The following year looked to be one of continued struggle but with further gains within reach.

The most important development for Brazilian nationalism in 1958 was the decision by the leadership of the PCB to shift its orientation away from radical revolution toward a nationalist broad-front approach. In February, ahead of the party’s official declaration, Mário Alves laid out the communists’ revised strategy for elections to be held in October for governor in eleven states, a third of the Senate, the entire lower house of Congress, and state assemblies across the country. The main goal of the communists would be to “unify nationalist and democratic forces against the representatives of entreguismo. In the elections of 1958, our efforts must concentrate on electing large nationalist and democratic blocs.” Although the PCB remained legally proscribed, the party would deemphasize its push for legalization. Communists “defend the right to elect their own representatives, but do not close themselves off in exclusionary positions and are willing to contribute to electing patriots and democrats in other parties.”²⁶⁵ The “clear and firm” communist line, argued another editorial in *Voz Operária* in April, “strengthens nationalist sectors who, in and out of government, face the onslaughts of imperialism and its agents in Brazil.”²⁶⁶ The new strategy formally solidified the PCB’s embrace of nationalist rhetoric—already a de facto position for some years—and deemphasized the international proletarianism that Carlos Marighella and Luiz Carlos Prestes had exalted in 1952. Decades later, the PCB’s official newspaper *Voz da Unidade* would remember 1958 as a declaration of independence for Brazilian communists from international

²⁶⁴ “Ao Governo cabe Avançar no Mesmo Rumor do Povo,” *Voz Operária*, January 4, 1958, 3.

²⁶⁵ Mário Alves, “A Nova Política dos Comunistas e as Eleições,” *Voz Operária*, February 8, 1958, 5.

²⁶⁶ “Porque se Irritam os Entreguistas,” *Voz Operária*, April 12, 1958, 3.

socialism, the moment when the party established “a political line based on transformations taking place in Brazil rather than copying other models.”²⁶⁷

The PCB’s decision was momentous for several reasons. While it became more difficult for those on the nationalist Left to deny any affiliation with communists, the PCB’s historic clout among workers, peasants, and other ardent bases of support meant that the nationalist movement could depend on more seasoned militants with deep grassroots connections, which would produce greater political waves. After explicitly joining the nationalist movement, the PCB began to employ some of the same rhetorical tactics the FPN had long used, particularly regarding the need for the movement to rise above partisan labels and political discrimination—likely, at least in part, a subtle way for the party to suggest that official sanction of its charter be lifted.²⁶⁸ As the 1950s faded into the 1960s, nationalist discourse was even more polarizing than it had been under Vargas. It was increasingly associated with a broader agenda of structural reforms, which the PCB had long championed. I now turn attention to developments within the PCB in the late 1950s, tracing the ways in which the party deepened and helped shape the nationalist cause.

A New Communist Line

Events in 1958 would lead communists in the PCB to drift definitively toward the reformist camp, although they resisted the notion that they had abandoned the revolutionary path to socialism. As Jorge Ferreira has observed, studies of the PCB pre-1958 abound, particularly related to its founding in the 1920s, its failed putsch in 1935, and the short period between 1945 and 1947 when it operated legally and performed strongly at the ballot box. Except for critical generalizations, however, scholarly interest in the PCB during the period after 1958 is notably slight.²⁶⁹ That year

²⁶⁷ Cited in Dulce Pandolfi, *Camaradas e companheiros: história e memória do PCB* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará, 1995): 184.

²⁶⁸ “O Movimento Nacionalista e a Luta Eleitoral,” *Voz Operária*, May 10, 1958, 3.

²⁶⁹ See Ferreira, “O Partido Comunista Brasileiro e o governo João Goulart.”

the party underwent an ideological repositioning that critics viewed as a move to the right and which eventually led to the creation of the dissident Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunista do Brasil, or PCdoB). The enduring split between Brazilian communists was directly linked to events in the Soviet Union, more specifically the 1953 death of Joseph Stalin. These developments precipitated a dramatic change in the PCB's strategy and are thus closely connected to the history of reformism in Brazil.

Joseph Stalin, the ruthless dictator who ruled the Soviet Union for thirty years, died on March 5, 1953. As most communists around the world mourned the loss—including the most prominent Brazilian communist, Luiz Carlos Prestes²⁷⁰—, changes in Soviet policy were put into place almost immediately by the new leadership trio of Georgi Malenkov, Lavrenti Beria, and Nikita Khrushchev. These modifications, later generally referred to as de-Stalinization, included pressuring China to support a ceasefire ending the Korean War (1950-1953) and the release of thousands of political prisoners. The most pronounced evidence of a new direction came during the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956. After eleven days of unremarkable speeches, Khrushchev, already established as Stalin's successor, delivered what would come to be known as the Secret Speech in a closed session on February 25. Khrushchev excoriated the cult of personality Stalin fostered and revealed that the former premier had murdered numerous Communist Party figures on trumped-up charges. With the speech, Archie Brown writes, "Khrushchev pricked the bubble of infallibility with which the Communist Party had surrounded itself."²⁷¹ When word of the speech eventually leaked to foreign news services, Brazilian Communists insisted it was a fabrication produced by American intelligence services. It was not until months later when the Brazilian delegation to the Twentieth Congress returned that the PCB would grapple with

²⁷⁰ Daniel Aarão Reis, *Luiz Carlos Prestes*, 267.

²⁷¹ Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, 243.

the implications of the Secret Speech.²⁷² Khrushchev, unlike his predecessor, was eager to travel abroad. In 1959, he met with President Dwight D. Eisenhower and with President John F. Kennedy in 1961. The superpowers were establishing grounds for peaceful coexistence; avoiding a third world war became an acknowledged aim for Soviet and American leaders.²⁷³ “In many ways,” according to Archie Brown, “the breakthrough to a higher level of honesty in Khrushchev’s speech, however incomplete its disclosure of facts and however simplistic its analysis, was the beginning of the end of international communism, but that end was a long time in coming.”²⁷⁴ In the meantime, Brazilian communism would be shaken in far-reaching ways.

By the time the Central Committee of the PCB met in late August 1956 to discuss fallout from the Twentieth Congress, tensions were simmering within the party. The Secret Speech had deeply divided the party, provoking criticisms of its leadership, including Prestes himself. In February, disregarding instructions from their superiors, *Voz Operária* and *Imprensa Popular* published several pieces concerning Khrushchev’s denunciations of Stalin. The journalistic independence, anti-stalinism, and spirit of renovation contained in both papers did not sit well with the PCB’s leaders. Shortly thereafter, burly dock workers stormed into the newsrooms of the communist newspapers to forcefully expel some of the journalists for their insubordination. The move marked the beginning of the end for both publications. In 1958, *Imprensa Popular* shut down while *Voz Operária* began to lose its creative and editorial zeal before ceasing publication in 1959.²⁷⁵ In October, a debate opened in the communist press regarding the future of the PCB, again against

²⁷² Augusto César Buonicore, “1948 – 1958 - Do manifesto de Janeiro de 1948 à Declaração de Março de 1958,” in *Contribuição à história do Partido Comunista do Brasil*, eds. José Carlos Ruy and Augusto Buonicore (São Paulo: Anita Garibaldi, 2010): 92.

²⁷³ Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism*, 312.

²⁷⁴ Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, 243. For more on the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, see Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, 240-243 and Service, *Comrades! A History of World Communism*, 310-316.

²⁷⁵ Jorge Ferreira, “Novos Rumos,” 207.

the wishes of its leaders. Some believed the party needed to be radically restructured. Agildo Barata, a leader of the 1935 Intentona who was shaken by the accusations against Stalin, for example, called for the PCB to democratize its operations. The following year he was either expelled from the party or left of his own accord, according to divergent accounts, along with Osvaldo Peralva and Aidano do Couto Ferraz. The PCB was divided over which course to take: it would either remain an avowedly radical entity committed to armed revolution or it would embrace a peaceful transition to socialism and pursue alliances with progressive actors in the short-term. The latter entailed formally embracing the nationalist movement the party long saw as bourgeois and retrograde. To break the stalemate, key opponents of the reformist course—João Amazonas, Maurício Grabois, Diógenes Arruda, and Sérgio Holmos—were removed from the PCB's leadership ranks and replaced by Giocondo Dias, Mário Alves, Carlos Marighella, and Calil Chade. This allowed Prestes to consolidate majority opinion behind a new direction for the party, articulated in a formal declaration on March 22, 1958.

The document, published in *Voz Operária*, preserved the central Marxist tenet of class struggle but argued that the problem “does not demand a radical solution at the current stage.” At a fundamental level, the declaration redefined the purpose of the PCB: “In the country's present condition, capitalist development corresponds to the interests of the proletariat and the whole people. The revolution in Brazil, therefore, is not socialist, but anti-imperialist and anti-feudal, national and democratic . . . The political defeat of the North American imperialists and their local agents will open the way to the solution of all the other problems” facing the nation. Unlike in previous statements, the 1958 declaration recognized that Brazil was already a capitalist society, though it had not reached the limits of that system as communists believed it inevitably would. The moment, therefore, called for strengthening ties with nationalist and reformist sectors of the bourgeoisie. The PCB opted for a peaceful transition to socialism, arguing that the Brazilian people

could “solve their basic problems with the gradual but relentless accumulation of deep and consequential reforms to economic structures and political institutions,” thereby attaining “the full realization of the radical changes placed on the agenda by the nation’s economic and social development.” Regarding the Kubitschek administration, the PCB was mixed. It affirmed that JK’s policies did not, overall, serve the “national interests and the aspirations of the popular masses.” But it contained “positive aspects of a nationalist and democratic nature.” Kubitschek’s presidency was thus not an enemy in any absolute sense; it was a government to be pressured, influenced, and contested by nationalist forces, whose positions were already represented, to a degree, within the government.²⁷⁶ The PCB’s priority should be to maximize the impact of the nationalist movement on the president’s decision-making.

While the new party line produced vocal dissenters, the 1958 declaration committed the PCB, with its clout among workers and progressive forces, to the cause of nationalist reformism. On the eve of its annual May 1 pronouncement, the party asserted that, “together with other progressive and anti-imperialist forces, workers have a direct interest in the victory of nationalist and democratic candidates” in the elections to be held in October.²⁷⁷ Going forward, the PCB would coexist with the democratic system in place since the end of the Estado Novo, thus laying the groundwork for its future collaboration with Goulart and the PTB and with nationalists in the FPN. It implicitly supported Kubitschek’s strategy of import substitution industrialization, which sought to lessen Brazil’s dependency on foreign goods as well as the nationalist discourse championed by the FPN and the PTB. For critics on the Left, this move constituted a dramatic shift to the Right that

²⁷⁶ For an incomplete English translation of the declaration, see Michael Lowy, ed. *Marxism in Latin America from 1909 to the Present: An Anthology* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1992): 125-128.

²⁷⁷ “1º de Maio de Unidades das Forças do Trabalho!” *Voz Operária*, April 26, 1958, 1.

“politically disarmed the people by affirming that the process of democratization was a ‘permanent tendency’ and for that reason could ‘overcome any setbacks and continue independently’.”²⁷⁸

With a new political orientation and an otherwise demoralized communist press, the party founded a new weekly newspaper in January 1959, to articulate and disseminate its positions. The inaugural issue of *Novos Rumos*—New Paths, or Directions—appeared in March. The first page described the paper’s mission, a reflection of the new communist line: “*Novos Rumos* joins with enthusiasm and combative zeal the united front of nationalist and democratic forces who fight to overcome obstacles to the progressive and independent development of the nation,” especially the dependency on foreign capital and an antiquated system of rural land tenure. The text made clear, however, that within the broader nationalist movement the paper’s allegiance—and that of the party behind it—lay with “the most revolutionary class, the proletariat.” While an armed overthrow of the government no longer figured into the PCB’s immediate plans, the editorial stressed that, “after achieving the fundamental objectives of the current stage of the Brazilian revolution,” the working class would be charged with securing “more advanced objectives,” namely, socialism.²⁷⁹ The front page of the first issue of *Novos Rumos* thus neatly expressed the PCB’s view of how socialism would prevail in Brazil: peacefully, gradually, and through the concerted efforts of the working class.

Another indication of the PCB’s heightened interest in electoral politics was the report on page two regarding the presidential succession. The candidate receiving the most national attention, even at that relatively early date, was the former governor of São Paulo Jânio Quadros, who the paper criticized for claiming the mantle of national savior: “Jânio exploits the animosity that exists in certain parts of the population against parties and congress. It is an old tactic, fascist at its core, that demagogic ‘saviors’ always employ.” In a roundabout way, the paper seemed to endorse General

²⁷⁸ Buonicore, *Contribuição à história do Partido Comunista do Brasil*, 93.

²⁷⁹ “Nossos Propósitos,” *Novos Rumos*, February 28–March 6, 1959, 1.

Henrique Teixeira Lott and João Goulart as the candidates around whom nationalists should rally to defeat Quadros, the reactionary candidate of *entreguismo*.²⁸⁰ In March, *Novos Rumos* published an interview with Luiz Carlos Prestes, the leader of the PCB, who stated that “the working masses demand a new policy. They demand a candidate capable of promoting the nation’s independent development, assuring the welfare of the people, defending the national economy from assault from trusts, and implementing a foreign policy free from imperialist pressures.” Prestes also warned that Lott and Goulart, the nominal candidates of the nationalist movement, could be tainted by the most regressive measures of the Kubitschek administration. Indeed, the new communist newspaper presented frequent admonitions of Goulart and the PTB for not being more vocal on issues related to the minimum wage, the rising cost of living, defending the integrity of Petrobras and other nationalist policies, among other matters dear to the Left. “An erosion in the standing of nationalist and popular forces like the PTB does not serve the cause of national emancipation and the fight of workers and the people for better living conditions.”²⁸¹ The PCB was clearly attempting to pull Goulart and his party further along in the nationalist and reformist direction it had taken under Kubitschek. In short, the communist paper argued, the PTB had better get its act together. Prestes concluded the interview by reiterating the communist position: nationalist forces should insist upon a broad, vocal, united front. In the short term, this meant applying consistent pressure to the Kubitschek administration to expel individuals deemed to be *entreguistas* from its ranks. The ongoing struggle to sustain a nationalist front would create the conditions for a suitable candidate to emerge, one the movement could embrace.²⁸²

The inaugural issue of *Novos Rumos* also included a section entitled “Teoria e prática”—Theory and Practice—which, throughout the paper’s run, contained reflections on Marxism, Leninism, and

²⁸⁰ “Quadro da Sucessão Presidencial,” *Novos Rumos*, February 28-March 6, 1959, 3, 11.

²⁸¹ “Jango e a Política de Avestruz,” *Novos Rumos*, February 28-March 6, 1959, 3.

²⁸² “Fala Prestes sobre a sucessão presidencial,” *Novos Rumos*, March 7-13, 1959, 1, 11.

other currents of leftist thought.²⁸³ The first column reflected on whether nationalism was an ideology. Written by Apolônio de Carvalho, according to Jorge Ferreira (the column is unsigned in the paper), the text suggests that nationalism is a movement, not an ideology in the classic sense. American imperialism impacts Brazilian society in different ways that affect the social classes in myriad ways. Thus, the nationalist movement consists of a united front—not a fusion, the author is careful to point out—composed of those opposed to undue foreign influence in the social, political, and economic life of the nation. There were certainly significant differences between components of the nationalist movement, but, Carvalho argued, unity in the short-term was paramount.²⁸⁴ This sentiment clearly reflected the redefined communist line of the late 1950s.

As Kubitschek approached his final year in office, *trabalhistas* and communists gave his administration mixed reviews. Running for vice president in 1955, Goulart had earned more votes than Kubitschek did for president. He grew frustrated, however, as JK failed to deliver on the promises of social and political reform the PTB had made during the campaign. Kubitschek's shortcomings, according to Goulart, meant that the PTB had no "moral force to return to the public square and promise the same things it promised in vain" in 1955. Goulart accused the president and the PSD of exploiting and undermining *trabalhismo*.²⁸⁵

In *Novos Rumos*, communists analyzed the Kubitschek administration as torn between two factions, one nationalistic and the other *entreguista*, moved more by the dictates of foreign economic powers than the needs and priorities of the Brazilian people. This characterization meant that the nationalist movement had at once to assume a defensive posture to safeguard victories secured under Vargas, and, to a lesser extent, Kubitschek, while also continuing to aggressively push for the

²⁸³ Jorge Ferreira, "Novos Rumos," 210.

²⁸⁴ "Nacionalismo é uma Ideologia?" *Novos Rumos*, February 28-March 6, 1959, 8.

²⁸⁵ "As condições de Jango," *O Cruzeiro*, February 13, 1960, 96.

implementation of more nationalist policies at the federal level.²⁸⁶ The electoral calculation in the 1960 election for those committed to reforms was clear if less than promising. Despite their growing confidence, Goulart and the PTB knew they could not yet win a presidential contest without the national PSD machine. At the same time, the endorsement of the PTB, Brazil's fastest-growing political party, was critical to the electoral viability of General Lott, the presumed candidate. Both sides would thus preserve their alliance at the national level even as the relationship frayed in state and local settings across the country. Significant numbers within the PTB were moving left, in no small measure due to the renewed energy and focus of the PCB.

Beginning in 1958, the PCB and the broader nationalist coalition began drawing popular attention to anti-inflationary policies designed by Lucas Lopes and Roberto Campos, both intimately evolved with Kubitschek's economic stabilization plan. Such attacks, "far from harming the united front and creating challenges for the nationalist sector in the government, is an important factor in reinforcing the positions of patriots who hold official posts," *Novos Rumos* argued. The communist newspaper credited its strategy with the increasingly nationalist rhetoric of General Lott over the course of 1959. The nationalists' push for a united front to consistently pressure progressive forces within the Kubitschek administration led Lott to vocally endorse a profit remittance law, the continued state monopoly on oil exploration, aggressive efforts to lower the cost of living, and the FPN's actions in congress.²⁸⁷ Lott's statements, *Novos Rumos* proclaimed, was a clear message to Kubitschek: "Time to change."²⁸⁸ While the conservative UDN had reportedly been in search of a candidate who, as *Última Hora* put it, "speaks about nationalism as much as possible and practices

²⁸⁶ "Os dois aspectos do movimento nacionalista," *Novos Rumos*, March 7-13, 1959, 8. See also "Os comunistas e o governo Kubitschek," *Novos Rumos*, April 3-9, 1959, 8.

²⁸⁷ "Os comunistas e o governo Kubitschek," *Novos Rumos*, April 3-9, 1959, 8.

²⁸⁸ "Hora de mudar," *Novos Rumos*, March 20-26, 1959, 1.

it as little as possible,” the nationalist Left was pushing its nominal candidates to speak more assertively on nationalism and to commit to firm positions.²⁸⁹

American consular officials worried about the PTB and PCB working together. In October 1958, days before voters went to the polls to elect state governors, a third of the senate, and the entire lower house of congress, it was reported that PTB president João Goulart had reached a secret agreement with Prestes. U.S. officials hoped the news, whether it was true or not, would hurt the PTB in close governor’s races in Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, and São Paulo.²⁹⁰ The PTB candidates ended up winning in all but the latter. Consular officials deemed the election of Carvalho Pinto as governor of São Paulo a “major blow to Communists and irresponsible ultra-nationalists” while largely dismissing Leonel Brizola’s victory in Rio Grande do Sul.²⁹¹ Brizola, who happened to be Goulart’s brother-in-law, would become the most prominent nationalist in the PTB. By the late 1950s, as employees of the American consulates in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo recognized, the Left had successfully claimed nationalism for itself, a concept it linked to a specific set of policies. Kubitschek’s administration can undoubtedly be considered nationalistic for its confidence and ambitious developmental vision, but his government was rarely described in those terms at the time. Nationalism had become a term with defined political connotations.

Indeed, nationalism had become the indispensable trait for progressive Brazilians looking ahead to the election of 1960. For students, workers, intellectuals, peasants, and others, the national interest had come to entail social and political reforms that they imagined would reshape Brazilian society. Conservatives, for their part, had virtually given up on claiming the mantle of nationalism,

²⁸⁹ “Procura-se um candidato,” *Última Hora*, January 15, 1957, 2.

²⁹⁰ Woodruff Wallner, October 1, 1958; Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Political and National Defense Affairs of Brazil 1955-1959 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1511, roll 3); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

²⁹¹ Woodruff Wallner, October 7, 1958; Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Political and National Defense Affairs of Brazil 1955-1959 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1511, roll 3); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

focusing instead on a discourse of anti-communism and anti-corruption. When they did discuss love of country, as a column in *Última Hora* correctly noted, commentators on the Right drew a distinction between patriotism and nationalism. According to this logic, the former reflects genuine affection for the land of one's birth while the latter "is something else, very different, a mix of communism and subversion with some hints of *varguismo*."²⁹² Conservative Brazilians dismissed nationalism as political opportunism. In doing so, they made clear the perceived potency of the nationalist project.

As progressive forces settled on an assertive nationalism under Kubitschek, conservative Brazilians and observers in the United States continued to associate nationalists with communism and thus with practices inimical to democracy. American consular officials frequently bemoaned the "unfortunate" "ultra-nationalism" prevalent in Brazil. As we shall see in the following chapter, they agonized over Goulart and the PTB's relationship with Luiz Carlos Prestes and the PCB. A July 1958 editorial in *Tribuna da Imprensa* argued that the "nationalists," a term that the paper itself placed in quotation marks, intended to keep Brazil "weakened, politically and socially," to create a "neo-totalitarian state in the Russian orbit." The editorial argued that nationalists were drifting toward lawlessness, ready to break with Kubitschek if they proved unable to influence him.²⁹³ This overstated the willingness of the nationalist coalition to take extralegal steps, but it did note that nationalism was increasingly central to any political appeal made to Brazilian progressives—students, workers, peasants, and those generally dissatisfied with Brazil's structural and longstanding inequalities.

The PTB and PCB remained the most important political parties of the Left as the 1950s drew to a close. The former was increasingly influenced by reformist aspirations expressed in nationalist terms. The party's general message, embraced by some members more than others, was that Brazil

²⁹² "Patriotismo e nacionalismo," *Última Hora*, January 5, 1957, 3.

²⁹³ "Posição dos 'nacionalistas'," *Tribuna da Imprensa*, July 1, 1958, 1.

had the potential to be a legitimate global power if it implemented a series of democratizing and modernizing reforms. The PTB played a supporting but vital role in the Kubitschek administration. Although JK was a member of the PSD, he had had close ties to Vargas. This helped the party form an electoral alliance with the PSD, based less on ideological commonalities than other, more venal interests, that would survive until the 1960 election. In his masterful biography of João Goulart, Jorge Ferreira notes that Goulart negotiated PTB support for Juscelino Kubitschek's presidential campaign—not to mention securing his place as Kubitschek's vice president—in exchange for a commitment to key PTB policy priorities and several appointments within the federal bureaucracy. The former appealed the more ideological members of the party while the latter assuaged members interested in the traditional prerogatives of power in Brazil.²⁹⁴

According to Lucilia de Almeida Neves Delgado, the Kubitschek years were a period of ideological effervescence within the PTB. Following his suicide, Vargas' governing style and cult of personality—in a word, *getulismo*—lost what had seemed an unshakeable grip on much of the PTB. He remained a potent mythical figure for the party but in the vacuum created by his death a more ideological social reformism, expressed predominantly in nationalist terms, prevailed as the party's guiding force. Regional tensions within the party that had previously been subsumed to the weight of Vargas's centralizing tendencies helped secure the party's shift “in a political and social direction that would coincide, on various points, with the communists.”²⁹⁵ During the second half of the 1950s, in short, the PTB evolved from a party whose primary function was to ensure that urban workers supported Vargas into an avowedly nationalist entity pushing for structural reforms that would address the country's economic and social inequalities.

²⁹⁴ Jorge Ferreira, *João Goulart*, 147.

²⁹⁵ Lucilia de Almeida Neves Delgado, *PTB: do Getulismo ao Reformismo, 1945-1964* (São Paulo: Marco Zero, 1989): 176.

Meanwhile, the PCB, with its hard-earned ideological credibility among workers, adapted and reengaged with society by embracing the evidently appealing discourse of nationalism and gradual reformism. This reinforced the PTB's drift to the left and the political machinations of the FPN in congress. By 1959, looking forward to the presidential election the next year, the FPN committed itself to regulating foreign capital in Brazil, agrarian reform, anti-trust legislation, measures to counter the rising cost of living, and nationalizing foreign banks with petrochemical interests.²⁹⁶ A favorable stance on each of these matters had come to be seen as *de facto* positions for any good nationalist. In this way, entrenched sectors of Brazilian society like the incumbent PSD, large landowners, and the business community were confronted with the reality that the progressive nationalist coalition entered the 1960 election animated by the prospect of structural change.

²⁹⁶ "3 anos de Frente Parlamentar Nacionalista – sangue novo no parlamento," *Novos Rumos*, March 20-26, 1959, 3.

CHAPTER 3

Politics as Solution

Nationalism and Reformist Aspirations from the 1960 Election to the Fall of João Goulart
(1960-1964)

The Brazilian Government is not prejudiced against foreign capital—far from it. We stand in dire need of its help. The sole condition is that the gradual nationalization of profits be accepted, for otherwise it no longer is an element of progress but becomes a mere leech feeding on our national effort. Let it be known that the state in Brazil will not relinquish those controls that will benefit our economy by channeling and ensuring the efficiency of our progress.

— Jânio Quadros, 1961²⁹⁷

We do not seek the reforms of other countries. Russia's reform may have served the Russian when it was carried out, China's reform may befit the Chinese, but the reform appropriate for Brazil is the one desired by the Brazilian people...

— João Goulart, 1962²⁹⁸

Looking back at his arrival in Brazil as U.S. ambassador in 1959, John Moors Cabot described the country as “a jilted woman.” He explained: “The Brazilians are a sensitive and sentimental people. Traditionally, over a century and a half, we have always had very close relations, and I found them craving attention, which we hadn't lately been giving them.”²⁹⁹ The Brazilian government had expected closer cooperation with the United States in light of the two countries' close relations during the Second World War, a proximity of aims and orientation that would redound to Brazil's economic benefit. In that sense, Cabot's chauvinistic comments expressed the seething chagrin of many Brazilian policymakers and businessmen who found U.S. consideration wanting in the years following the Axis defeat.

By the beginning of the 1960s, however, for reasons outlined in the previous chapter, the general mood had shifted. In July 1961, Lloyd A. Free, a public opinion specialist, published a report

²⁹⁷ Jânio Quadros, “Brazil's New Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (October 1961): 23.

²⁹⁸ “Reforma agrária: pronunciamento de Goulart,” *Folha de São Paulo*, July 31, 1962, 3.

²⁹⁹ Robert Shaplen, “Profiles: Ambassador,” *The New Yorker*, March 4, 1961, 88.

entitled “Some International Implications of the Political Psychology of Brazilians” that examined Brazilian attitudes toward President Quadros, “ultra-nationalism,” and communism. According to Free, the report presented the most exhaustive polling data ever collected in Brazil, reaching 91 percent of the population and 100 members of congress (chosen in proportion to their party’s representation in the federal legislature). The report found that 89 percent of congress identified as nationalists. “I’m a nationalist because I’m a patriot,” explained one unnamed congressman, equating nationalism with love of country. “I am a nationalist,” another member of congress said, “because I fight for the economic freedom of our people, this being the condition for our political independence.” Another claimed nationalism because “I defend the interests and aspirations of the Brazilian people against all forms of imperialism.” These captured the leftist view of nationalism as a proactive ideology seeking to lessen Brazil’s dependence on foreign powers. Yet another member of congress embraced nationalism as a defense against American domination of the economy and an assertion of Brazil’s capacity to govern itself. He then stressed to the interviewer that he was no communist.³⁰⁰ Such were the terms of debate as the 1960s began.

For decades, a key argument of leftist Brazilian nationalism had been that Brazil’s endemic poverty resulted from foreign exploitation aided by a pliant local elite. This view, which solidified in the 1920s and gained widespread currency in the second half of the 1950s, would continue to define the discourse of the Left into the next decade. A front-page story in the nationalist *O Semanário* in January 1961 proclaimed that one billion dollars in profits had been sent abroad from Brazil by the Canadian utility company Light, enough to build forty thousand schools.³⁰¹ Articles like that, printed frequently in the pages of the leftist press, led Congressman Gabriel Passos to proclaim two years

³⁰⁰ Lloyd A. Free, “Some International Implications of the Political Psychology of Brazilians,” Institute for International Social Research, July 1961; IRI BR79; Office of Research and Reference/Agency Library; International Survey Research Reports, 1953-1964; U.S. Information Agency, Record Group 306; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

³⁰¹ “Um bilhão de dólares – lucro remetido pela Light,” *O Semanário*, January 1-7, 1961, 1, 7.

earlier that “we nationalists can prove without question that the misery, hunger, and impoverishment of our people stem from criminal profit remittances.”³⁰² The matter came up consistently in the 1960 campaign. Edna Lott, the daughter of the nationalist candidate and a potent political voice in her own right, pointed out in March 1960 that the revered conspirators of the failed 1789 revolt known as the *inconfidência mineira* were protesting the remittance of gold from Minas Gerais to the Portuguese crown.³⁰³ According to Free’s surveys, just over half of legislators favored action to limit profit remittances, 12 percent of them calling for the practice to be outlawed entirely. At the same time, two-thirds of congressmen believed the government should be soliciting more aid from the United States in the form of loans and grants. Self-avowed nationalists seemed marginally more willing to trust American government than American industry.

Passos’ involvement with the nationalist movement hints at the broad acceptance of arguments made by communists and others on the Left regarding the pernicious effects of imperialism, even among those who might not use the term in association with the United States. If a member of the UDN, the party most associated with orthodox economic principles and opposition to the state-led industrialization introduced by Vargas, could decry exploitation in the truculent terms associated with communists and *trabalhistas* then perhaps systemic reforms were not so far off. Indeed, it would probably have seemed reasonable to an informed observer to expect that within the decade the federal government would address the structural causes of Brazil’s penury, one of which was perceived to be foreign rapaciousness.

Nationalism had proved to be a potent political vocabulary because of its appeal to diverse sectors of Brazilian society. As the 1960s wore on, however, the stakes of a reformist nationalist agenda escalated. Talk of American imperialism and economic exploitation lost its unifying potential

³⁰² “As causas da fome, da miséria e do empobrecimento do povo brasileiro – disse Gabriel Passos – residem na remessa de lucros para o exterior,” *O Semanário*, March 19-25, 1959, 5.

³⁰³ Plínio de Abreu Ramos, “Lott inicia em Minas campanha eleitoral nacionalista,” *O Semanário*, March 12-18, 1960, 6.

as the Brazilian populace polarized increasingly along Cold War lines. The 1964 coup represented the culmination of a clash between two distinct nationalist narratives. One side argued that the nation could never become just and prosperous until it addressed longstanding structural deficiencies while the other side characterized progressive reforms as a plot by international communism to infiltrate and undermine Brazilian institutions.

This chapter explores the period from the 1960 presidential campaign through the beginning of military rule in 1964. I argue that the conditions that allowed nationalism to serve as a unifying political discourse in the late 1950s—among them the enduring appeal of *varguismo*, sustained economic growth, and industrial development—eroded under the presidencies of Jânio Quadros and João Goulart for several reasons. The Cuban Revolution (1959) reignited Washington’s interest in Latin America as fear of communist contagion reached a fever pitch. President John F. Kennedy devoted more resources to the region than his predecessor, with Brazil a particular cause for concern. Suddenly, the nationalist movement in Brazil that had elicited concern in Washington during the Kubitschek years was met with outright panic. The PCB’s involvement in the nationalist coalition often meant that the entire progressive camp was tarred as communist, radical, and revolutionary. This was particularly dangerous for the PTB, a mainstream progressive entity thrust into the presidency by Quadros’ abrupt resignation.

Goulart’s ascension to the presidency also undermined the unifying appeal of nationalism. The former labor minister under Vargas, spurred on by vocal nationalists in his own party and in the PCB, came to embrace a reformist platform that included land reform, restrictions on profit remittances, and suffrage for illiterates. Goulart’s opponents and allies alike imagined that the measures he endorsed in the final days of his presidency would change the country in fundamental ways. These *reformas de base*, or structural reforms, thus represented a national project vigorously contested by conservatives discomfited by the implications of such a shift. To counter the rhetoric

of progressive nationalists, conservative Brazilians in the press, civil society, and government fell back on the familiar tropes that identified the Left exclusively with opportunism and corruption. Once again, the Right claimed patriotism as a legitimate and noble counter to the dangerous nationalism of irresponsible demagogues. Debates between Left and Right leading up to the 1964 coup, discussed in this chapter, illustrate the ways in which different social actors claim to best represent the national interest. Between 1960 and 1964, Brazil was shaken by competing nationalisms. One sought to keep things as they were, as they ever had been, while another sought to implement measures to transform the nation into what it could be.

The Election of 1960

On the afternoon of December 31, 1959, before year-end celebrations engulfed Rio de Janeiro, student demonstrators marched toward Catete Palace, the presidential mansion located in the city's South Zone. Armed with sticks and stones, they clashed with police in riot gear. Eight students were gravely injured. The protest was ostensibly a response to a cut in government subsidies that would lead meal prices at a popular student eatery to jump from Cr\$2 to Cr\$25.³⁰⁴ More broadly, the student demonstration was part of a simmering discontent over the rising cost of living. That the restaurant in question catered primarily to poor students from the urban periphery made the price increase of over 1000 percent even more objectionable. One foreign correspondent observed that the nation entered the new year with "tensions high." An intense debate over the "difficult and dangerous problems" facing the country appeared unavoidable ahead of the presidential election scheduled for October.³⁰⁵

Although Kubitschek enjoyed high approval ratings as his term drew to a close, there were

³⁰⁴ "Polícia estoura a bala passeata de estudantes ao Catete: oito feridos," *Jornal do Brasil*, January 1, 1960, 1.

³⁰⁵ Tad Szulc, "Brazil Faces '60 with Unrest High," *New York Times*, January 3, 1960, 19.

doubts regarding his economic stewardship. Conservative economist Roberto Campos argued that JK was a pragmatist who cared “where the factory is and not where the shareholder lives,” but serious concerns persisted that his approach to national development relied too heavily on courting foreign investment at the expense of Brazilian sovereignty.³⁰⁶ The PCB took solace that it had “amplified their positions” under Kubitschek, especially after its political realignment in 1958, but they also argued that because the administration had “obstinately repell[ed] solutions put forth by nationalist and popular forces, the dominant groups in the government and the president himself . . . cannot present themselves to the people with heads held high.”³⁰⁷

Furthermore, inflation soared on Kubitschek’s watch, from 19 percent in 1956 to over 30 percent in 1960, underscoring the lack of broad-based economic development as poor Brazilians were hit disproportionately hard by rising prices.³⁰⁸ Critics pointed to the superficial nature of development under the outgoing Bossa Nova president, as one songwriter derisively called Kubitschek.³⁰⁹ They argued that his policies sharpened longstanding inequalities and that his modernizing zeal left intact age-old mechanisms of social exclusion.

The sense of economic anxiety was not only evident in the streets as students protested and workers went on strike to protest the rising cost of living. The cover of the January 2, 1960, issue of *Careta*, a weekly humor publication akin to *Mad* magazine, depicted a little boy wearing a hat reading “1960” and an old man with a hat reading “1959.” They stand on ground littered with rocks, behind them a leafless tree stands amidst a barren landscape. With pleading eyes and hand outstretched, the child says to the old man, “from what I can see, I’m going to live off bread and water.” Stunned by the boy’s temerity, the old man replies, “water?! You are very optimistic.”³¹⁰ The cartoon, entitled

³⁰⁶ Campos, *A lanterna na popa*, 287.

³⁰⁷ “Ano novo,” *Novos Rumos*, January 1-7, 1960, 1, 3.

³⁰⁸ Figures cited in Reis, *Luiz Carlos Prestes*, 281.

³⁰⁹ See the satirical 1959 song by Juca Chaves, “Presidente bossa-nova.”

³¹⁰ *Careta*, January 2, 1960, cover.

“Drought,” is a pointed warning that the effervescence of the late 1950s had resulted from unsustainable economic policies that would soon give way to austerity.³¹¹ The feeling that the economic growth the nation enjoyed under JK was about to stall meant that it was unclear whether the national agenda established by Kubitschek would survive into the new decade.

In early 1960, even before the landscape of the presidential campaign came into sharp focus, Kubitschek began looking ahead: he knew that the next administration would be forced to adopt unpopular austerity measures to contain inflation, which would allow him to once again run for president in 1965 on a platform of restoring economic growth.³¹² Seeking support from the PSD and PTB, he hoped to position the governor of Bahia, Juracy Magalhães of the conservative UDN, as a consensus candidate. Kubitschek worried that a fourth consecutive defeat for the rightwing UDN would destabilize the young democratic system.³¹³ He did not count on the popular movement that arose around the mayor of São Paulo, Jânio Quadros.

The state of São Paulo experienced unprecedented growth under Kubitschek, producing cars, skyscrapers, textiles, and other industrialized goods like never before. It had not, however, produced many national political leaders. To his supporters, Quadros embodied the promise of the new São Paulo and the moral rectitude of paulistas. He was the very essence of the “Paulista people in reaction” against the corruption and cronyism of the Kubitschek administration, according to one admirer.³¹⁴ Climbing the political ladder in São Paulo from alderman in 1948 to state legislator in 1950, from mayor in 1953 to governor of the state the year after that, Quadros owed his success to moralistic iconoclasm rather than consistent ideology. Indeed, Flávio Tavares, a journalist who

³¹¹ The cartoon was likely also a pointed inside joke about the perpetual insufficiencies of the municipal water supply in Rio de Janeiro prior to the Guandu water project in the late 1950s.

³¹² On Kubitschek’s electoral strategy see Sheldon Maram, “Juscelino Kubitschek e a política presidencial,” in *O Brasil de JK*, ed. Angela de Castro Gomes (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. da Fundação Getúlio Vargas/CPDOC, 1991): 100-121.

³¹³ Hippolito, *De raposas e reformistas*, 200.

³¹⁴ Castilho Cabral, *Tempos de Jânio e outros tempos* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1962): 145.

covered the 1960 campaign, described Quadros as a kaleidoscope: “all one had to do was lightly twist the magic tube and, with every touch, there appeared a new and more colorful picture than before.”³¹⁵ As Quadros’s presidential intentions became clear, many Leftists around the country worried about his mercurial and aggressive style. Francisco Julião proclaimed in the Pernambuco state legislature that Quadros would become a “junior Hitler” if elected president.³¹⁶ The PCB newspaper *Novos Rumos* consistently ran stories denouncing Quadros’ actions as governor, including harsh treatment of workers and new taxes that primarily affected the working poor.³¹⁷

Yet, as Thomas Skidmore noted, Quadros’ vocal “opposition to the ‘system’ became broad-based enough to have an appeal for elements in all classes.”³¹⁸ An inveterate outsider and “a born showman,” as the *New York Times* put it, Quadros was seen as a man of the people who appeared disheveled at campaign events and was more likely to munch on a sandwich pulled from his coat pocket than to dine lavishly with members of the elite.³¹⁹ In Quadros, the UDN saw a charismatic crusader against corruption who could appeal to middle-class professionals and workers concerned with the rising cost of living. By 1959, the UDN “broke the ice” with urban labor and the lower classes in São Paulo and had begun to shed the entreguista label affixed to the party by its opponents, as UDN congressman Herbert Levy explained to American consular officials.³²⁰ The party eventually threw its weight behind Quadros.

³¹⁵ Flávio Tavares, *O dia em que Allende matou Getúlio e outras novelas do poder* (2nd ed., Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2004): 159.

³¹⁶ Cláudio Aguiar, *Francisco Julião, uma biografia: o homem e a política, as ligas camponesas e a reforma agrária, exílio e caso* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2014): 279.

³¹⁷ For example, see “Govêrno Janista de S. Paulo Espanca e Prende Operários,” *Novos Rumos*, January 1-7, 1960, 1 and “A Vassoura Ultrapassada,” *Novos Rumos*, March 7-13, 1959, 9.

³¹⁸ Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 188.

³¹⁹ Juan de Onis, “Quadros puts Case to People,” *New York Times*, August 27, 1961,

³²⁰ Ralph J. Burton, “Herbert Levy Comments on UDN Gains and Policies,” November 17, 1958; Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Political and National Defense Affairs of Brazil 1955-1959 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1511, roll 3); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

The conservative UDN was less enthused by Quadros' foreign policy proposals. During the campaign, he actively sought an invitation from the Cuban government to visit the island. Through backchannels, Fidel Castro extended invitations to Quadros and his main opponent, General Henrique Teixeira Lott of the PSD. When the staunchly anti-communist Lott refused, Quadros alone accepted Castro's overture, earning him goodwill among young progressives who admired the Cuban Revolution and its leaders, Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara.³²¹ "I will go to Cuba," Quadros declared to the consternation of his supporters in the UDN and in defiance of the boycott of that country by the United States and the Organization of American States, "I will meet with Fidel Castro to see and learn what they are doing over there."³²² Francisco Julião, an admirer of the Cuban Revolution who had strongly criticized Quadros in the past, was the only representative of the Brazilian Left who accepted Quadros' invitation to join him on his trip to Cuba. Despite American concerns that "ultra-nationalist groups" like the FPN and the Ala Moça of the PSD would push Lott to endorse their "extremist program," Quadros more vocally embraced an independent foreign policy that sought to lessen Brazil's reflective reliance on the United States and expand relations with the rest of the world, including the Soviet Union and China.³²³

Nationalist forces and organized labor vocally pushed for Goulart's nomination. As an editorial in *Folha de São Paulo* recognized in early 1960, Goulart alone could unite the various factions of the PTB, some more aggressive than others in pushing for reformist action. Goulart, "with all the defects that characterize his political activity and despite the serious reservations he has earned from the more enlightened members of the PTB itself, is the only name capable of

³²¹ Celso Furtado, *Obra autobiográfica*, 282.

³²² Tavares, *O dia em que Allende matou Getúlio*, 162.

³²³ Eric Wendelin, Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs, "Marshal Lott's Political Pronouncements," July 22, 1959; Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Political and National Defense Affairs of Brazil 1955-1959 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1511, roll 3); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

maximizing the electoral prospects of trabalhismo.”³²⁴ Meanwhile, Goulart equivocated when asked whether he would accept the nomination to once again serve as vice president to a PSD candidate. Running for the same position in 1955, Goulart had earned more votes than Kubitschek did for president. He grew frustrated, however, as Kubitschek failed to deliver on the promises of social and political reform the PTB had made during the campaign. Kubitschek’s shortcomings, according to Goulart, meant that the PTB had no “moral force to return to the public square and promise the same things it promised in vain” in 1955. Goulart accused the president and the PSD of exploiting trabalhismo.³²⁵

The PTB’s support of Kubitschek had deeply divided the party, creating internal pressure to shore up its ideological foundations and move away from the personalism that defined its leadership since the days of Getúlio Vargas. A 1955 editorial in *Última Hora* crystalized the problem for many of the PTB’s ideologues when it favorably equated trabalhismo to getulismo, referring to the governing style and popular appeal of Getúlio Vargas. Goulart, the paper noted, represented getulismo more than anything else, “and in this resides his importance or his strength.”³²⁶ By the late 1950s, segments of the PTB chafed at Goulart’s uncontested power within the party and the idea of playing second fiddle to the PSD. This resentment ultimately led a group to break from the PTB to form the Renovating Labor Movement (Movimento Trabalhista Renovador, or MTR) under the leadership of former PTB Congressman Fernando Ferrari, who criticized what he saw as cravenness and ideological bankruptcy in the PTB.³²⁷ While the MTR called on trabalhistas to more explicitly define what they stood for, Goulart sought to placate the ideologically-driven members of his own party, as well as those more concerned with the maintenance of power, by insisting that the

³²⁴ “Para o que der e vier,” *Folha de São Paulo*, February 9, 1960, 3.

³²⁵ “As condições de Jango,” *O Cruzeiro*, February 13, 1960, 96.

³²⁶ “Vence o trabalhismo a batalha da legalidade,” *Última Hora*, March 14, 1955. 4.

³²⁷ For more on MTR, see Fernando Ferrari, *Mensagem renovadora* (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1960), and Fernando Ferrari, *Minha campanha* (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1961).

PTB's endorsement of Lott occur on his terms.

The traditional power brokers of the PSD during the Kubitschek presidency failed to recognize the ways in which urbanization, industrialization, and development were changing the political climate. By resisting the reformism of the *Ala Moça*, they pulled the party further from the moderate center-right position it had traditionally occupied. This contributed to the growth of the PTB and the instability brewing in the political system.³²⁸ By 1960, broader segments of the UDN also recognized the need for the party to change. The so-called *Bossa Nova* group supported Quadros's foreign policy proposals but noted that the “the broom by itself”—referring to Quadros's campaign symbol signifying a promise to sweep out corruption—was less likely to move voters in the future. This new wing of the UDN would formally launch in April 1961 at the party's convention in Recife. The PTB, PSD, and UDN thus all sought to adapt to the transformational Kubitschek presidency. Of the three major parties, the PTB was undoubtedly the most committed to social and political reforms even as it faced its own internal divisions over ideology and tactics.

The electoral calculation for those committed to nationalist reforms was clear if less than promising. Despite their growing confidence, Goulart and the PTB knew they could not yet win a presidential contest without the far-reaching PSD machine. At the same time, the endorsement of the PTB, Brazil's fastest-growing political party, was critical to Lott's electoral viability. Both sides thus decided to preserve their alliance at the national level even as the relationship frayed in state and local elections across the country. Goulart's public hesitation to join with Lott was a clear attempt to extract policy concessions from the PSD. It allowed him to secure a strong hold over Lott's platform. San Tiago Dantas, for example, one of the most important PTB intellectuals, drafted Lott's economic policy which defended the continued state monopoly over oil exploration in Brazil

³²⁸ Hippolito, *De raposas e reformistas*, 170-171.

and a profit-remittance law.³²⁹ Goulart's machinations to ensure PSD support for a reformist agenda demonstrated his abilities as a political tactician and, it seems fair to say, a genuine commitment to progressive policy changes.³³⁰

On February 17-18, 1960, the PTB held its convention in Rio de Janeiro to formally endorse Lott's candidacy for president and to nominate João Goulart for vice president. The front page of *Última Hora* declared Lott and Goulart the "popular ticket" for the 1960 election. A headline the following day quoted Lott as saying he wanted to be "the workers' candidate."³³¹ By March, the PSD and PTB ticket was formalized but relations between the two remained uneasy. Legislation favored by the PTB languished in Congress, dominated by the PSD. This placed Lott in the delicate position of criticizing the opposition, most prominently the UDN, for holding up reformist measures while the PTB held Lott's party responsible. "It is very hard to say whether the bills pertaining to strikes, profit remittances, and the nationalization of bank deposits, among others, will be approved before the elections. Because that depends on congress and the opposition," Lott said in São Paulo state before officially kicking off the campaign. The opposition, he argued, had worked consistently against the achievements of the Kubitschek administration, like the construction of Brasília and Furnas, Brazil's first large-scale hydroelectric plant. He continued: "They might also say that these laws are in the interest of my candidacy and that of my partner Dr. João Goulart. I agree. But before that they are in the nation's interest." He hoped to have the issues resolved before voters went to the polls in October. Lott was clearly trying to link himself to the most visible accomplishments of the outgoing president while diverting attention from his party's intransigence on progressive reforms demanded by the *trabalhistas* and communists. Goulart, for his part, sensed that the PSD was closer to the UDN on legislative matters than to the PTB. The PTB thus largely withdrew from

³²⁹ "As condições de Jango," *O Cruzeiro*, February 13, 1960, 97.

³³⁰ See, for example, "Base popular para lançar Jango como vice de Lott," *Diário Carioca*, January 27, 1960, 1.

³³¹ "Lott: 'Quero ser sobretudo o candidato dos trabalhadores'," *Última Hora*, February 19, 1960, 4.

acting in the Kubitschek administration even as they held onto the key ministries of agriculture and labor.

The marriage of necessity between both parties forced their standard-bearers to publicly downplay ideological tensions. As Lott began his campaign on the evening of March 3, he appeared in Três Rios, a small city in the interior of Rio de Janeiro state, alongside local representatives of the PSD and PTB. The parties were staunch opponents locally but PTB congressman Bocayuva Cunha observed in his remarks that they shared an interest in the outcome of the presidential race. Lott agreed, noting that victory was possible only if his party maintained a harmonious relationship with Goulart. By May, 1800 Nationalist Lott-Jango Committees had formed in several states, further linking the candidates to one another.

Meanwhile, the PCB was opening a debate in the pages of the communist press regarding the party's positions in the 1960s. This reflected a commitment to transparency in the wake of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which in 1956 exposed the horrors of Stalinism and inspired reforms in communist parties around the world. The discussions also foreshadowed the fault lines that would cause some members to abandon the party in 1962. Critiquing the March 1958 declaration that reoriented the PCB toward nationalism and reformism, Carlos Danielli argued for greater specificity in how the party discussed its alliances. There was a difference, he observed, between a united nationalist and democratic front on one hand and the short-term alliances communists might make with large landowners and industrialists on the other. The former could produce radical change and satisfy the demands of the "current stage of the Brazilian revolution" while the latter did nothing to alter Brazil's fortunes in the long run. Pedro Pomar made a similar point when he reflected on the communists' experience supporting Vargas in the war against fascism only to be cast again into illegality a few years later. Pomar worried about sacrificing the party's historical internationalism in the service of a broad-based nationalism that

could ultimately undermine the communists' credibility among workers.³³² For Danielli, the FPN was a positive force but it lacked stability and mass support. He explained that this was because the FPN and its nationalist allies feared alienating their more conservative partners by whole-heartedly endorsing an aggressive leftist platform.³³³

The opposing case was made in the same publication by Laura Austregésilo who argued that the PCB should work to preserve party unity. In her view, the current stage of the Brazilian revolution demanded that all action be dedicated to the independent development of the nation, including withdrawing from the Cold War and establishing diplomatic relations with the entire world—including the Soviet Union.³³⁴ From his arguments, it does not surprise that Danielli would later be part of the dissident faction that broke off from the PCB to form the more militant Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunista do Brasil, or PCdoB) in 1962. Danielli and like-minded communists considered the party line, embraced by Austregésilo, too cautious. In its place, they advocated for insurrection in the countryside along the lines of the 1949 Chinese revolution led by Mao Zedong.

If nationalism expressed primarily in economic terms could attract support from across the political spectrum in the 1950s, by the early 1960s leftist nationalists thought the movement needed to make explicit its support for structural reforms. Brazilian communists were not content to establish nationalism as a legitimate political vocabulary employed broadly in the halls of congress. Some thought it needed to produce results, even if that meant narrowing its coalition.

Not all communists felt this way. Indeed, a key divide within the Left seemed to center on the nature and size of the coalition needed to enact nationalist reforms. Segments within the PTB and PCB chafed at the imperative of supporting Lott, generally seen as an honorable man but

³³² Pedro Pomar, "Observações sobre o artigo do camarada Prestes," *Novos Rumos*, August 12-18, 1960, 6.

³³³ Carlos Danielli, "Sobre as teses para discussão," *Novos Rumos*, May 6-12, 1960, 4.

³³⁴ Laura Austregésilo, "Caminho novo para a revolução brasileira," *Novos Rumos*, August 12-18, 1960, 6.

nevertheless affiliated with the hidebound PSD. Those divisions would fester and eventually shake up the Left. In 1960, however, there was virtually unqualified support for the Lott-Jango ticket in the pages of *Novos Rumos* and *Última Hora*, key progressive newspapers. According to the main communist publication, for example, Lott always approached problems from a nationalist position with the goal of emancipating the Brazilian people in mind while Quadros hid his defense of reactionary interests behind a shameless demagogic exterior.³³⁵ Such was the choice presented to readers.

As the campaign unfolded, there was little sign in the progressive press that Lott might lose the election. Quadros, however, through political schizophrenia or strategic mastery, managed to make key sectors of the electorate believe they agreed with him. For the anti-communists, he was a moralizing crusader who would not abide foreign subversion. For some nationalists, he was committed to an independent foreign policy that would assert Brazil's position in the world. For workers, he was the uncouth dynamo from humble origins who fought relentlessly for the common man. Lott was respected among the armed forces but staid on the stump. Speaking about nationalism, he was long-winded, pedantic, and inaccessible. His daughter, by contrast, became a star on the campaign trail, going on nationalist excursions throughout the country making fiery pronouncements about the potential of the election to reshape Brazil's destiny. As the campaign wore on, segments of the PTB successfully and not-so-subtly encouraged voters to embrace a "Jan-Jan" ticket—Jânio Quadros for president and João "Jango" Goulart for vice president—in order to untie its leader from the sinking Lott candidacy. This "ticket," denounced as a treasonous "tumor" by the nationalist *O Semanário*, was made possible by the fact that between 1945 and 1960 candidates for president and vice president were elected individually and not as a ticket.³³⁶ In the final days

³³⁵ "Lott e Jânio apontam no Conclap caminhos opostos para o Brasil: emancipação ou entreguismo," *Novos Rumos*, September 9-15, 1960, 1.

³³⁶ "Frota Moreira fura, em São Paulo, o tumor dos comitês Jânio-Jango," *O Semanário*, June 4-10, 1960, 4.

before the election Luiz Carlos Prestes took to the pages of *Novos Rumos* to make a closing argument for the putatively nationalist ticket. Lott and Goulart's victory, he argued, would represent "a new step in the struggle for Brazil's complete emancipation, the struggle for progress and the happiness of our people." Prestes defended three basic policies: agrarian reform, extending voting rights to illiterates, and legalizing the PCB. "The nationalist victory," he argued, "will be a new and significant defeat for the forces interested in keeping Brazil dependent and backward, exploited by North-American monopolies and submissive to the policies imposed by them."³³⁷

The appeal was insufficient. The charismatic Quadros, who throughout the campaign attacked the inflation and high cost of living left by Kubitschek, won the election with forty-eight percent of the vote. Almost two million more people voted for him than Lott, his nearest competitor (Adhemar de Barros, the powerful former governor of São Paulo, also ran, winning only the state of Rondônia). The tiny Trotskyist Revolutionary Worker's Party (Partido Operário Revolucionário, or POR) declared the PCB and PTB the biggest losers in the election "because they stubbornly refused to offer an independent response" to the status quo "and associated themselves to the lost cause of the bourgeois sector in the [Kubitschek] administration."³³⁸ While the significance of Quadros's margin of victory has been disputed, he clearly channeled the electorate's hunger for a fresh independent voice, as the POR suggested.³³⁹ However, the PTB and PCB were hardly as damaged as the Trotskyists in the POR asserted.

Between 1958 and 1962, the number of PTB congressmen jumped from 66 to 116, an uptick that Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira attributes to the party's increasingly overt embrace of social and

³³⁷ Luiz Carlos Prestes, "As urnas, para a vitória," *Novos Rumos*, September 30-October 6, 1960, 1.

³³⁸ "Balanço das eleições e perspectivas para o próximo governo," *Frente Operária*, No. 43, November 1960. Cited in Murilo Leal, *À esquerda da esquerda: trotskistas, comunistas e populistas no Brasil Contemporâneo, (1952-1966)* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2003): 111.

³³⁹ Claudio Bojunga argues that Quadros's victory was not so impressive, pointing out that he failed to reach an absolute majority. See Claudio Bojunga, *O artista do impossível* (Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2001): 569-570. In Daniel Aarão Reis's view, Quadros won handily. Daniel Aarão Reis, *Luiz Carlos Prestes: Um revolucionário entre dois mundos* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014): 290.

political reforms.³⁴⁰ Goulart won the vice-presidency by a few hundred thousand votes over UDN candidate Milton Campos, exceeding Lott's total vote count at the top of the ticket. This meant that the PTB would maintain important parts of the federal government pertaining to labor and pensions under its control. The party also elected several governors and expanded its presence in rural areas traditionally dominated by the PSD. For its part, the PCB could not count on regaining its legal status under Quadros, but Lott, the self-avowed progressive candidate, had also made clear he would not allow the PCB to formally reenter the political arena. If anything, Quadros had made more significant gestures to the Soviet bloc than the stern General Lott ever had. The PCB and PTB moved closer together, jointly deciding to reinforce their activities among popular sectors in unions, Peasant Leagues, and other civic organizations.³⁴¹ As *Novos Rumos* argued in acknowledging defeat, the election had been edifying for the Brazilian people. The campaign, concerned primarily with the nationalist agenda, had fortified the position of nationalist forces to make reformist demands going forward.³⁴² The PTB in particular was poised to play a critical national role when Quadros stepped down less than eight months into his term. The PCB would remain critical of Goulart until 1963 when he decided to abandon his strategy of courting conservative support for structural reforms in favor of assembling a vocal Leftist coalition to pressure wary legislators. Only then did the PCB and PTB, the most important reformist entities, formally unite. The more impactful outcome of the 1960 election, given the way history unfolded, was thus the increasingly firm commitment within the PTB to structural reforms, a tendency that predated the election but gained force in the crucible of electoral competition and drew it closer to the PCB.

In September, the First National Convention of the Nationalist Movement declared nationalism the means through which “the individual in underdeveloped regions sees the possibility

³⁴⁰ Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira, *O governo João Goulart: as lutas sociais no Brasil, 1961-1964* (8th ed., São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2010): 144.

³⁴¹ Delgado, *PTB: do getulismo ao reformismo*, 232-233.

³⁴² “Movimento nacionalista avançou com as eleições,” *Novos Rumos*, October 7-13, 1960, 1.

of promoting his liberation from economic misery, cultural backwardness, and political servitude stemming from the long period of colonial or semicolonial exploitation that keeps scores of human beings subjugated to the interests of inhabitants of privileged areas, and in fact only benefits the dominant classes of colonial countries.”³⁴³ This language marked a radicalization of nationalist rhetoric from the early days of the FPN less than five years earlier. Even though Quadros won, the 1960 campaign demonstrated the steadily growing political strength of the nationalist Left—led by segments of the PTB and PCB—and foreshadowed the conflicts that would come to a head less than five years later.

The Quadros Moment

In the first issue of *O Semanário* published in 1961, the paper’s founder Oswaldo Costa penned an editorial establishing the decidedly combative tone the publication would take during the Quadros presidency. He lamented the lack of organization that still plagued parts of the nationalist movement as well as the support Quadros had been able to muster from avowed nationalists. Nevertheless, Costa took heart in the fact that nationalists had definitively inserted their agenda into the national debate. Nationalists would continue to pursue the reforms they deemed necessary, Costa proclaimed, through peaceful means if possible but through force if not. “We are not against anyone: we are in favor of Brazil. But, if they want war, they shall have war. Because our aim is to free our country or die for it. It is independence or death,” he concluded, echoing the calls of bygone martyrs.³⁴⁴

In early February, the FPN chose *O Semanário* to be its official press organ. This meant the weekly newspaper would now devote specific space in every issue to update readers on the activities

³⁴³ “1º convenção nacional do Movimento Nacionalista Brasileiro — declaração de princípios,” *O Semanário*, September 24-30, 1960, 5.

³⁴⁴ Oswaldo Costa, “Movimento nacionalista: balanço de 60 e perspectivas de 61,” *O Semanário*, January 1-7, 1961, 3.

of the FPN. The nationalist publication had, of course, been closely following the FPN since its creation but the formalization of the bond represented the increasing organizational and institutional weight of the FPN. It was already the largest parliamentary bloc. Now it had an official voice in the press. While the pages devoted to the FPN reported on events in congress, the rest of the paper focused on political developments in the various states, with special attention paid to agrarian reform efforts.

The necessity of ardent opposition against Quadros proved fleeting, however, as he stepped down after only seven months in office. His domestic agenda had been characterized by moralizing measures that appealed to conservatives. His military ministers were of the Right and his economic team was referred to in *Novos Rumos* as a department of the International Monetary Fund.³⁴⁵ They pushed Quadros to pursue austerity measures that might improve Brazil's ability to borrow money from abroad. This helped the country's fiscal standing but did little to improve the lives of the ordinary people who had elected him. As São Paulo state senator José Rocha Mendes Filho of the PTB put it, "the people must be thinking: 'Hell, when we elected this man beans cost this much, rice cost this much and now it costs three times that and the minimum wage does not go up.'" He pointed out that nothing in the country had changed since Quadros' inauguration. There had been no land reform, no response to the unemployment crisis roiling the nation and São Paulo in particular, "and this state government, which is a copy, a miniature of the federal government, carries out here, at the state level, the policies of Mr. Jânio Quadros."³⁴⁶ While Quadros had been president for less than seven months, he displayed little aptitude for decisive economic action. This helps to explain the dearth of popular support for Quadros when he decided to step down.

More than anything, the Quadros presidency became most associated with the independent

³⁴⁵ Orlando Bomfim Jr., "Confirmação," *Novos Rumos*, February 3-9, 1961, 1.

³⁴⁶ *Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo*, No. 192, Suplementos, Saturday, August 26, 1961, 9.

foreign policy promised during the campaign. He supported Cuba's right to self-rule and reestablishing trade relations with the Soviet Union, moves that unsettled policymakers in Washington even as President John F. Kennedy held out hope that Quadros would help staunch the advance of communism in the Americas. His decision to grant Che Guevara the Order of the Southern Cross, the highest honor the Brazilian government can bestow upon a foreigner, infuriated Quadros' conservative backers while earning personal plaudits from Luiz Carlos Prestes. Quadros also maintained that the Brazilian government did not oppose foreign capital, in fact, it needed investments from abroad. The only condition, however, "is that the gradual nationalization of profits be accepted, for otherwise it no longer is an element of progress but becomes a mere leech feeding on our national effort."³⁴⁷ He spoke of economic emancipation and development in terms that appealed to many self-avowed nationalists, though he was continuously excoriated in the pages of *O Semanário*, *Novos Rumos*, and *Última Hora*. Oswaldo Costa denounced Quadros' foreign policy as too timid and ultimately unwilling to challenge the economic imperatives of imperialism.³⁴⁸ Orlando Bomfim Jr. in *Novos Rumos* argued that Quadros' move to reestablish ties with the Soviet Union was achieved by the people despite, not because of, the president.³⁴⁹ In February, *O Semanário* published a photo on its front page of Quadros asleep during a hearing in congress. That was not nationalism, the ironic caption read. "Nobody can sleep when the nation is being robbed by foreign economic hordes. Nationalism is vigilance," it continued.³⁵⁰ The constant insinuation was that Quadros lacked both the focus and disposition to be a reliable nationalist.

In the final days of the short-lived Quadros presidency, Brazil signed the Declaration of Punta del Este that formally created the Alliance for Progress, a pillar of the Kennedy administration's plans for Latin American development and hemispheric cooperation. The Alliance for Progress was

³⁴⁷ See Quadros, "Brazil's New Foreign Policy," 23.

³⁴⁸ Oswaldo Costa, "A política interna e a política externa do governo," *O Semanário*, March 17-24, 1961, 2.

³⁴⁹ Orlando Bomfim Jr., "O único caminho," *Novos Rumos*, July 28-August 3, 1961, 1.

³⁵⁰ See *O Semanário*, February 16-23, 1961, 1.

based on a premise gaining ground as the 1960s began, namely that American policymakers had to make more strategic and aggressive use of foreign aid in impoverished areas of the world in order to steer political outcomes away from communist interference.³⁵¹

This strategy owed much to modernization theory, a set of ideas born in American academia after World War II and embraced by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations as “a means of understanding the process of global change and identifying ways the United States could accelerate, channel, and direct it.”³⁵² For example, the Kennedy administration, recognizing the potential of land disputes to mobilize and radicalize Latin America’s vast peasantry, formally endorsed “programs of comprehensive agrarian reform leading to the effective transformation, where required, of unjust structures and systems of land tenure.”³⁵³ Politicians, scholars, and policymakers who embraced modernization theory, while staunchly anti-communist, “imagined that they might promote progressive social and economic development...[and] many of them anticipated that they might radically improve the overall quality of life of some of the poorest regions of the world.”³⁵⁴ Indeed, “modernization also reflected aspirations deeply embedded in U.S. liberalism,” according to Michael E. Latham.³⁵⁵ President John F. Kennedy expressed a similar sentiment six years earlier in his inaugural address, proclaiming: “To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.” Enabling poor but promising countries like Brazil to achieve their potential was thus presented as both a political and moral imperative. The program nevertheless

³⁵¹ Jeffrey Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America* (New York: Routledge, 2007): 11.

³⁵² Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and “Nation Building” in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000): 2.

³⁵³ Title I, No. 6 of “The Charter of Punta Del Este: Establishing an Alliance for Progress within the Framework of Operation Pan America, August 17, 1961.” For full text see Appendix B in Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy*, 205-223.

³⁵⁴ Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011): 37.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

emphasized self-help and aversion to charity so as to underscore the key message that Alliance for Progress organizers sought to impart: Latin American governments had to be encouraged to seize their own destiny responsibly with prodding, not handholding, from Washington.

Quadros' tense and volatile presidency can be explained in large part by his disdain for congress and the limits of executive authority. He once purportedly observed to his minister of foreign affairs that in London a red light always shines atop the Palace of Westminster where the two houses of parliament meet. Every British citizen, the president mused, would take up arms to keep that symbolic light from shutting off. "It is the light of freedom for the people; the signal of their participation in the government of the State . . . Minister, would you take up arms to defend this congress we have?" Elsewhere, the president supposedly claimed only "fifteen or sixteen" congressmen out of close to five hundred were worthy of his respect.³⁵⁶ Despite his low opinion of the political establishment, Quadros had engineered a meteoric rise to the presidency that clearly led him to believe he could manipulate political forces to his own advantage.

Two days before Quadros stepped down, Tereza Delta of the National Labor Party (Partido Trabalhista Nacional, or PTN) spoke in the São Paulo State Assembly, criticizing Carlos Lacerda and his allies for once again creating a hostile climate for a sitting president. "This August 24 closely resembles that of 1954," she stated, arguing that Quadros' courageously independent foreign policy that resisted the dichotomy of the Cold War had left him isolated within his own administration with no military support just like Vargas in the days leading to his suicide. Denouncing imperialism, foreign economic interests, and the conservative UDN, she urged Quadros to, "beware the fascist shadows that surround you!"³⁵⁷

For his part, speaking in the same legislative body, Jethero de Faria Cardoso of the Brazilian

³⁵⁶ John W.F. Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil: Political-Military Crises 1955-1964* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970): 432.

³⁵⁷ Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, No. 192, Suplementos, Saturday, August 26, 1961, 6.

Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Brasileiro, or PSB) agreed that the national situation had not much changed since 1954. Referring to Vargas' suicide note, he observed that Quadros confronted many of the same obstacles the former president had identified, such as conservative domestic interests and foreign economic powers. Cardoso said he differed from Quadros on a host of issues but agreed with him generally on foreign affairs. Arguing for a continued commitment to the constitution, he proclaimed, "we cannot reduce the presidency of the republic to dust." Vargas was held in especially high regard by parties associated with nationalist causes and labor unions, but even parties on the Right made no point of overtly criticizing the fallen president on the anniversary of his demise. Less than a decade after his death, Vargas' suicide had done much to ensure that his legacy would be safe from direct attacks. Quadros understood this, as indicated by his attempt to coopt some of the Vargas mystique upon his resignation.

Like Vargas, Quadros had drafted a letter to the Brazilian people purporting to explain his motives. The document was vague and laden with tropes other Brazilian leaders had used in the past to justify dramatic action. As Ruth Leacock writes, "Quadros, like Vargas, mentioned unspecified foreign and domestic forces that had conspired against him as he labored tirelessly to liberate Brazil" from economic and political subjugation. "Unlike Vargas, who had been ousted by the military and omitted any reference to them in his last testament, Quadros put in a favorable reference, thus tacitly endorsing an interim military junta," Leacock observes.³⁵⁸ Indeed, multiple sources indicate that Quadros hoped for a temporary military government that would block Goulart from taking power and force his return.

Furthermore, just as Vargas had blamed "a subterranean campaign of international groups joined with national interests" for his downfall, Quadros denounced the "corruption, lies, and

³⁵⁸ Ruth Leacock, *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961-1969* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1990): 44. See Leacock for Quadros' letter translated in its entirety, pp. 44-45.

cowardice which subordinated the general interests to the appetites and ambitions of individual groups, including foreign ones.” “In these seven months I fulfilled my duty,” he proclaimed, “I have fulfilled it day and night, working indefatigably without prejudice and without animosity. But I have been frustrated in my efforts to take the nation on the road of its true political and economic freedom.” Along the same lines, Vargas had “fought month after month, day after day, hour after hour, resisting constant, incessant pressures, unceasingly bearing it all in silence, forgetting everything and giving myself in order to defend the people that now fall abandoned.” Quadros clearly hoped to paint himself with the Vargas brush, a strategy that if successful might place his political intentions above suspicion and perhaps even reward him with increased powers. Instead, as John W.F. Dulles writes, many in the press simply “dismissed [Quadros] as a spoiled and unpredictable eccentric who drank too much and would not play ball unless he always had his own way.”³⁵⁹ The similarities between Quadros’ and Vargas’ letters were striking but their effect could not have been more different.

After Quadros abruptly relinquished his office, the legislature moved quickly to avert civil unrest. That Quadros had no control over the political response to his actions demonstrates how tenuous his attachment was to the rightwing political forces that had enabled his rise. “An enormous charisma allowed [Quadros] to manipulate various sectors of society, without rooting himself in any one place,” Celso Furtado writes, attributing this to Quadros’ “incompetence” as a political organizer.³⁶⁰ I would argue that Quadros’ political career reflects not incompetence but a general unwillingness to follow the informal rules of politics as established in the post-1945 order.³⁶¹ Unlike, say, Goulart or Carlos Lacerda, Quadros had no history with any one party. Political parties may

³⁵⁹ Dulles, *Unrest in Brazil*, 143.

³⁶⁰ Celso Furtado, *Obra autobiográfica* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014): 319.

³⁶¹ Felipe Loureiro makes this point in his insightful study of relations between Quadros and Congress. See Felipe Pereira Loureiro, “Varrendo a democracia: considerações sobre as relações políticas entre Jânio Quadros e o Congresso Nacional,” *Revista Brasileira de História*, Vol. 29, No. 57 (2009): 187-208.

have been largely flexible in their ideological affinities but the most successful politicians were closely identified with one party and demonstrated an ability, if not an eagerness, to navigate the dubious ethical terrain of Brazilian government. Quadros' anti-partisan platform obviously helped him win the presidency but it crippled his ability to notch significant accomplishments.

There was some international and domestic precedent for Quadros' gambit, which historians generally interpret as an attempt to rally popular support and regain the office with expanded powers: Charles de Gaulle withdrew from politics in 1947 until the deterioration of the Fourth Republic led to popular acclaim for his return. He then presided over a transitional administration tasked with writing a new constitution. In Latin America, there were the examples of Juan Perón in Argentina and, of course, Vargas in Brazil who was removed from office by a military coup in 1945 only to be elected president in 1950. Quadros had pulled a similar stunt while running for office, temporarily withdrawing from the presidential race in November 1959 only to reenter the campaign with a freer hand after pleading from segments of the military and the UDN.

In the moment, however, the resignation was so confounding that observers could not but speculate as to what was really afoot. The PCB, for example, embraced the cryptic denunciation of powerful economic forces in Quadros' resignation letter. The communist paper blamed Carlos Lacerda and "antinational" forces for stymieing the president who they conceded had taken some positive steps in foreign affairs. Congressman Almino Affonso, leader of the PTB in congress and future minister of labor, suspected that Quadros was attempting to stage a coup. Affonso feared that Quadros would seek to return with dictatorial powers, crippling the democratic system in place since 1946. During a speech in congress, he pointed to Quadros' exceedingly vague resignation letter as evidence of either political incompetence or dastardly intent on the part of the former president.

The only thing that was clear in the early aftermath of Quadros' resignation was that the incumbent military ministers—Gabriel Grün Moss of the air force, Silvio Heck of the navy, and

Minister of War Odílio Denys of the army—would not allow Vice President João Goulart to return from China where Quadros had sent him on a trade mission, likely to keep him at arm's length while he carried out his political maneuver. In an emergency issue of *Novos Rumos* put out the day after Quadros' resignation (the paper was normally published weekly), Luiz Carlos Prestes proclaimed that the only way to prevent calamity was for Goulart to immediately take over as president.³⁶² The PCB and *O Semanário* had fiercely opposed Quadros throughout his short presidency but they did not support his resignation, which in their view constituted a soft kind of overthrow. They defended their own political preferences by calling for Goulart to become president but also democratic order. The constitution may have mandated that the vice president take office but powerful members of the armed forces made it clear that Goulart would first need to go through them. The situation had the makings of a major crisis.

Goulart's Ascension

One idea that seems to have occurred to lawmakers in Brasília relatively quickly was the adoption of a parliamentary system of government. This would allow Goulart to take office but in a reduced capacity, placating those demanding that the vice president assume the highest office, as the constitution dictated, as well as those suspicious of the former minister of labor, who would be rendered largely powerless in the new regime. For years, Raul Pila, an old politician from Rio Grande do Sul, had frequently presented a constitutional amendment that would do away with the current system and institute a parliamentary regime. He even founded a party dedicated to advancing the cause of parliamentarism, the Liberating Party (Partido Libertador, or PL), a minor player in national affairs. Few but Pila seemed to believe in the viability of his platform.³⁶³ As the early disarray over

³⁶² "Prestes lança manifesto – solução para a crise: Jango na presidência," *Novos Rumos*, August 26, 1961, 1.

³⁶³ Affonso Heliodoro, *JK: exemplo e desafio*, 2. ed. rev. e ampliada (Brasília: Thesaurus, 2005): 179.

Quadros' resignation subsided in Brasília, however, several congressmen rushed to meet with Pila, known as "the pope of parliamentarism." After the meeting, they were convinced that a constitutional amendment modifying the current system should be taken up as quickly as possible to defuse the conflict before it could escalate further. In a statement likely intended to goad congressmen into taking urgent measures, Pila told the *Folha de São Paulo* that an amendment could not be voted on immediately since there was a slow-moving formal procedure to be observed. A few hours later, lawmakers conducted a stealthy campaign to modify the internal rules of the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of congress, to allow an "ultra-fast proceeding" for the constitutional amendment. As Speaker of the House Ranieri Mazzilli became interim president, Pila commented on the situation facing the nation: "This the natural course of the presidential system. I hope this is the end of it."³⁶⁴

On the evening of Quadros' resignation, a number of his supporters gathered in São Paulo (where Quadros had flown after stepping down) outside the city council building, singing the national anthem and carrying signs calling for Quadros to return and for the assassination of Carlos Lacerda. In the days leading up to August 25, Lacerda, Quadros' erstwhile supporter who had become an outspoken opponent of his foreign policy, alleged the president had sought his support for a coup. Quadros' backers believed that Lacerda's accusations had forced the president into a corner. The fact that he had led the crusade against Vargas only seven years earlier added to Lacerda's aura of culpability. There was minor agitation throughout the city; the army and police forces moved quickly to shore up security at the American consulate, the homes of foreign diplomats, newspaper headquarters, and other strategic locations. The president of the State Assembly Roberto Costa de Abreu Sodré declared that, "with the aid, patriotism, public spirit, and courage of paulista lawmakers, I will defend, at any price, the integrity of this legislative body, in the certainty that it will

³⁶⁴ "Pila: É o curso natural do regime presidencialista," *Folha de São Paulo*, August 26, 1961, 3.

continue to represent the people of São Paulo and that we can find a formula for ensuring democratic continuity.”³⁶⁵ Despite the concerns of law enforcement and state legislators, the tumult soon abated. The critical mass Quadros sought did not coalesce and his gambit failed. Shortly thereafter his resignation was juridically recognized as a “unilateral act of volition” and was thus not submitted to further scrutiny by congressional committees. Quadros’ ersatz martyrdom had not paid off.

Following the weekend of Quadros’ resignation, São Paulo Governor Carlos Alberto Alves de Carvalho Pinto proclaimed that the situation in his state had returned to normal. The governor asserted that the country’s elected leaders were dutifully following the constitution by elevating Mazzilli to the presidency until a more permanent arrangement could be agreed upon. He was confident that the political class would devise a sensible solution to the crisis. But political ingenuity was unnecessary: an impartial reading of the constitution clearly held that the vice president, João Goulart, should be immediately sworn in as president. Yet in his remarks shortly after Quadros’ resignation Carvalho Pinto did not mention Goulart who was still abroad pending an indication that he could return safely to Brazil. Indeed, in a sign of how fluid and uncertain the political situation was, an interviewer asked the governor whether he would accept the presidency under any circumstances. Pinto rejected the notion but not on constitutional grounds. He remained committed to his constituents, he said, even if congress decided to indirectly elect a new president and name him to the office. The governor had established an identity as a technocratic politician who took measured stances on issues rather than relying on inflammatory rhetoric. His campaign slogan—“more governance and less politics”—indicated he would not be a fiery populist in the mold of governors like Leonel Brizola of Rio Grande do Sul, Miguel Arraes of Pernambuco, or Quadros

³⁶⁵ “Coesa a Assembléia Paulista em defesa das instituições,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, August 26, 1961, 4.

himself, a key ally in the 1958 mayoral election.³⁶⁶ In neglecting to point out that Goulart was Quadros' legitimate successor, Pinto likely believed he was embracing a nonpartisan position that would allow him to remain above the fray as congress worked out a solution to the crisis. This supposedly apolitical stance was, of course, loaded with political considerations.

The national and statewide debate that followed over the succession crisis was fraught with what seemed to be existential dilemmas for Brazilian democracy: was Goulart the only possible replacement, as the constitution explicitly held? Could Goulart's association with labor unions and radical nationalists on the Left legitimately be held against him? What did it take to disqualify a potential president from consideration? Despite the anti-Goulart machinations of the incumbent military ministers, lawmakers in the São Paulo State Assembly, a useful test case of national political debate distilled to the state, stood resolutely in favor of the vice president's ascension to the highest office. Perhaps guided in their actions by remembrances from the recent anniversary of Vargas' suicide, they unanimously opposed an arbitrary maneuver by the military to keep Quadros' rightful successor—who happened to be a prominent Vargas protégé—from taking office. Several lawmakers also referenced São Paulo's traditional, self-proclaimed role as a guardian of constitutionalism in a nation given to favoring strongmen. Finally, in a pragmatic sense, the parties represented in the São Paulo State Assembly favored preserving the current system because many hoped to launch their own candidates for the presidency in 1965. The PSD for example, well-represented in the state legislature, made no secret of its intentions to once again nominate former president Juscelino Kubitschek. The prospect of future elections joined the various political parties in defense of the constitution.

Lawmakers in the state of São Paulo conspicuously touched upon the same set of motivations when justifying their support for Goulart: maintaining the independent foreign policy introduced

³⁶⁶ Áureo Busetto, *A democracia cristã no Brasil: princípios e práticas* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2002): 131-133.

by Quadros, purportedly threatened by the same forces blocking the vice president's ascension; preventing the armed forces from unduly influencing the political process; honoring the will of the electorate; and respecting the constitution. Overlapping arguments might be expected in a chamber dominated overwhelmingly by one or two parties that could effectively steer the response of its members. In fact, however, twelve parties of varying political orientations and priorities were represented in the ALESP, making explicit coordination difficult if not impossible. During the 1960 presidential campaign, some had supported the nationalist ticket of Goulart for vice president and Henrique Teixeira Lott for president while other, generally more conservative parties, endorsed Quadros and Milton Campos of the UDN for vice president. There were also those who had supported Quadros for president and Goulart for vice president, a "ticket" made possible by the fact that between 1945 and 1960 candidates for president and vice president were elected individually and not together on a ticket. There were thus distinct electoral coalitions represented in the ALESP. Unlike in subsequent crises, however, lawmakers expressed a shared understanding of the constitution and endorsed a similar course of action for the nation.

While some military men conspired to thwart Goulart's ascension, others proclaimed fealty to the constitution. On August 26, General Lott, the face of the nationalist wing of the armed forces, issued a statement calling for a constitutional outcome. In his address, Lott said he had spoken with Minister of War Denys to ask that he abandon the "violence" of his position, to no avail. Although he was no longer on active duty, Lott called on students, workers, intellectuals, and "the people in general" to take a firm position in defense of the constitution. Shortly thereafter, he was placed under house arrest at his home in Rio de Janeiro.³⁶⁷

Elsewhere, General José Machado Lopes was also making moves to counter anti-Goulart forces. In April 1961, he had been placed in charge of the Third Army in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande

³⁶⁷ "Lott preso (lançou manifesto): JK lança apela; censura em jornais," *Folha de São Paulo*, August 28, 1961, 2.

do Sul, Goulart's home state. The day after Quadros' resignation the governor of Rio Grande do Sul, Leonel Brizola—Goulart's brother-in-law—quickly put together a campaign to ensure that the vice president be sworn in. That same day, in response to Brizola's combative response, the Fifth Regional Air Command in Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul, was placed on alert. Brizola proceeded to cobble together a network of local radio stations that would continue to broadcast his appeals directly to the population. This network, dubbed the Chain of Legality (*Cadeia da Legalidade*), was consolidated on August 27 and allowed pro-Goulart forces to bypass attempts to censor the governor's vociferous calls for people to take to the streets—and take up arms, if necessary—to defend their native son's claim to the presidency. When the minister of war ordered the governor's mansion bombed in an air raid, Lopes broke with the federal government and pledged to support the constitution and Brizola's campaign for legality.³⁶⁸ Brizola's aggressive response to the crisis made him a hero to the Left.

In the São Paulo State Legislature, the aftermath of Quadros' resignation was characterized by appeals to democratic order; a faithful allegiance to the letter of the constitution; and invocations, implicit and explicit, of paulista exceptionalism.³⁶⁹ Leaders placed their support for constitutional procedure within the context of São Paulo's frequent role in the twentieth century as a check on the arbitrary excesses of the federal government, most notably in the Constitutionalist Revolt of 1932. Although their motivations differed, the parties represented in the São Paulo state assembly expressed similar reasons for endorsing Goulart's claim to the presidency, including respect for the electoral outcome of the 1960 election; observance of the procedural rules laid out in the 1946 constitution; an aversion to military interference in the political sphere, which for many had been a long-standing complaint against Vargas; and support for key policies initiated by Quadros,

³⁶⁸ For a journalistic account of the succession crisis following Quadros' resignation, see Juremir Machado da Silva, *Vozes da legalidade: política e imaginário na era do rádio* (Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2011).

³⁶⁹ For examples of the discourse of paulista exceptionalism see *Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo*, No. 195, Suplementos, Wednesday, August 30, 1961, 11.

particularly an independent foreign policy, that could be undone by unelected actors.

Cid Franco of the PSB, for example, emphasized the importance of Quadros' foreign policy, placing it within the context of anti-imperialism that animated the nationalist Left. The PCB, illegal since 1947, had run candidates through other parties like the PTB and PSB. Thus, it was not surprising that the language of anti-imperialism explicitly adopted by Brazilian leftists since the late 1950s was articulated in the São Paulo State Legislature. Franco argued that Quadros had been thwarted by the economic power of the United States, pointing out that, "whoever studies in our time the political and economic history of the underdeveloped nations of America, Asia, and Africa cannot ignore the terrible power of the trusts . . . that are the essential policy of the United States." The PSB had opposed Quadros in the election of 1960, and Franco took the time to note that he disagreed with the former president's domestic initiatives, but he praised his vision of foreign relations: "what a ridiculous position it would be for Brazil to not deal with such and such country in an age of cosmic flight! How ridiculous!"³⁷⁰ The unanimous vote of confidence by state senators in São Paulo is surprising given how events would unfold over the course of João Goulart's presidency.

By August 30, the national congress made it clear that they would insist upon the parliamentary solution to the crisis despite the reluctance of the joint chiefs of staff to accept any outcome that involved Goulart coming to power. The vice president himself was confident enough to assert to the press that he was on his way back to Brazil to be sworn in. As the conflict appeared to be approaching a resolution in congress, the heads of the three branches of the military once again denounced Goulart as a menace, arguing that his swearing in would only enflame tensions across the country. American consular officials reported profound discouragement as faith in the Brazilian "genius for compromise" dwindled amid rioting and street demonstrations. Civil war

³⁷⁰ Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, No. 195, Suplementos, Wednesday, August 30, 1961, 4.

seemed a very real prospect.³⁷¹ Yet, American officials in Brazil advised the Kennedy administration to remain neutral in the power struggle between Goulart and the military. A September 1 communique asserted that while a statement in support of the constitution would be in line with the traditional U.S. response to such crises, in the Brazilian case it would represent a clear endorsement of the vice president. This “would be deeply resented by those of our friends who support [the] effort of [the] military to exclude Goulart from [the] presidency.” Unlike Fidel Castro who denounced the Brazilian military, American officials argued, the U.S. should keep quiet.³⁷²

There was, of course, a certain irony in the military conspirators’ suggestion that a Goulart presidency would provide an “incentive to all those who wish to see the country submerged in chaos, anarchy, [and] civil war.” The constitution, read impartially, mandated that Goulart become president. His ascension was not simply a whim of the political Left. Tellingly, the joint chiefs feared that under Goulart the “armed forces themselves, infiltrated and tamed, would become, as has happened in other countries, communist militias.”³⁷³ In seeking to avoid becoming ideological enforcers of Goulart’s purportedly radical agenda, segments of the military were willing to forcibly obstruct the applicable legal framework in place since 1946. This was a supposedly apolitical decision by segments of the military laced with ideological conviction. Confronting the threat of political subversion outweighed a literal reading of constitutional procedure, a calculation that would come to define the military regime installed in 1964.

Under a parliamentary system that constrained his powers, João Goulart was sworn in on September 7, Brazil’s Independence Day, stating in his inauguration speech that “I consider myself the guardian of this national unity and it is up to me to preserve it, with the patriotic aim of guiding

³⁷¹ Niles Bond to Secretary of State, telegram, August 31, 1961. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries, Box 12. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

³⁷² American Embassy in Rio de Janeiro to White House, September 1, 1961. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries, Box 12. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

³⁷³ “Lançado manifesto à nação, expondo as razões do veto,” *Folha de São Paulo*, August 31, 1961, 1.

it to achieve the high and glorious destiny of the Brazilian nation.”³⁷⁴ The communist *Novos Rumos* expressed confidence that the new president would maintain an independent foreign policy and pursue nationalist solutions to the nation’s pressing problems, although it would assume a harsher posture toward Goulart as time went on. For its part, the FPN celebrated Goulart’s ascension but did not necessarily bemoan the parliamentary system. This is unsurprising given that an entity organized to promote nationalist measures in congress would welcome greater political powers at the expense of the executive. By 1961, the leftist nationalist movement was wholeheartedly committed to structural reforms, which they imagined would be shepherded through congress by the FPN. Rather than squabble over the merits of a parliamentary system, *O Semanário* pleaded with readers to gird themselves for a continued push against imperialism, which remained “enemy number one.”³⁷⁵

For their part, American officials in Brazil advised treating the nascent Goulart presidency in friendly but skeptical terms. The relationship would depend on “whether and to what extent Goulart may in fact wish to live down his fellow-traveling past.” Brazilians waited anxiously to see how Washington would react to the new government, according to U.S. chargé d’affaires Niles Bond. This was largely because since 1955, “Brazilian people, for perhaps the first time in their history, have had instilled in them a sense of national pride and national destiny which has caused them to associate themselves, intellectually and emotionally, with Brazil’s aspirations to be taken seriously as contender for great power status.” The nationalist movement, in other words, had inflamed Brazil’s sense of self-importance. The chaos over Quadros’ succession was a fresh humiliation. Bond concluded by asserting that the Brazilian military was the institution most harmed by the episode, emerging less popular and more divided than at any point since the mid-

³⁷⁴ Cited in Almino Affonso, *1964 na visão do ministro do Trabalho de João Goulart* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo; Fundação do Desenvolvimento Administrativo, 2014): 162.

³⁷⁵ “Reestruturação das forças nacionalistas,” *O Semanário*, September 26-October 2, 1961, 3.

1950s when they unsuccessfully sought to prevent Kubitschek from taking office. American dealings with the Brazilian military going forward would thus require a “particular degree of tact and understanding.” Finally, Bond noted, “we should not lose sight of [the] fact that [the] armed forces, though ostensibly acting in contravention of [the] constitution, were beyond doubt sincerely motivated by [a] desire to preserve ultimate democratic values.”³⁷⁶ Bond neatly expressed the American policy of granting wide latitude to the Brazilian armed forces even when constitutional principles were clearly being undermined. This foreshadowed Washington’s treatment of the regime forcefully imposed by the military in 1964.

The Goulart Government

By late September it was possible for American officials to begin drawing some conclusions about the type of president Goulart would be. In a memorandum for the president dated September 15, 1961, Secretary of State Dean Rusk observed that Goulart’s cabinet “tends to the conservative side.” He observed that Prime Minister Tancredo Neves (who also served as Minister of Justice) and Foreign Minister San Tiago Dantas did not share Goulart’s purportedly favorable disposition toward communists. Rusk expected the new administration to be at least as favorable to the Alliance for Progress as Quadros’ had been.³⁷⁷

Less than two weeks later, the CIA reported with some alarm on “communist inroads in the Brazilian government.” Unlike Dean Rusk’s assessment, which looked at Goulart’s cabinet and found it mostly moderate, the CIA looked at the lower ranks of Goulart’s government and found the situation much worse. Noting Goulart’s historical association with the Left, the report observed

³⁷⁶ Niles Bond to Secretary of State, telegram, September 6, 1961. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries, Box 12. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

³⁷⁷ Dean Rusk, memorandum for the president, “Preliminary Appraisal of the new Brazilian Government,” September 15, 1961. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries, Box 12. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

an uptick in communists working in the federal government. Raul Riff, a purported communist party member, had been named private secretary to Goulart. Evandro Lins, who accompanied Goulart on the trip to China that coincided with Quadros' resignation, was appointed attorney general. According to the report, "Lins has a long history of supporting Communist causes although his most recent reported activity prior to the trip to China was five years ago." The report acknowledged that some reports of communist appointments had turned out to be wrong. Pompeu de Souza, identified as a communist who was appointed press secretary, was in fact a member of the PSD. Hermes Lima, Goulart's chief of staff, had been tarred as pro-communist but in 1955 Lima was described in a PCB meeting as "an enemy of the party." The accusations were admittedly tenuous and yet the report quoted the embassy as stating that it was "difficult entirely to exclude the possibility that we may be witnessing the early stages of an attempted slow-motion coup in which Goulart, wittingly or unwittingly, is paving the way for effective Communist infiltration designed as a prelude to an eventual takeover."

The CIA was most concerned with communists in the armed forces. The supposedly pro-communist colonel Carlos Cairoli had been named chief of police in Brasilia and it looked as though General Oromar Osorio, the highest-ranking fellow-traveler in the armed forces, according to the report, would be appointed as commander of the strategic Vila Militar army garrison in Rio de Janeiro. General Osorio had been relieved from a key post in March 1960 by President Kubitschek, who was seeking at the time to purge communists and "ultra-nationalists" from key positions. While the reports of these appointments could not be confirmed at the time, the CIA deemed their possibility to be especially troublesome "because Communist penetration of the Brazilian army, while slight, is greater than in other Latin American military establishments." For some historical context, the report noted that "Communists, pro-Communists and ultra-nationalists in the Brazilian army have tended since Getúlio Vargas' election campaign in 1950 to belong to the faction which

supported Vargas and has since supported those considered his heirs, such as Kubitschek, Goulart and Neves.”³⁷⁸ Less than a month into office, Goulart’s government seemed to have exhausted Washington’s benefit of doubt.

Throughout the Goulart presidency, *O Semanário* insisted that the nationalist movement was not strictly leftist. Rather, it was “anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, patriotic . . . a union of all progressive forces, whether of the Left, the Center, willing to fight for the economic emancipation of the nation, the intransigent defense of its interests and the affirmation of its sovereignty in the concert of nations.”³⁷⁹ The reason for this rhetorical strategy seems clear. Unlike Quadros, who self-avowed nationalists and the Left generally considered an interloper, Goulart was someone who had come from the progressive camp. If the president was to successfully enact the structural reforms pushed by the Left he would need as broad a base of public support as possible. The nationalist movement thus needed to expand its horizons and present itself as open to all, above the partisan fray.

The FPN and the nationalist movement to which it belonged had always included moderate elements, to be sure. But the stakes described in the leftist press vis-à-vis imperialism and reforms had been escalating since roughly 1960. The notion that the nationalist movement could remain a big tent that harbored revolutionaries as well as conservatives was belied by the increasing radicalization of the Left, which demanded reforms immediately. This tension was apparent to American officials when some members of the FPN were invited on a tour of the United States in early 1962. A memo to the White House Appointments Secretary requesting a courtesy call with President Kennedy noted that “these deputies represent the moderate elements of Brazilian Nationalism and are not themselves unfriendly to the United States. To continue in congress they

³⁷⁸ Current intelligence memorandum, “Communist Inroads in the Brazilian Government,” September 27, 1961. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries, Box 12. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

³⁷⁹ “Os nacionalistas e as eleições,” *O Semanário*, May 10, 1962, 2.

must all stand for re-election in the Brazilian congressional election to take place in October of this year.” It was recommended that Kennedy meet with the delegation “in view of our desire to support the moderate, democratic forces in Brazil.”³⁸⁰ In fact, while the nationalist movement remained democratic, its moderation was faltering as the broader progressive camp inched to the left.

In late 1961, the communist newspaper *Novos Rumos* published an extensive essay analyzing the fallout from Quadros’ resignation and the best way forward for the nation. The front-page headline summed up the PCB’s position: “Communists identify the solution: a nationalist cabinet to carry out structural reforms.”³⁸¹ For communists, the crisis the nation had faced when Quadros stepped down was a symptom of the two major contradictions in Brazilian society that needed to be resolved to complete the present stage of the revolution. The first was the contradiction between the nation and imperialism (and its internal allies) while the second was between the rural “forces of production”—peasants, in other words—and *latifundiários*, or large landholders. A tertiary source of social tension they identified was the friction between workers and the bourgeoisie, a conflict made worse by inflation and the cost of living which continued to rise. The first order of business, in other words, was to confront imperialism. Despite Goulart’s longstanding commitment to nationalism and reformist causes, the PCB was skeptical that he could revert the situation. The movement to preserve the constitution and allow the vice president to take office had served a pedagogic role for the masses, they argued, but the new administration was still the product of a “conciliation with imperialism and the latifúndio.”³⁸² Nevertheless, as the Goulart presidency began, Brazilian communists made a point of noting that structural reforms were part of the PTB party platform,

³⁸⁰ L. D. Battle, memorandum for Mr. P. Kenneth O’Donnell, “Request for Appointment with the President,” January 31, 1962. Papers of John F. Kennedy. Presidential Papers. National Security Files. Countries, Box 12A. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

³⁸¹ “Nacionalistas apontam a saída: gabinete nacionalista para fazer as reformas de base,” *Novos Rumos*, November 3-9, 1961, 1.

³⁸² “Resolução dos comunistas sobre a crise política e o governo Jango-Tancredo Neves,” *Novos Rumos*, November 3-9, 1961, 8.

itself a sign of the growing intellectual solidity of *trabalhistas*. Structural change could hardly be credibly dismissed as an extremist communist plot initiated by foreign agitators.

The reformist zeal inspiring the nationalist Left in the early 1960s was further driven by the plight of the arid northeastern region of Brazil, an area beset by frequent drought, political insularity, and lack of economic opportunity. Upon its creation in 1956, the FPN had devoted itself to “incessantly combatting pauperism through the economic [and] social recovery of marginalized populations and underdeveloped regions of Brazil, including a greater distribution of wealth to municipalities.”³⁸³ This attention to impoverished parts of the country—almost always a reference to the Northeast—foreshadowed the 1960s when, according to Darlene J. Sadlier, “Brazil’s image as a land of poverty, hunger, and violence steadily emerged in art cinemas” with films like *Barravento* (1962) by Glauber Rocha, *O Pagador de Promessas* (1962) by Anselmo Duarte, and *Vidas Secas* (1963) by Nelson Pereira dos Santos.³⁸⁴ These films presented the nation and the world with harsh visions of Brazilian inequality and destitution. The effect was stirring: for many, particularly those on the Left, nationalism and the very definition of the national good came to entail doing something about the shocking austerity of life in the backlands of the northeast.

Carlos Marighella argued in August 1961 that communists had initiated the struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil but that several other progressive entities had since joined.³⁸⁵ The momentum continued to build during the next year, with *O Semanário* a year later. For Brazilian revolutionaries and reformers like Goulart, an outmoded, tradition-bound system of land tenure loomed especially large among the many impediments to Brazil’s development. There was disagreement, however, regarding how to implement change. The PTB defended reforms within the constitutional order. It hoped to ensure a supportive constituency by pushing for voting rights to be

³⁸³ “Política nacionalista definida em 11 pontos,” *O Semanário*, November 22-29, 1956, 9.

³⁸⁴ Darlene J. Sadlier, *Brazil Imagined: 1500 to the Present* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008): 237.

³⁸⁵ Carlos Marighella, “Reforma agrária – problema nacional,” *Novos Rumos*, August 18-24, 1961, 1.

extended to illiterates and by appealing to nationalists in cities, universities, and factories across the country. A congressional fact-finding mission sent to the northeast in May 1962 found that “revolution or anarchy” were, for local residents, the only alternative to land reform. Trabalhistas had no interest in such disorder. For its part, the PCB lacked a clear vision of what exactly the revolution would look like and how it would take place, according to Dulce Pandolfi.³⁸⁶ The conflicting views of Brazilian communists eventually split their party in far-reaching ways.

An early 1962 edition of *Novos Rumos* announced that influential communists like João Amazonas, Mauricio Grabois, Calil Chade, and several others had been expelled from the party for factionalism and conduct detrimental to the communist cause. The split stemmed largely from the new party line embraced in 1958, which this group considered a betrayal of the PCB’s revolutionary spirit. They rejected the leadership of Luiz Carlos Prestes, a point of contention that for some Brazilian communists could be traced back even further to the 1930s. Among the issues was Prestes’ decision to change the party’s name when pushing for legalization from the Communist Party of Brazil—the title since its founding in 1922—to the Brazilian Communist Party, in part to establish a clearer national association for the party.³⁸⁷ The name change was more than cosmetic. Several members thought Prestes was sacrificing the party’s revolutionary credentials for institutional recognition.³⁸⁸ To the disaffected communists forced out of leadership positions in 1958 so that Prestes could pass the new orientation it reflected a repudiation of the proletarian internationalism the party had embraced (even if relegated to the background since 1958) from the beginning.³⁸⁹ Several intelligent and dedicated party members not only left the PCB but presented themselves as

³⁸⁶ Pandolfi, *Camaradas e companheiros*, 184-185.

³⁸⁷ See Luiz Carlos Prestes, “Partido Comunista Brasileiro: manifesto, programa, estatutos,” *Novos Rumos*, August 11-17, 1961, supplement.

³⁸⁸ Reis, *Luiz Carlos Prestes*, 302.

³⁸⁹ For those who broke off from the PCB, the 1958 declaration represented a reformist concession to entrenched elites. Those who stayed in the PCB were more likely to see it as the moment when Brazilian communists established democracy as a guiding principle for their activities. See Pandolfi, *Camaradas e companheiros*, 186.

the true heirs of the party founded in 1922. For them, the Cuban Revolution seemed to prove that a relatively small number of committed revolutionaries could defeat a regime unresponsive to the needs of its people, turn back imperialist challenges, and establish a socialist government. Political positions radicalized and hardened.

The PCB's self-ascribed dominance of the Left would face further challenges in 1962 as the progressive camp expanded. Francisco Julião's Peasant Leagues in the Northeast and Leonel Brizola, the PTB governor of Rio Grande do Sul who had successfully stared down the generals blocking Goulart's path to the presidency, attracted widespread attention and sympathy from progressives.³⁹⁰ Furthermore, through the National Union of Students (União Nacional dos Estudantes, or UNE), young educated Brazilians sought greater influence in national affairs. At the same time, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965) began pushing the Catholic Church in a socially-conscious direction that would reverberate throughout Latin America in the form of a progressive engagement with the poor, later called liberation theology. Finally, the Kennedy administration's Alliance for Progress promised support for reformist governments and development projects, which raised hopes as well as suspicions in Latin America. For a generation of Brazilians these were years of "revolutionary romanticism," defined by Marcelo Ridenti as the belief that dramatic changes were possible if the nation applied the contemporary ideologies of the Left—socialism, communism, and *trabalhismo*—to reclaim and reinterpret its national heritage. In that way, according to Ridenti, progressives imagined a new authentically Brazilian post-capitalist society could be built.³⁹¹

Goulart himself became the avatar of this potential—and risk—for a great many Brazilians. On July 29, 1962, for example, he addressed a crowd of about twenty thousand peasants and rural workers in João Pessoa, capital of the northeastern state of Paraíba. Gathering in the verdant Solon

³⁹⁰ Reis, *Luiz Carlos Prestes*, 301-302.

³⁹¹ Marcelo Ridenti, *Em busca do povo brasileiro: artistas da revolução, do CPD à era da TV* (2nd ed., São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2014): 7-17.

de Lucena Park, the crowd listened while Goulart, jabbing the air as he spoke, called for government action to address exploitation in the countryside. He was joined by Paraíba's governor Pedro Gondim of the centrist PSD, a political entity that eschewed ideology in favor of conciliation and averting national crises. Gondim's presence, however, did little to improve the reception Goulart received from the local landed elite who considered the president an "unwelcome guest" with "extremist objectives."³⁹² Large landowners and right-wing groups promised a counterdemonstration against the president. There were even threats of violence, leading the army to assume control of security for the speech. The death of João Pedro Teixeira hung in the air. Teixeira, an activist for peasant rights in rural Paraíba, had been assassinated earlier that year at the behest of powerful landowners.³⁹³ The commander of the Fourth Army, General Artur da Costa e Silva, flew from nearby Recife to oversee safety preparations and to welcome the president to the northeast.

In the end there were no serious disruptions. The crowd cheered as Goulart reaffirmed his longstanding commitment to political and social reform, asserting that the nation's conscience demanded a "harmonious and peaceful solution to the most basic problem of the hour, that is the fate of millions of Brazilians who like absolute outcasts have been abandoned by the disorganization of rural life in this country." His tone was deliberately popular: "I am not at a convention of learned men to pontificate on agrarian reform. And if I found myself in such a setting I might not be the most qualified person to do so . . . [but] here in this assembly, workers, I know that I can speak and be understood by the people of the Northeast."

Goulart emphasized his upbringing in the countryside. A rancher with vast holdings in Rio Grande do Sul, he claimed to "know well the anguish, the challenges, the sacrifices" of "workers who toil in the interior of the country." He called for a national effort to develop the Northeast with

³⁹² "Latifundiários reagiram na Paraíba à visita de Goulart," *Diário de Notícias*, July 31, 1962, 9.

³⁹³ Teixeira's story was immortalized in the 1984 documentary *Cabra marcada para morrer* directed by Eduardo Coutinho.

the same apolitical spirit the country had summoned in the past during national crises. Goulart also implicitly addressed critics who equated even a modest program of agrarian reform with communism: “We do not seek the reforms of other countries. Russia’s reform may have served the Russian when it was carried out, China’s reform may befit the Chinese, but the reform appropriate for Brazil is the one desired by the Brazilian people and the one which . . . addresses the common interest so that men who work the land can access and improve it to the benefit of the nation.”³⁹⁴ Goulart, the trabalhista leader, was seeking to preempt the argument made against the PCB for decades: that it was a Trojan horse for foreign subversion.

The president was hardly shouting into the wind as he sought support for agrarian reform in Paraíba. As T. Lynn Smith observed in 1964, since the presidency of Getúlio Vargas, most members of congress and the clergy, “from parish priests to archbishops and cardinals, have participated actively in conferences, seminars, and other endeavors designed to promote and give guidance to programs of agrarian reform. There are even reports that wealthy speculators are buying up large expanses of land with a view to making huge profits when it is expropriated.”³⁹⁵ Goulart had contributed to the endeavor by creating the National Council for Agrarian Reform (Conselho Nacional de Reforma Agrária) to expedite policy planning in April 1962. That same year, Robert J. Alexander wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that “large landholdings and antiquated methods of production keep an estimated 40 million of [Brazil’s] 70 million people out of the market, with incomes so small that they buy virtually nothing.”³⁹⁶

Goulart in Paraíba promised to address the problem while reassuring opponents that the horrors of Soviet and Chinese collectivizations would not be visited upon Brazilian landowners. The balancing act demanded a steady political hand and a break in the polarization roiling the nation.

³⁹⁴ “Reforma agrária: pronunciamento de Goulart,” *Folha de São Paulo*, July 31, 1962, 3.

³⁹⁵ T. Lynn Smith, “Agrarian Reform in Brazil,” *Luso-Brazilian Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Winter, 1964): 3.

³⁹⁶ Robert J. Alexander, “Agrarian Reform in Latin America,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Oct., 1962): 192.

In the ten months since he took office, it had become apparent that Goulart would need his charisma, deal-making ability, and partisan savvy to keep from being deposed, to say nothing of restoring his diminished presidency to full power. While a great many in the fields, factories, and beyond insisted that he seize the opportunity to carry out the reformist promise of his government, others viewed the measures he might realistically take as either inherently compromised or indicative of an insidious plot to radically remake Brazilian society. The situation for Goulart and his country remained delicate less than a year later as he addressed the crowd in Paraíba.

Indeed, reactions to Goulart's Paraíba speech reveal much about the sensitive political climate of the early 1960s. The July 30 front page of the daily Rio de Janeiro newspaper *Tribuna da Imprensa*, a publication generally hostile to Goulart and the PTB, stated that "Jango insists on reforms and threatens with chaos." The *Tribuna* highlighted Goulart's call for the militant Peasant Leagues to organize according to the model of state-sponsored labor unions.³⁹⁷ Vargas had legalized rural unionization in 1944, but opposition from powerful landed interests made it effectively impossible to organize in the countryside.³⁹⁸ The Peasant Leagues, under the leadership of Francisco Julião, rejected the path Vargas had laid out. Instead of conciliatory rhetoric, they opted for slogans like "land or death," "land for those who work it," and "agrarian reform by law or by force."³⁹⁹ Julião had been a source of trepidation for Brazilian conservatives and foreign observers alike since at least 1960. That year the *New York Times* reported with alarm that the Leagues were a haven for communists "organizing and indoctrinating" the restless rural peasantry in the Northeast.⁴⁰⁰

Goulart was pushing the Leagues toward moderation. Echoing the PCB, he urged the

³⁹⁷ "Jango insiste nas reformas e ameaça com caos," *Tribuna da Imprensa*, July 30, 1962, 1-3.

³⁹⁸ Decree-law no. 7.038/1944, issued by Vargas near the end of the Estado Novo, permitted rural unionization according to the model established for urban workers in the 1943 Consolidation of Labor Laws (Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho, or CLT).

³⁹⁹ Leonilde Sérvo de Medeiros, "Os trabalhadores rurais na política: o papel da imprensa partidária na constituição de uma linguagem de classe," in *Política e reforma agrária*, ed. Luiz Flávio Carvalho Costa and Raimundo Santos (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad, 1998): 51.

⁴⁰⁰ Tad Szulc, "Northeast Brazil Poverty Breeds Threat of a Revolt," *New York Times*, October 31, 1960, 1.

Leagues to proceed like the corporatist labor unions created under Vargas.⁴⁰¹ In practical terms this would mean softening their rhetoric, establishing formal ties to the state, and adopting an incremental approach to obtaining rights.⁴⁰² This type of rural organizing was already taking place around the country, but Julião's Peasant Leagues were zealous and fiercely independent, appealing qualities in a context of intensifying ideological fervor in Brazil and around the world.⁴⁰³ The *Tribuna* would eventually embrace a staunchly anti-Goulart line culminating in support for the coup that removed him from office two years later. In its coverage of the Paraíba speech, however, the paper made clear that Goulart hoped to forestall social turmoil rather than incite it to his benefit.

Elsewhere, in a meeting with business leaders, Nelson de Melo, the Minister of War, affirmed that he saw no imminent threat of a communist revolution in Brazil. Goulart's speech in Paraíba, he said, "could have been undersigned by Pope John XXIII himself and I am sure that you gentlemen will be the first to collaborate with the government in the battle currently being waged" against radical agitation. De Melo also praised Goulart for tending to poor Brazilians "unprotected by good fortune."⁴⁰⁴ The war minister expressed public support for Goulart's handling of the political situation, but the fact that he felt compelled to reassure his audience that there was no looming communist takeover reflects the unease many in the Brazilian business community felt in the early 1960s.

If Goulart and his allies reassured Brazilians wary of social revolution, they enraged those pushing for sweeping social and political changes. Writing in *A Classe Operária*, a publication aligned with the Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunista do Brasil, or PCdoB), the radical offshoot of the PCB, Pedro Pomar excoriated the president's conciliatory rhetoric in Paraíba. For Pomar,

⁴⁰¹ Ferreira, *João Goulart*, 270.

⁴⁰² On labor law under Vargas, see John D. French, *Drowning in Laws: Labor Law and Brazilian Political Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁴⁰³ For an overview of divergences between the Ligas Camponesas and rural unions see José de Souza Martins, *Os camponeses e a política no Brasil: as lutas sociais no campo e seu lugar no processo político* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1981): 76-80.

⁴⁰⁴ "Não vejo perigo iminente do comunismo no Brasil," *Folha de São Paulo*, August 2, 1962, 4.

Goulart planned only “a few indispensable reforms to avoid the real revolution, reforms that enable the Brazilian ruling classes to justify the dollars promised by Yankee politicians to countries that put into place the designs of the Alliance [for Progress].” Pomar continued: “It is not hard to grasp, even for those far removed from the problem, that Mr. Jango Goulart’s agrarian reform seeks to strengthen the position of large landowners like himself . . . [I]t seeks mainly to prevent the peasantry from becoming a social and political force and rising to power, along with their working brethren in the cities.” Goulart explicitly disavowed the agrarian reforms carried out in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba precisely because such measures, according to Pomar, granted peasants and workers full rights and transformed them into their country’s ruling classes. Goulart, the United States, and domestic elites would never allow that kind of social reorganization to happen in Brazil, Pomar argued. He denounced the PCB as well for effectively becoming “the left wing of the conciliatory bourgeoisie.” He concluded that “João Goulart demonstrates, with this contrived leftism, his capacity to mystify the masses as the providential man to defend the privileges of the ruling classes and his partners, the American imperialists.” Such maneuvering would not withstand “the independent action of the working masses” and “the rise of a true revolutionary force on the Left.”⁴⁰⁵ Pomar’s take on the Paraíba speech illustrates the deep fissures within the Left during the Goulart presidency, centered on whether or not meaningful social progress could be achieved within existing systems of political resolution.

The split between the PCB and PCdoB illustrates a stark divide in strategic thinking in the early 1960s; the former embraced the campaign for structural reforms, particularly after 1963, while the latter remained devoted to revolutionary action independent of Goulart and the PTB. Pomar’s PCdoB was small, rigidly dogmatic, and largely irrelevant to the workers and students most active

⁴⁰⁵ Pedro Pomar, “Os discursos do presidente na Paraíba,” *A Classe Operária*, August 16-31, 1962, 3.

among the Left, aligned primarily with the PCB and PTB.⁴⁰⁶ Yet Pomar noted correctly in his criticism of Goulart that the organization pushing the most aggressive version of agrarian reform would be critically undermined by the president's attempts to temper the political climate. By the early 1960s, Francisco Julião's Peasant Leagues had captured the imagination of impoverished peasants in the northeast in a way that neither the PCB nor the newly-founded PCdoB had. The organization's manifesto that circulated throughout the Northeast proclaimed to the peasantry that "your cruel enemy, the latifúndio will die as it died in China, a country very similar to our Brazil. It will die as it died in Cuba where the great Fidel Castro handed a rifle to each peasant and said: 'Democracy is the government that arms the people.'"⁴⁰⁷ The sheer urgency of the Leagues helped place rural workers at the center of the national debate over structural reforms.⁴⁰⁸ But Goulart's call to form rural unions, a proposal the PCB had been promoting since the 1950s through its own Farmers's and Agricultural Laborers's Union of Brazil (União dos Lavradores e Trabalhadores Agrícolas do Brasil, or ULTAB), blunted the effect of Julião's Leagues.⁴⁰⁹ Goulart and the PCB hoped to organize the rural peasantry into unions linked to the state just as Vargas had done with urban workers some two decades earlier. But that approach to rural workers rights proved altogether unsatisfying to many leftists at a moment of increasing polarization and perceived opportunity.

For Goulart, reasserting the powers of the presidency was key. The compromise that allowed him to take office in 1961 called for a plebiscite to be held in early 1965, nine months before the end of his term, to decide whether the country should return to a presidential system. Throughout 1962, labor unions, many linked semi-openly to the PCB, threatened a general strike if the plebiscite

⁴⁰⁶ Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, 279.

⁴⁰⁷ Cited in Tad Szulc, "Marxists Are Organizing Peasants in Brazil: Leftist League Aims at a Political Army 40 Million Strong," *New York Times*, November 1, 1960, 3. The manifesto was originally published in the PCB newspaper *Novos Rumos*. See Francisco Julião, "Cartilha do Camponês," *Novos Rumos*, October 7-13, 1960, 4-5.

⁴⁰⁸ André Lopes Ferreira, "Reforma agrária e revolução: Cuba e as Ligas Camponesas do Brasil nos anos 60," *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*, Vol. X, No. 19 (Jul-Dez, 2009): 181.

⁴⁰⁹ Mario Grynspan, "O período Jango e a questão agrária: luta política e afirmação de novos atores," in *João Goulart: entre a memória e a história*, ed. Marieta de Moraes Ferreira (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2006): 64.

were not held sooner. They argued that the president needed a stronger hand in order to enact the reformist agenda the Left was clamoring for. The broad support for nationalist causes in congress had declined since its heyday in the late 1950s as Brazilian progressives expanded the scope of their nationalism and stepped up the tone of their rhetoric. Goulart and his allies eventually succeeded in moving up the plebiscite, an outcome Goulart's opponents saw as the beginning of an insidious plot carried out in collusion with communists.

On January 6, 1963, with just over eighty percent of the vote, the Brazilian people voted to reinstate the presidential system. Goulart saw support for presidentialism as a popular endorsement of his agenda, discounting the fact that virtually every major party wanted to run a candidate in the 1965 presidential election.⁴¹⁰ Some number of voters, in other words, opted against parliamentarism but not necessarily for Goulart. Nevertheless, the president was optimistic that he now had the political capital to push for broad reforms.

On April 5, he addressed students of the University of São Paulo Law School, a prestigious institution proud of its liberal tradition and history of resisting federal authority.⁴¹¹ The event offered Goulart the opportunity to speak to some of the nation's most politically conscious students. The law school had produced luminaries in politics and literature, including President Jânio Quadros and writer Monteiro Lobato (1882-1948), contributing to its reputation as a breeding ground for future leaders and shapers of public opinion and national culture. His speech was interwoven with deliberate appeals to national and provincial identities, linking the youth of São Paulo, whose promise was embodied by the students of the esteemed law school, to the fate of the nation. "What we want, young people of São Paulo, to use only a few words" the president declared, "is for the rich to be less rich so that the poor might be less miserable." The president knew his agenda would likely

⁴¹⁰ Affonso Heliodoro, *JK: exemplo e desafio*, 2. ed. rev. e ampliada (Brasília: Thesaurus, 2005): 180.

⁴¹¹ For more on the São Paulo Law School, see John W.F. Dulles, *The São Paulo Law School and the Anti-Vargas Resistance (1938-1945)* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

go nowhere if the powerful state of São Paulo stood united in opposition. He thus emphasized the pacific nature of the reforms he was proposing, arguing that he represented “all those who do not desire reforms through violence, reforms by force . . . [T]he reforms that we propose, I want to be very clear to São Paulo, are essentially humane and Christian reforms.” Goulart concluded with an appeal to God that he might always depend on the “courage, the patriotism, and the ardor of our nation’s young people.”⁴¹²

Paulistas, for their part, did not need to be convinced of their central role in national affairs. The state’s prosperity derived mainly from a late-nineteenth century coffee boom that helped finance a turn toward industry earlier than almost anywhere else in the nation. São Paulo grew at a rate unmatched by its peers from the 1890s well into the twentieth century. Such economic success fostered an aversion to any federal directives that sought to subordinate the state to the national government. When the state of São Paulo rose in armed rebellion against the provisional federal government of Getúlio Vargas in 1932, it did so in a purported defense of liberal democracy, provincial autonomy, and economic progress. In fact, however, given its reliance on racialized hierarchies and a notion of order with no corresponding sense of justice, Barbara Weinstein argues, “it was a movement that sought to narrow, not widen, the notion of who could exercise full political rights in Brazilian society.”⁴¹³ By the 1960s, the 1932 uprising had been successfully reconfigured by the press and civic organizations as, “a crucial moment in the ongoing but inevitable transformation of Brazil into a democratic society.”⁴¹⁴ Paulista exceptionalism thus rested on a stated commitment to democratic process and industry along with a less explicit, but no less discernible, claim to racial

⁴¹² “Discurso pronunciado por João Goulart, então presidente da República, no ‘Centro Acadêmico XI de Agosto’.” 22-23.

⁴¹³ Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015): 191.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 341.

superiority. Throughout his presidency, Goulart sought not to challenge that feeling of superiority but to channel its self-avowed progressivism in the service of a national reformist agenda.

Blocking the Nationalist Left

Despite his demonstrable proclivity to working within the system, Goulart was inextricably identified with progressive political forces that became more confrontational over the course of his presidency. Since coming to political prominence as Vargas' labor minister in the early 1950s, Goulart's primary base of support had been organized labor, a hotbed of leftist agitation and communist organization even as the PCB remained formally illegal. By 1964, the broad nationalist coalition on the Left that supported Goulart in the 1960 presidential election included various movements of social justice and structural reform that called for reforms by law or by force ("na lei ou na marra"). Many took this as a positive sign, an indication that conditions were finally ripe to enact changes necessary for Brazil to overcome its enduring inequalities. They reasoned that if the choice was between radical leftists bringing about the revolution or Goulart, the establishment *trabalhista*, implementing moderate but no less significant reforms, the establishment would opt for the latter. General José Machado Lopes essentially made this argument in 1961 after Goulart became president: "Our century is undoubtedly one of proletarian gains. The rising expenses of life are causing mass movements from the bottom up, and those nations unable to modify their structures to attend to the just demands of the working masses will be irredeemably condemned to extinction."⁴¹⁵ Machado Lopes grimly concluded that "we either provide the worker that to which he is entitled as a human creature, or he will conquer through violence all that which he desires." The general situated Goulart's *trabalhismo*, inherited from the Getúlio Vargas of the 1950s, within a global movement to ease social tension and avoid upheaval.

⁴¹⁵ Machado Lopes, "Trabalhismo em marcha," *A Cidade*, October 30, 1961, 2.

Others, however, largely influenced by the escalating stakes of the Cold War, drew no distinctions in condemning Goulart's coalition. As Greg Grandin has written, "throughout Latin America, mid-century oscillations between democratic promise and reaction not only radicalized actors but polarized the political field, accelerating confrontation."⁴¹⁶ This describes well what during the presidency of João Goulart. Conservative Brazilians (and American observers) associated progressive ferment with disorder and subversion. Ideas began to circulate that Goulart sought either to impose a syndicalist dictatorship that he would lead in the style of Argentina's Juan Perón, or Vargas himself, or that he would accede to communists seeking to establish a Soviet satellite government. In January 1964, Giocondo Dias laid out the case for why communists should embrace the nationalist reformist agenda, arguing that "in our case, the fight for structural reforms is, today, the main way of advancing the revolutionary process. Achieving these reforms, regardless of the outcomes desired by the various social groups, will act against imperialist despoliation and semifeudal backwardness." In other words, even if social change was secured through means other than violent revolution (through the legislative process, for example) they could still have a revolutionary effect by challenging dynamics of power deeply ingrained in Brazilian society and history.⁴¹⁷ Such change was deeply unsettling in a society defined by hierarchies of power, race, and class.

CHAPTER 4

Patriotic Authoritarianism

Redefining Nationalism under Military Rule (1964-1974)

⁴¹⁶ Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004): 177.

⁴¹⁷ Giocondo Dias, "Sentido revolucionário das lutas pelas reformas," *Novos Rumos*, January 10-16, 1964, 3.

I know now that many things contrary to the national interest are hidden under the banner of nationalism.

— **General Argemiro de Assis Brasil, July 1964**⁴¹⁸

It is time for the current government to proclaim that it has undertaken the sole authentic nationalist Revolution—the one the people called for and not that which demagogues promised knowing they would never carry out.

— **General-President Castelo Branco, December 1964**⁴¹⁹

On April 2, 1964, Ranieri Mazzilli, the speaker of the lower house of congress, was named interim president of Brazil, but de facto power remained in the hands of a military junta known as the Supreme Command of the Revolution composed of General Artur da Costa e Silva, Admiral Augusto Rademaker Grünewald, and Brigadier-General Francisco de Assis Correia de Melo. A week later, the junta issued the first of several Institutional Acts (*Atos Institucionais*, or AI), unilateral executive edicts that immediately assumed the force of law. AI-1 suspended the Constitution of 1946 for six months, restricted the political rights of influential figures like Goulart, Quadros, Prestes, Celso Furtado, among others, and called for an indirect presidential election within two days. On April 11, congress elected General Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco the first president of a regime of exception that was traditionally called a “military dictatorship” but more recently been labeled a “civil-military regime.”⁴²⁰

The coup that removed João Goulart from office was hailed in much of the mainstream domestic press and internationally as a victory against the subversive forces of communism. The best example of this was a 1964 *Reader's Digest* article entitled “The Country that Saved Itself,” a romantic

⁴¹⁸ “A reinquirição de Assis Brasil,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, July 7, 1964, 6-7.

⁴¹⁹ “Castelo: nacionalismo é o que se tem agora,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 15, 1964, 1.

⁴²⁰ For more on the historical nomenclature used to refer to the regime, see Andre Pagliarini, “De onde? Para onde?” The Continuity Question and the Debate over Brazil’s ‘Civil’-Military Dictatorship,” *Latin American Research Review*, 52(5), 2017: 760-774.

depiction of the events that culminated in Goulart's downfall based upon interviews with "participants in the events." The article argued that the nation had been at the center of communist designs on Latin America: "for years the Reds had been eyeing, with slaving hunger, this great sprawling country . . . [whose] direct or indirect rule by communists would offer prime opportunities to subvert one neighbor after another." The article was of a piece with decades of conservative Brazilian anxiety regarding the true intentions of the PCB and its allies. It argued that the mobilization of civil society successfully, but by no means inevitably, pushed back creeping foreign influence.⁴²¹ The conservative *O Estado de São Paulo* called the coup "the first decisive victory for democracy over communist totalitarianism and imperialism in the so-called 'third world.'"⁴²² The narrative that immediately took shape was that middle-class Brazilians, representatives of the traditional order, had prevailed over Goulart and his insidious coalition—which included the nationalist movement.

The perception that they were basically Soviet proxies left progressive entities and individuals vulnerable to attack by an emboldened right wing in the aftermath of the coup. Approximately 7,000 people were arrested and 9,000 elected representatives removed from office in the early days of the new order. On April 1, as the coup marched toward a successful conclusion, Edmar Morel of *O Semanário* spent hours at the newspaper's headquarters single-handedly shredding internal documents that might incriminate his collaborators in the repressive wave he foresaw.⁴²³ On April 2, the headquarters of the National Union of Students (f. 1938, União Nacional dos Estudantes, UNE) in Rio de Janeiro was burned to the ground by vandals celebrating the military intervention. In the days that followed, several journalists were arrested and the newsrooms of both the PCB's newspaper, *Novos Rumos*, and the daily *Última Hora* were defaced by anonymous thugs. On April 4,

⁴²¹ Clarence W. Hall, "The Country that Saved Itself," *Reader's Digest*, November 1964, 135-59.

⁴²² "Definição oportuna," *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 24, 1964, 3.

⁴²³ Leonardo Britto, *A imprensa nacionalista no Brasil: O periódico O Semanário (1956-1964)* (Jundiaí: Paco Editorial, 2010).

Última Hora published a statement repudiating these attacks on the press undersigned by the heads of various journalistic bodies, including the Brazilian Press Association and the National Federation of Brazilian Journalists.⁴²⁴ Avant-garde theater actors were inexplicably whisked away to unnamed locations. Congressman Neiva Moreira, one of the founders of the FPN, was arrested along with his son, both removed from a plane on the tarmac headed to Brasília.⁴²⁵ Indeed, almost every member of the FPN in Congress was named on the new regime's list of elected officials whose political rights were to be stripped.⁴²⁶ While such practices of extrajudicial, political violence against adversaries had deep roots in Brazilian history, certainly going back to the first Vargas regime at least, the crackdown in this instance stemmed directly from the conservative line that the nationalist Left, wittingly or not, was aligned with the interests of a hostile foreign power. In more practical terms, the immediate aftermath of Goulart's fall was a propitious moment to settle political scores.

In congress, the parties that had opposed Goulart blamed the fallen president for the crisis engulfing the nation. Ernani Satiro of the UDN argued that the trouble had started with Goulart's campaign to do away with parliamentarism. After that point, "the president insisted on not governing, even as he mobilized a false nationalism identified with genuine communism."⁴²⁷ Indeed, in the early days of the new order, its leaders made a point of noting that what had been most threatening about Goulart was not his embrace of structural reforms per se but rather his purported willingness to sow disorder for personal gain. On May 6, the conservative newspaper *Estado de São Paulo* hosted a luncheon to acknowledge and thank the Brazilian air force for its role in ousting Goulart. Air force general Márcio de Sousa Melo, the guest of honor, noted that his branch of the military had long been a proponent of Brazilian democracy, striking against "communism, false

⁴²⁴ "Debate deve ser assegurado," *Última Hora*, April 4, 1964, 8.

⁴²⁵ "Polícia prende atôres," *Última Hora*, April 5, 1964, 1.

⁴²⁶ Lucilia de Almeida Neves Delgado, "Nacionalismo como projeto de nação: a Frente Parlamentar Nacionalista (1956-1964)," in Jorge Ferreira and Daniel Aarão Reis, eds. *Nacionalismo e reformismo Radical (1945-1964)*, 372-373.

⁴²⁷ "Debates na câmara em torno da crise," *Correio da Manhã*, April 2, 1964, 5.

nationalism, complacency, and opportunism.”⁴²⁸ Melo’s statements suggested not only that Goulart had come to embody these ills but that they were longstanding afflictions of Brazilian politics. From this perspective, the coup was a defensive maneuver to excise the leftist nationalism that had been allowed to fester for too long and threatened to metastasize under Goulart.

At the same time, the first military president understood the need for a positive agenda. Without one, as Roberto Campos, Castelo Branco’s minister of planning, wrote in his memoirs, the military’s intervention would be seen as just another “typical Latin American putsch.” Thus, Castelo Branco declared that once the political climate calmed down he intended to enact many of the structural reforms proposed by Goulart. José de Magalhães Pinto, governor of Minas Gerais and a key supporter of the coup, stated that the nation needed its political “excesses” reined in but also reforms that would foster national development and general welfare. The new government, he proclaimed, must assure the implementation of the “ideals of the revolutionary democratic movement and carry out the just aspirations of the Brazilian people.”⁴²⁹ According to Campos, the structural reform agenda proposed by Goulart was a matter of politics, a more palatable course of action than the austerity measures advocated by his advisors.⁴³⁰ Nevertheless, he too recognized the importance of an aspirational agenda.

Castelo Branco was also eager to show the nation and the world that the so-called “revolution” of 1964 was a modernizing force that would enable the country to meet its potential.⁴³¹ Years later, looking back on this period, the businessman and technocrat Boris Tabacof described the early years of military rule in exactly those terms. Many in the military and business community saw new regime as an “opportunity” to “correct historic mistakes” in Brazil’s development. The

⁴²⁸ “O ‘Estado’ presta homenagem à FAB e ao brigadeiro Márcio Souza e Melo,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 7, 1964, 17.

⁴²⁹ “Magalhães: Agora cumpre enfrentar a luta pela paz,” *Folha de São Paulo*, April 13, 1964, 5.

⁴³⁰ Roberto Campos, *A lanterna na popa: memórias*, vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1994): 571.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 573.

Castelo Branco administration was, he recalled, “the last period of serious reforms in Brazil.”⁴³² For his part, Otávio Gouveia de Bulhões, Castelo Branco’s finance minister, looked back on the first military government as the first to truly tackle the issue of inflation, a fact that was not properly appreciated until 1968. By then, however, government policy had moved on from the urgency of that task, a development that Bulhões later bemoaned.⁴³³ Successive military administrations sought to assert their legitimacy while extolling what they saw as their singular ability to rationally manage the state. I would argue, however, that the rhetoric of the new regime and its supporters also reflects the success of the nationalist movement in setting the country’s political agenda.

Since the mid 1950s, nationalists had identified structural reforms as central to the national interest. Quadros, while not the preferred candidate of the organized nationalist movement, had paid lip service to its positions. Goulart was an avowed nationalist who helped place structural reforms at the center of the national debate while, in the eyes of critics, stoking class conflict in order to secure greater power for himself. The latter does not seem to have discredited the former. The new leadership focused their attacks on Goulart and his supposed attempts to undermine the system from above (“superversion,” as U.S. ambassador Lincoln Gordon called it).⁴³⁴ By personalizing their criticisms of the Goulart administration, military governments left intact much of the ideological edifice constructed by the nationalist Left. While the Right was united in its contempt for Goulart and his brand of politics, the post-1964 Left was in disarray over how to respond. Its basic assumptions regarding nationalism and the political process were instantly shaken by recriminations and self-doubt.

⁴³² Cited in *Elites empresariais paulistas: depoimentos à FGV* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2011): 49-50.

⁴³³ Bulhões, Octavio Gouvêa de. *Octavio Gouvêa de Bulhões: depoimento* (Brasília: Divisão de Impressão e Publicações do Departamento de Administração de Recursos Materiais do Banco Central do Brasil, 1990): 188-189.

⁴³⁴ FIND CITATION IN Brazil and the Quiet Intervention, 1964 By Phyllis R. Parker

This chapter analyzes the use of nationalist rhetoric during the first decade and a half of military rule. I argue that for roughly the first ten years of its existence, the dictatorship was largely driven by the debates over what constituted “legitimate” nationalism that had dominated Brazilian politics since Getúlio Vargas’ suicide in 1954. Campos and Finance Minister Otávio Gouveia de Bulhões, influential figures in the early years of dictatorship, had both been vocal critics of the economic nationalism increasingly embraced by the Left in the second half of the 1950s. Their policy prescriptions sought to reverse many of the trends initiated under Vargas, particularly pertaining to limits on profit remittances and foreign investment. Furthermore, despite important differences between Castelo Branco and his successor Artur da Costa e Silva (1967-1969), both men epitomized the mindset of Brazilian conservatives vis-à-vis nationalism discussed in previous chapters, namely that it should be synonymous with patriotism, with a general love of country—a position countered by the much more proactive view on the Left that legitimate nationalism demanded structural reforms to make Brazil a more just and equitable country less dependent on the United States. The period of the so-called “Economic Miracle,” the five-year stretch of astronomic growth rates between 1968 and 1973, strengthened the regime’s embrace of what I call patriotic authoritarianism, that is, the marriage of the conservative nationalist position with the anti-democratic inclinations of the military regime.

This chapter also continues to trace the rhetorical and tactical strategies of the Left vis-à-vis nationalism. How did the groups that had supported Goulart understand their sudden change in fortune? In what ways did they connect Goulart’s fall to the history of imperialism in the twentieth century? The answers to these questions help us place the coup in a broader context, namely the ongoing struggle over the nationalist mantle and the right to legitimately define the national interest. While the military and its supporters lambasted Goulart personally, the regime’s hand-picked technocrats sought ways to mitigate the effects of the FPN’s policy influence. The reform-minded

nationalist movement had made a mark on Brazilian politics and the military regime would have to contend with the implications.

Castelo Branco: Confronting "Temperamental Nationalism," 1964-1967

A month after Castelo Branco was sworn in on April 15, 1964, Roberto Campos joined the government as Minister of Planning and Economic Coordination. His nominal superior, Finance Minister Otávio Gouveia de Bulhões, a conservative like-minded economist, had been in place since the interim presidency of Ranieri Mazzilli. Both men would set the tone for conservative technocratic governance during the dictatorship. As historian Thomas Skidmore noted, Campos, more prominent and outgoing than Bulhões, "revealed a penchant for rough and tumble debate. He especially liked to ridicule the nationalist attacks on foreign capital. The nationalists returned the compliment by branding him 'Bobby Fields,' an unsubtle play on his name."⁴³⁵ The Minister of Planning spent much of August and September speaking to various groups across the country to present the new regime's fiscal policies along with a broader defense of the need for the military intervention.⁴³⁶ On September 19, he gave a speech sponsored by the Porto Alegre chapter of the Associação dos Diplomados da Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG), the alumni association for graduates of the nation's foremost war college, analyzing the flaws of the Goulart administration. Campos' speech is a good indication of how the regime saw itself: rational, responsible, and indispensable.

Goulart's worst offense, according to Campos, was sacrificing sober consideration of policy for sloganeering and self-aggrandizement. Aided by "engineers of chaos," the former president deliberately sought to ravage the economy so as to introduce "the Trojan horse of political and social

⁴³⁵ Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 23.

⁴³⁶ For an overview of Campos' actions as minister of planning see Marcelo Henrique Pereira dos Santos, "Roberto de Oliveira Campos: homem de ação do governo Castelo Branco," in *São Paulo em Perspectiva*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Apr-June 2000): 112-121.

subversion.”⁴³⁷ Campos argued that since the elected presidency of Getúlio Vargas, national governments had embraced measures that made no empirical sense. The new government was intent on undoing Goulart’s mystifications, one of which Campos dubbed “temperamental nationalism,” which he defined as an outlook that mistook tough language against foreigners for a strategy of economic development. Campos blamed this type of nationalism for a host of maladies, including the unrestrained growth of the public sector and foreign indebtedness, both of which actually made the nation less able to act independently. A rational nationalism, he posited, would seek efficient investments above all, be they domestic or from abroad, rather than “heaping on others the blame for our poverty.” Inflation, hostility to foreign investment, and class-based invectives were, under the previous government, percussion instruments in a “bizarre nationalist symphony,” Campos declared.⁴³⁸

That symphony had been setting the tune for Brazilian political debate since the elected Vargas presidency of the 1950s, much to the chagrin of conservative economists like Campos and Bulhões, politicians like Carlos Lacerda, and intellectuals like Wilson Martins. Martins, a literary critic, observed that the present generation seemed to think it had invented nationalism when really it only “grotesquely corrupted” it, injecting an authoritarian streak into a noble sentiment that he argued had inspired the modernist movement of the 1920s, a paragon of “political and intellectual liberalism.”⁴³⁹ Castelo Branco and other military leaders who had served in World War II also deeply distrusted “anything that seemed to them to be narrow, unrealistic, emotional nationalism,” as Alfred Stepan put it.⁴⁴⁰ For his part, Campos charged temperamental nationalists with being less interested in solutions than in a dim-witted pursuit of culprits to castigate. “Many people see in the

⁴³⁷ FGV/CPDOC, RC p m 64.08.13. “Diretrizes gerais da política econômico-financeira do governo,” p. 1, 6 (September 9, 1964).

⁴³⁸ FGV/CPDOC, RC p m 64.08.13. “Diretrizes gerais da política econômico-financeira do governo,” p. 3 (September 9, 1964).

⁴³⁹ Wilson Martins, “Júlio Mesquita e literatura,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, June 13, 1964, suplemento literário, 2.

⁴⁴⁰ Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971): 243.

epithet entreguista, with which we insult some of our greatest patriots and finest technicians, an example of bad faith. It is not even that. It is an example of simple stupidity,” he remarked in 1964, expressing the broadly held views of those close to the center of power after the coup.⁴⁴¹

Undoing the nationalist approach to public affairs required domestic and international action. In a major speech unveiling his foreign policy, Castelo Branco stated that nationalism had become a coded language of support for “socialist systems.” The new president asserted that the nationalism of his predecessors had produced an unpredictable and contradictory foreign policy that complained of insufficient foreign aid in economic development while placing restrictions on foreign investment. Notably, however, Castelo Branco refused to rule out commercial relations with Soviet bloc countries if they served the national interest.⁴⁴² Technocrats criticized the Left’s nationalism as a misguided policy framework while the military and Washington deemed it a harbinger of foreign (Soviet) submission. Civilian and military forces thus united in 1964 to parry the reformist Left’s reformist thrust, which it presented as part and parcel of legitimate nationalism.

The next move for rightwing forces, however, remained unsettled. While men like Campos set about reshaping policy—including loosening limits Goulart had placed on profit remittances for foreign companies, a key nationalist victory—allies like Carlos Lacerda were already considering the political endgame for the generals-cum-politicians. In between meetings with Castelo Branco in July, Lacerda rejected the notion of postponing the presidential election set for October 3, 1965. The people were behind the “revolution,” he argued, but popular support could easily wane in time.⁴⁴³ Lacerda was clear in his belief that the armed forces should only help provide the conditions for a supposedly more rational and less corrupt political debate to take place. For civilians who welcomed

⁴⁴¹ Roberto Campos, “The United States and Brazil: A Diplomatic View,” in *Revolution in Brazil*, ed. Louis Horowitz (New York: Dutton, 1964): 360-361.

⁴⁴² “Castelo expõe as normas da política externa do País,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, August 1, 1964, 7.

⁴⁴³ “Repele maioria o gov. Lacerda,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, July 9, 1964, 1.

the coup as a means of closing the book on the reformist nationalism that took hold in the late 1950s, this was not a goal that required military men to remain in power indefinitely.

Indeed, while the nationalist movement had created space for political actors to expect greater independence for Brazil on the world stage, there were immediate signs that the coup had provoked a change in the currency of the nationalist label. The case of General Argemiro de Assis Brasil illustrates this point well. Coming of age in the tumultuous 1920s, Assis Brasil identified with the *tenentes* and served in the 1932 Constitutionalist Revolt against the Vargas regime. He was briefly exiled before being amnestied and returning to Brazil in 1934. Assis Brasil was not particularly influential throughout his career but he was widely seen as a leftist figure in military circles, close with nationalist generals like Osvaldo Ferreira Alves, who was able to secure Assis Brasil's promotion to general in 1963. Shortly thereafter, Goulart chose Assis Brasil to be his chief of staff for the armed forces (*chefe do Gabinete Militar*). Assis Brasil served Goulart loyally until the end, flying with him to Rio Grande do Sul and delivering the fallen president to exile in Uruguay after the coup. In order to avoid being classified as a deserter, Assis Brasil returned to Brazil, presenting himself to authorities, and was promptly arrested.

In a revealing military deposition published in July 1964 in *O Estado de São Paulo*, the general was forced to disavow his ideological reputation and the political ideas with which he had long been associated. When asked why he thought Goulart had selected him for such a strategically important post, Assis Brasil downplayed any real ideological affinity, noting that perhaps the invitation merely reflected Goulart's gratitude for Assis Brasil's support in the 1961 succession crisis. Assis Brasil downplayed his role in the administration, noting that his opinions were rarely sought and only superficially when they were. Prompted by the interviewer, Assis Brasil called PTB firebrand Leonel Brizola an extremist, though he stopped short of suggesting that Brizola was inciting violence.

At one point in the exchange, Assis Brasil was asked whether he considered himself “one of those so-called nationalists attempting to point out a direct line of action for people to follow.” In his lengthy response—itsself an indication of the sensitivity of the subject—the general dismissed the notion out of hand, saying he had never been part of any nationalist organizations or been close to any avowed nationalists. “Obviously, I am not completely amorphous,” he continued, “I have my own ideas, but I am not part of any group, I am not of the nationalist or anti-nationalist group...what I wish for now and will continue to hope for is a democratic and free fatherland, free from all that is bad, be it national or foreign; if that is what they call nationalism then I am nationalist.” Assis Brasil concluded on a penitent note: “I know now that many things contrary to the national interest are hidden under the banner of nationalism.”⁴⁴⁴

Assis Brasil’s deposition is intriguing for a few reasons, but the most striking is that it reveals how toxic it had become to be associated with the nationalist label—a marked change from the late 1950s when the nationalist movement was confidently dictating the terms of national political debate. Assis Brasil barely acknowledged his previous nationalist inclinations and when he did he sought to reframe the concept in more conservative terms by insisting that it did not actually entail a proactive policy agenda but instead represented merely a general love of country. The social context that produced McCarthyite fears of communist subversion also made it so that to be dubbed an avowed nationalist was to be seen as radical, perhaps even treasonous.

Such was the case for the governor of Goiás, Mauro Borges. Borges’ father, a PSD congressman, was forced in October to defend his son from attacks on his administration. Borges had always been a nationalist “in the good sense” of the word, declared his father, and as soon as he found out that nationalism was being manipulated for political and subversive ends he broke with

⁴⁴⁴ “A reinquirição de Assis Brasil,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, July 7, 1964, 6-7.

Goulart.⁴⁴⁵ Nevertheless, a month later, Castelo Branco removed Mauro Borges from office and named Colonel Carlos de Meira Matos as his successor. Similarly, Lair Romão, a leader in the December 1963 navy sergeant uprising that helped turn the military against Goulart, adopted the regime's line that the nationalist movement—and Leonel Brizola in particular—had enmeshed itself in a communist conspiracy to install a left-wing dictatorship.⁴⁴⁶ Such was the fate of the nationalist mantle after the coup: many who had once embraced the label now sought, often unsuccessfully, to shed any association with it.

In September, speaking at the Paraná state governor's mansion, Castelo Branco defined "our nationalism" as one that "neither knows nor abides any form of submission" but whose values aligned unequivocally with the West. "We will continue to fight for a world in which fear has been swept away and the threat of mankind's destruction" has been neutralized. "That is our nationalism," the president concluded, "and that it is the nationalism Brazilians understand and desire."⁴⁴⁷ Castelo Branco's allusions to the Cold War placed Brazil squarely on the side of the United States in the struggle against the Soviet Union, though he stopped short of signaling total quiescence. His position was based on the same premise embraced by those who had supported the construction of the U.S. military base on Fernando de Noronha less than a decade before: The Cold War was a civilizational struggle that required hemispheric collaboration. The Castelo Branco administration rejected the notion held by the nationalist Left that the clash between the world's superpowers was none of Brazil's concern.

During the first months of military rule, members of the armed forces and their civilian allies sought to reclaim the nationalist mantle, which they believed had been exploited by disingenuous politicians prior to the 1964 coup. Roberto Campos told other Latin American foreign ministers

⁴⁴⁵ "Ludovico defende o governador de Goiás," *O Estado de São Paulo*, October 24, 1964, 5.

⁴⁴⁶ "Asilado critica Brizola," *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 10, 1965, 4.

⁴⁴⁷ "Castelo condena a transferência de responsabilidades," *O Estado de São Paulo*, September 6, 1964, 7.

that Brazil was now embracing “real nationalism” that would allow the nation to help itself by promoting investment and personal saving. Indeed, Campos repeatedly sought to define what he saw as authentic nationalism and to explain how the Castelo Branco administration was living up to that ideal.⁴⁴⁸ His constant perorations on the meaning of nationalism were clear signs of how successfully and enduringly the nationalist movement had lodged such considerations into the country’s political consciousness. While Campos spoke of the need for reforms, the “realistic financial measures” he described were classically liberal in nature—they called for the reduction and rationalization of the state.⁴⁴⁹

Prominent generals like Peri Constant Bevilaqua, however, disagreed with the regime’s civilian technocrats on some key economic matters. Bevilaqua defended Petrobras as a nationalist achievement and worried about focusing excessively on the debate between private and state-led economic growth. “Just because there is false nationalism does not mean we will give up our nationalist ideals in the same way that we will not cease to believe in medicine and doctors because there are some charlatans,” Bevilaqua explained.⁴⁵⁰ Despite the fact that Goulart’s propagandistic “false nationalism” failed to improve the economy or promote social justice, according to Castelo Branco, it remained the goal of the “authentic nationalists” who supported the so-called revolution to seek measures to promote the nation’s economic independence.⁴⁵¹ The government’s economic disagreements also reflect the influence of the nationalist movement, which at its inception held significant appeal across ideological lines.

Indeed, military men like Castelo Branco and Bevilaqua denounced the particular type of nationalism—reformist and anti-imperialist—represented by Goulart and his allies but did not reject the notion outright. The early months of military rule thus represent a key moment of contestation

⁴⁴⁸ See, for example, “Campos faz paralelo entre duas épocas,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 30, 1965, 15.

⁴⁴⁹ “Brasil enfrenta seu ‘momento da verdade,’ diz Campos,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 10, 1964, 24.

⁴⁵⁰ “‘Cidadão emérito’ o gen. Bevilaqua,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 16, 1964, 12.

⁴⁵¹ “O discurso do presidente,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 15, 1964, 5.

between the military's longstanding self-conception as the paramount national institution and the legacy of the leftist nationalist movement that so successfully claimed the nationalist mantle in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Castelo Branco made this clear in a December address, declaring it "time for the current government to assert that it has undertaken the sole authentic nationalist Revolution—the one the people called for and not that which demagogues promised knowing they would not carry out."⁴⁵² For the military, as Bevilaqua put it, nationalism was "an irreversible ideological force"—with Goulart's fall, it had simply changed hands.

Ensuring the New Status Quo

A key success of the nationalist movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s was establishing a conceptual link between the national interest and structural reforms. The Left had long held that Brazilian society could only become more equal through the implementation of radical changes in political representation, land tenure, and labor relations, to name a few key areas. The nationalist movement was integral in broadening the appeal of that idea, discursively tying reforms to Brazil's potential to become a great power able to provide for all of its citizens. At the same time that it endeavored to present itself as legitimately nationalistic, therefore, the new regime also sought to claim the mantle of reformism—a positive agenda of the kind both Roberto Campos and Castelo Branco deemed necessary from the beginning.

Unlike the nationalist movement of the 1950s and early 1960s, ever suspicious of the American press which it saw as an agent of imperialism, the new government actively pursued favorable coverage in foreign newspapers. In late 1965, for example, Curtis J. Hoxter, president of Hoxter Inc., a public relations and marketing company based in New York, wrote a letter to Roberto Campos explaining that their efforts to gin up positive assessments in the American press were

⁴⁵² "Castelo: nacionalismo é o que se tem agora," *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 15, 1964, 1.

already paying off. Based on reports prepared by the Hoxter organization, editorial writers at the *Baltimore Sun* and *Cincinnati Enquirer* praised the regime's economic measures. The case of the *Baltimore Sun* was especially noteworthy, Hoxter proudly proclaimed, "because of the fact that this paper's correspondent in Rio de Janeiro has been one of the most critical observers of the Brazilian Government and his attitude has been completely countermanded by this editorial reaction of his own paper."⁴⁵³ Hoxter suggested to Campos that the laudatory editorial prepared in Baltimore using information provided by Hoxter Inc., and through them the Brazilian government, implicitly rebutted the newspaper's man on the ground in Brazil. In fact, the editorial expressed some doubts about Castelo Branco's democratic bona fides, noting that "authoritarian as he may, he turns out, so far, not to be totalitarian."

The editorial was much more direct in praising the regime's economic measures, which had the nation "inching toward that happy circularity in which political calm promotes economic growth which generates political calm and so on."⁴⁵⁴ The editorials stated that sound economic management had returned to Brazil after the feckless Goulart administration. This aligned perfectly with Roberto Campos' argument that the overt nationalism of the previous government had in fact made the nation more vulnerable to external economic pressures by feeding inflation and hampering investments. The new regime was setting the country on the path toward fiscal health and, as the minister of planning frequently asserted, economic emancipation on its own terms.

Recognizing that ambitious new policies would require time in order to be implemented and take effect, the regime also adopted a rhetorical strategy to justify continued military rule. According to the government, the country had teetered too close to ruin to prematurely revert back to the way

⁴⁵³ FGV/CPDOC, RC p m 64.06.08. "Correspondência (em inglês) entre Curtis J. Hoxter e RC sobre artigos de jornais" (December 23, 1965-December 28, 1965).

⁴⁵⁴ "Brazil Story," *Baltimore Sun*, December 14, 1965. Attachment to FGV/CPDOC, RC p m 64.06.08. "Correspondência (em inglês) entre Curtis J. Hoxter e RC sobre artigos de jornais" (December 23, 1965-December 28, 1965).

things were. As the president of Bank of Brazil, Luiz de Moraes Barros, told the American Chamber of Commerce, the government's anti-inflationary measures were painful in the short term but they paled in comparison to the damage Goulart would have wrought. "The consequences of the campaign against the business community and excessive nationalism present challenges for the country that we will continue to face for many years," he concluded.⁴⁵⁵ For his part, the president urged the heads of state legislative assemblies to "bring this conviction to your states—whatever the circumstances, the Revolution must not give way to a past that endangered the ideals of democracy and liberty for our people." The regime, according to the president, was not driven by hatred nor did it persecute any segment of the population. It therefore did not fear elections. Indeed, Castelo Branco presented free and fair elections as a key goal of the new regime. The president exhorted the state legislators to carry home to their respective states "the torch of the Revolution's ideals."⁴⁵⁶

In part to ensure its longevity, the regime was eager to present itself as thoroughly democratic and responsive to voters. Supportive publications like *O Estado de São Paulo*, however, pleaded with the armed forces not to step aside too soon. Recalling the year 1945, one editorial pointed out that just as the military had been forced then to remove Vargas, twenty years later it was called upon to block the "shameful...alliance between a frontier strongman [*caudilhismo de fronteira*] and communist-nationalism."⁴⁵⁷ The editorial concluded that "to trust a situation dominated by the worst of what the getulista era has bequeathed us is to enable the nation to very quickly reinstate the same figures who, alongside Mr. João Goulart, dragged the nation to the point that made the armed movement of March 31 an absolute necessity." The paper urged the president to give up his "dangerous pseudo-

⁴⁵⁵ "O nacionalismo antiempresarial atrasou o País," *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 7, 1965, 23.

⁴⁵⁶ "É fato irreversível a Revolução, diz Castelo," *O Estado de São Paulo*, February 14, 1965, 1.

⁴⁵⁷ Notably, *O Estado de São Paulo* frequently decried the supposed "communist-nationalism [*communo-nacionalismo*]" of the Goulart administration when discussing the 1964 coup. That the terms were linked is indicative of the nationalist movement's association with the Left and vice versa. See, for example, "Reflexões sobre a Intentona," March 30, 1965, *O Estado de São Paulo*, 3.

democratic lucubrations” by devoting less attention to basic democratic processes like free and fair elections.⁴⁵⁸

Yet, once again seizing the mantle of reforms, Castelo Branco insisted that while 1964 had been the year of addressing the nation’s financial problems, 1965 would be the year for political changes designed to preserve the social order the military and its allies desired. Notably, he continued to address calls for economic emancipation, a key catchphrase of the nationalist movement. This suggests that while the regime saw itself as a revitalizing force for Brazilian democracy—a dubious assumption given that political freedoms were constrained, not expanded, under military rule—it felt compelled to continuously relitigate the nationalist question in its attempt to disqualify opponents on the left. This was also true of its supporters. Commemorating the regime’s first anniversary, *O Estado de São Paulo* praised the dictatorship for having solved the nation’s crisis of authority. As one headline put it, “Nationalism today is patriotism”—in other words, the politically-charged nationalism embraced by the Left in the late 1950s and early 1960s had been successfully displaced by a broader, vaguer, and less incendiary patriotism.⁴⁵⁹ The argument advanced by the regime and its allies was that nationalist reformism under Goulart would have sparked chaos and social upheaval whereas the military’s authoritarian patriotism promised order and development. This was the essence of the regime’s case for continuity.

Of course, the dictatorship’s attempt to brand itself as the only legitimate nationalist and reformist force in Brazilian politics was not uncontested. On the eleventh anniversary of Vargas’ suicide, his son, the president of the PTB, issued a statement that attempted to reassert for his father and his trabalhista heirs the mantle of nationalism. The younger Vargas criticized the regime in veiled terms for attempting to reestablish, notwithstanding its high-minded rhetoric, the

⁴⁵⁸ “As palavras e a realidade,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, February 16, 1965, 3.

⁴⁵⁹ “Nacionalismo é hoje patriotismo,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, April 1, 1965, 12.

exclusionary political system that his father helped do away with in 1930. “The nation’s tormenters—conspicuous or in disguise—forget that the victories of Vargas’ ideals, of *trabalhismo*, of nationalism are historically irreversible,” he proclaimed.⁴⁶⁰

Castelo Branco countered by pointing out the hypocrisy and opportunism of the communists and *trabalhistas*. He observed that in the early 1950s, publications linked to the PCB characterized Vargas as the ultimate *entreguista*, selling out the nation’s resources to foreign interests. After Vargas’ dramatic suicide, the president asserted, the PCB, “which does not shape public opinion but always seeks to benefit from it,” recast Vargas as the hero of their “false nationalism.” Against such fecklessness, Castelo Branco called on the nation to make the sacrifices necessary to quell inflation and attract foreign investment. Brazil should pursue “international collaborations” not as a show of subservience, he argued, but as “an instrument of economic progress, social justice, and national liberation. Might that interest the communists? Of course not.”⁴⁶¹ Castelo Branco and his technocratic allies saw it as their mission to undo the Goulart presidency but also to discredit the longer tradition of nationalist reformism that Vargas had come to personify and that was associated most closely with the PTB and, beginning in the mid-1950s, the PCB.

Indeed, the continued existence of the PTB served as a visible reminder of the *varguista* legacy. The PCB remained circumscribed but Brazilian communists were generally free to remain engaged through the PTB and other progressive parties. For the dictatorship and its allies, the PTB was an enduring symbol of all that was wrong with Brazilian politics. Such open partisan challenges to the regime’s authority would be severely checked only a few months later.

⁴⁶⁰ “O PTB lança um manifesto,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, August 25, 1965, 4.

⁴⁶¹ “Castelo expõe êxito da política economica,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 23, 1965, 1.

On October 27, 1965, the Castelo Branco administration unilaterally decreed Institutional Act 2 (IA-2) abolishing all existing parties and creating a new system that allowed for only one opposition and one government party. The move allowed the dictatorship to essentially wipe the political slate clean, doing away with the historical associations parties like the PTB, PSD, and UDN had with voters, bolstering the military's project of remaining in power with the support of civilian political actors organized into parties. When asked whether the move would make Brazil look bad abroad, Luis Antonio da Gama e Silva, dean of the University of São Paulo and one of Castelo Branco's favored jurists who helped craft the IA-2, said foreign perception should not matter. "We should strive for our own sovereignty and not tie ourselves to certain opinions held by certain international groups. That," he concluded, "is what I consider to be true nationalism."⁴⁶²

"Foreign Cooperation" in the Early Years of Military Rule

As early as 1965, the Castelo Branco administration, especially the economic team composed of Roberto Campos and Otavio Bulhões, was accused of facilitating the denationalization of the Brazilian economy. Denationalization, as the regime's opponents used the term, referred to the relative weakening of domestic capital against the increasing presence of foreign corporations.⁴⁶³ Critics charged the regime's anti-inflationary measures with crippling the investment capabilities of Brazilian businesses, favoring capital-rich multinational companies who could acquire or outmatch domestic competitors on the cheap. Reporting on two paper companies bought out by American conglomerates, the left-wing *Última Hora* noted that they had succumbed to an inability to access credit and "fiscal pressure" from the federal government. "There is no doubt that such will be the fate for much of Brazil's industry. That or bankruptcy pure and simple in areas that do not interest

⁴⁶² "De novo em seus rumos," *O Estado de São Paulo*, October 28, 1965, 4.

⁴⁶³ Maria D'Alva G. Kinzo, *Legal Opposition Politics under Authoritarian Rule in Brazil: The Case of the MDB, 1966-79* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988): 252.

foreign capital,” the paper concluded.⁴⁶⁴ The head of the National Confederation of Industry (Confederação Nacional da Indústria, or CNI), an entity generally supportive of the regime, acknowledged that the government’s policies seemed to favor foreign competitors.⁴⁶⁵

By December 1966, following the dutiful indirect election of General Artur da Costa e Silva as Castelo Branco’s successor, even Carlos Lacerda was expressing misgivings about the dictatorship’s economic plans. Lacerda told the mainstream weekly newsmagazine *O Cruzeiro* that Campos and Bulhões had misdiagnosed the cause of the inflation. They attributed it to long-term fiscal mismanagement while Lacerda maintained the spike was directly related to political crises during the Goulart administration. He also criticized Castelo Branco’s single-minded pursuit of foreign investments to the detriment of strengthening the domestic market. As a result, Lacerda noted, “the obvious happened: capital from abroad did not come, because it never comes to stagnant countries. The more they stall development less foreign capital will come to Brazil. If Brazil’s leaders don’t believe in the nation why should foreigners?” Agreeing with other critics of the regime, Lacerda observed that it was a challenge to name a sector of the economy that was not being denationalized at an alarming rate. Lacerda’s harsh assessment of Castelo Branco was tempered by his assurances that the regime was temporary and not militaristic. He blamed the government, however, for perpetuating a sense of crisis by not handing power back to civilian leaders sooner. For Lacerda, the regime was not doing enough to inspire confidence in the reinvigoration of the nation’s finances.⁴⁶⁶

While Castelo Branco personally remained popular, these critiques took a toll on the regime—especially its fiscal technocrats. Roberto Campos dismissed the charge of denationalization as the latest buzzword “in our desperate attempt to transfer the cause of our ills to someone else.”⁴⁶⁷ For his part, after leaving the government in 1967, ex-finance minister Otávio Bulhões endorsed a

⁴⁶⁴ “Governo faz humor à custa da crise,” *Última Hora*, January 15, 1965, 4.

⁴⁶⁵ “Empresário estrangeiro é favorecido,” *Correio da Manhã*, April 24, 1968, 2.

⁴⁶⁶ “Os 10 pecados da revolução são 11,” *O Cruzeiro*, December 10, 1966, 7-9.

⁴⁶⁷ Roberto Campos, “Nacionalismo, a isca e os peixes,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 30, 1967, 4.

more proactive role for the state on behalf of Brazilian industry, arguing that nationalism entailed not only resisting the incursions of foreign companies in Brazil but also helping Brazilian companies to compete internationally.⁴⁶⁸ Both men remained invested in publicly litigating the definition of nationalism after their time in office, seeking to cast their policies—anti-inflationary to the core—as crucial steps in the nation’s economic emancipation.

While they struggled to defend their approach, measures implemented by Campos and Bulhões helped place the nation on more solid fiscal ground, a course of action that would pay off later in the form of astronomically high rates of economic growth, according to most economists. Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira, for example, argues that while Castelo Branco’s economic program, known as the Government Economic Action Program (Programa de Ação Econômica do Governo, or PAEG), focused on inflation to the detriment of job creation, it achieved meaningful results. In 1962, inflation hit 94%; by 1967, it was down to 25%. Furthermore, the government passed reforms pertaining to the tax code and banking, and nationalized telephone and electric companies, steps that held the promise of spurring development in the near future.⁴⁶⁹ The regime was uniquely successful in quelling inflation when compared to its predecessors, André Lara Resende writes, because of its ability to directly dictate wage policies, a product of the authoritarian political context in which reforms were implemented.⁴⁷⁰ Despite these gains, the criticisms of Castelo Branco’s government stuck in the popular consciousness. This fact suggests that the nationalist movement, which had helped to popularize the notion that outright subservience to the United States reflected poorly on Brazil’s image and did little to advance the nation’s international standing, had had a lasting impact on the considerations underlaying political debate.

⁴⁶⁸ “Bulhões quer ações no mercado mundial,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 31, 1970, 31.

⁴⁶⁹ Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira, *A construção política do Brasil: Sociedade, economia e Estado desde a Independência* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2015): 185.

⁴⁷⁰ André Lara Resende, “Estabilização e reforma,” in *A ordem do progresso: dois séculos de política econômica no Brasil*, ed. Marcelo de Paiva Abreu (Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2014): 211.

American observers acknowledged the distance in public assessments of Castelo Branco as a leader and of his administration. As Castelo Branco's presidency wound down, the embassy in Rio de Janeiro filed a detailed assessment of the outgoing president and what the U.S. government might expect from Costa e Silva. The document noted that while Castelo Branco "has been a severe task master, often called ruthless and dictatorial . . . few indeed credit him with other than the best of motives and objectives, even if they disagree with his methods." Indeed, "although everyone is aware that his hand guides, supports and is responsible for virtually all actions of his government, resentment is vented largely on those easier to attack than [the] president, notably Minister Roberto Campos . . . Finance Minister Bulhões . . . and some of the more authoritarian military figures (including ex-war minister Costa e Silva until his candidacy to the presidency was consolidated.)" The report stated that Castelo Branco was widely seen as "ill-advised by his technocrats on the economic side and sometimes forced to take extreme actions by [the] military hardline." The result was that public opprobrium centered on figures like Campos and Bulhões while the president's standing was left mostly intact.

The report also concluded that most Brazilians were unmoved by the "innovations" of the Castelo Branco administration—including the Institutional Acts and planned legislation pertaining to the press and national security—since "they believe (and history gives many examples) [that] severely restrictive measures are rarely enforced and can be changed." Moreover, "many of [the] more important spokesmen and activists of the 'Revolution'—principally [in the] military—see time as having come for profound changes in [the] Brazilian body politic. They believe [the] nation must be modernized along uniquely Brazilian lines differing from traditional liberal U.S. and French models."

American government officials also worried about the fervor over the perceived denationalization of the economy, noting that "if Costa e Silva has little success in improving

business conditions and economic and social conditions of lower and lower-middle urban classes (including civil service and military,) [the] scapegoat [of] anti-Americanism can be expected to reach [a] level damaging to U.S. interests by limiting [the] administration's freedom of action in its relations with U.S." Officials further fretted that "nationalism, which directly affects relations with U.S. since one of its most virulent forms is anti-Americanism, is increasingly vocal," including in the armed forces. "Resentment of [the] U.S. role in Brazil and [the] world among intellectuals and students, is both intense and profound today. Perhaps even more disturbing are new inroads made in conservative sectors such as industrialists and businessmen who have personally felt competition of foreign, usually U.S., business enterprises."

The report concluded that the rise in anti-Americanism likely stemmed from "those elements seeking [to] worsen relations for political advantage, e.g. communists" and Carlos Lacerda, and was a natural outcome of the perceived "risks and futility of attacking [the] government itself." Widespread allegations of the denationalization of Brazilian industries further inflamed anti-American sentiment, according to officials. American observers were alarmed that the nationalist sentiment had "reached [the] extreme of charges that [the] Alliance for Progress [is] being used as [an] instrument of 'denationalization.' Castelo Branco administration's all-out public support of U.S. policies has served rather to increase anti-Americanism than to lessen it." None of this was to say that the "Brazilian people are about to rise up in arms against [the] United States since [a] large reservoir of good will continues to exist throughout [the] country, particularly in rural areas and in cities other than [the] most populous" but nationalist sentiment "could become [an] increasingly important factor in our relations with [the] Brazilian government."⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷¹ Telegram, "Situation and Contingency Evaluation," 7539 from Rio de Janeiro, 1/24/67, Brazil, Country File, NSF, Box 11, LBJ Presidential Library.

Clearly, the dictatorship's early attempts to brand itself as legitimately nationalistic had failed. Castelo Branco's administration, particularly his economic team, was seen as overly acquiescent to American interests and insufficiently committed to fostering domestic industry. Roberto Campos' success in removing the limits João Goulart had imposed on profit remittances was emblematic of this perceived foible. In March 1970, Campos, granted his own column in *O Estado de São Paulo* upon leaving government, argued that the obstacles to Brazilian development were much more attitudinal than material. He cited "incoherent socialism, inefficient paternalism, and temperamental nationalism" as the main pathologies of the body politic. "Nationalism, or rather, emotionalism," he continued, reiterating points made during his tenure as minister of planning, "hinders self-criticism and thus the ability to correct trajectories, leading to diabolical and escapist explanations for underdevelopment in terms of foreign exploitation or demonic conspiracy."⁴⁷² I would argue that part of the reason Castelo Branco's government was not considered a nationalist success was because it failed, in the short term, to produce economic results that could impress the average citizen. The political appeal of "temperamental nationalism" seemed to endure despite his best efforts, as Campos bemoaned. His sense of frustration was evident.

American frustration with the Brazilian government was also clear. As Jeffrey F. Taffet points out in his study of the Alliance for Progress, U.S. policymakers were concerned about repressive measures in Brazil but were more likely to criticize what they saw as shortcomings in public policy than abuses in fundamental human rights. In March 1967, Costa e Silva partnered with the U.S. government in a far-reaching overhaul of the national education system only to withdraw following a nationalistic public outcry. Furthermore, the dictatorship failed to follow through on the agrarian and labor reforms discussed under Castelo Branco, which the Johnson administration approved of in limited ways. "There was some discussion within the U.S. government in mid-1967 about

⁴⁷² Roberto de Oliveira Campos, "Oração aos moços," *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 4, 1970, 4.

confronting the Brazilian government with its lack of effective economic reform and withholding funds as a result. This was standard procedure in Alliance for Progress loans elsewhere,” according to Taffet. “Yet in Brazil, fears about instability and a desire to see the Costa e Silva government succeed ensured that U.S. policymakers would continue to provide funding.”⁴⁷³

The Johnson administration, in other words, decided to accept Costa e Silva’s shortcomings in order to forestall an open break with the regime, a move U.S. analysts thought would embolden the more openly nationalistic ranks within the Brazilian military. Johnson’s policy was informed by the nationalist moment the country had experienced less than a decade before. The U.S. government was unwilling to take actions that might resuscitate the openly anti-imperialistic rhetoric of the previous decade when the nationalist movement successfully built on the mystique of Getúlio Vargas’ suicide to establish an independent foreign policy and aggressive state action on behalf of Brazilian companies as indispensable traits of political nationalism. Anything less, as Castelo Branco and Costa e Silva warily perceived, could be convincingly dismissed as *entreguismo*.

Costa e Silva: “back on the nationalist track,” 1967-1969

On March 15, 1967, the same day that Costa e Silva took office, a new constitution went into effect. Rammed through the National Congress through presidential decree, the document strengthened the executive branch by attributing it with sole power to legislate on budgetary and national security matters; mandated indirect elections for president with a five-year term; established the death penalty for crimes against national security; restricted workers’ right to strike; and expanded the jurisdiction of military courts. The new constitution foreshadowed the authoritarian turn the regime would take less than two years later.

⁴⁷³ Jeffrey F. Taffet, *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America* (New York: Routledge, 2007): 119.

American observers viewed the transfer of power inauspiciously, less bullish about the prospect of working with Costa e Silva than they had been about Castelo Branco. “Because he is less judicious and more a man of action than Castelo Branco, we see more chance that he might resort to harsh, authoritarian methods. Finally, we think that he will put more emphasis on Brazilian nationalism and that in time this could cause friction in US-Brazilian relations,” concluded an August 1966 National Intelligence Estimate prepared by the CIA.⁴⁷⁴

Indeed, as suspicions of American interest in Brazil carried over into the second military government, embassy officials acknowledged that nationalism remained an obstacle for U.S. activities in Brazil. A September 1967 report from U.S. ambassador John Tuthill noted that nationalism was “the principal controlling factor . . . within which we seek to realize our objectives in Brazil. There are, of course, other factors but none that impinges so heavily in so many areas as this amorphous, but everpresent phenomenon.” The report laid out the key components of Brazil’s enduring nationalism:

(a) a sense of the nation’s future greatness, by virtue of its size and resources combined with often irrational optimism based on sheer size; (b) a sense of shame, as Brazil has not yet progressed further in spite of its natural blessings; (c) a sense of pride in Brazilian accomplishments, particularly in the social field; (d) a sense of envy, particularly towards the United States.

Tuthill concluded that “these components of Brazilian nationalism, contradictory as they are, result in a heightened Brazilian sensitivity, which is often hypersensitivity where the United States is concerned.”

Furthermore, the ambassador noted incisively that the generation who had served in the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (Força Expedicionária Brasileira, or FEB) during World War II

⁴⁷⁴ National Intelligence Estimate, “The Outlook for Brazil,” Number 93-66, 8/18/66, National Intelligence Estimates, NSF, Box 9, LBJ Library.

(Castelo Branco most notably) was more likely to view the United States favorably and was thus less receptive to the aggressive nationalism that emerged in the late 1950s. Castelo Branco's death in a midair small aircraft collision near Fortaleza six months after leaving the presidency signified for Tuthill "the symbolic passing of the FEB generation." To wit, under Costa e Silva, who had not served in the FEB, "the emerging attitude. . . shows clear signs of reverting to the more nationalist attitude of the post-World War II period. He is back on the nationalist track and is already deriving some domestic popularity and support from this policy," Tuthill concluded with some alarm. Tuthill assumed Costa e Silva likely enjoyed the support of his military base in this more assertive position. Indeed, "the increased nationalist input in the Costa e Silva administration is already noticeable in our working relationship with it. The easy, almost automatic intimacy that U.S. officials inside and outside Brazil enjoyed with their counterparts at almost every level of the Castelo Branco government is already largely a thing of the past."⁴⁷⁵ In response to the changed dynamics, Tuthill advised a cut in American staff in Brazil.⁴⁷⁶

Unlike the Castelo Branco administration, which couched its claim to nationalism in economic terms, Costa e Silva was more intent on projecting a tough image for Brazil on the global stage. Although his finance minister, Antonio Delfim Netto, maintained the same basic approach set by Campos and Bulhões—pursuing foreign capital as a matter of "common sense," for example⁴⁷⁷—, Costa e Silva deemphasized the "positive agenda" of structural reforms that Castelo Branco and his technocrats deemed indispensable for the regime to survive and for the nation to thrive, focusing instead on asserting Brazil's prerogatives as a hemispheric power. A 1968 National Intelligence Estimate prepared by the CIA identified Costa e Silva's favored nationalist causes. The first was an insistence upon Brazil's sovereign right to develop nuclear energy resources. More

⁴⁷⁵ Airgram, "Notes on Brazilian Nationalism," A-39 from Brasilia, 9/8/67, Brazil, Country File, NSF, Box 11, LBJ Library.

⁴⁷⁶ Memo, WG Bowdler to Walt Rostow, 9/16/67, Brazil, Country File, NSF, Box 11, LBJ Library.

⁴⁷⁷ "Mitos e capital estrangeiro," *O Estado de São Paulo*, April 30, 1970, 3.

successfully than his successor, Costa e Silva argued that “the draft international non-proliferation treaty discriminates against the underdeveloped nations by not distinguishing between nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and for the production of nuclear weapons.”

Costa e Silva further distanced himself from Castelo Branco by assuming a more independent stance in foreign policy. Like his recent predecessors, he called for trade with all countries, regardless of ideology. But in contrast to the notorious statement of Castelo Branco’s foreign minister that “what’s good for the U.S. is good for Brazil,” Costa e Silva’s government specifically rejected any subordination of Brazilian to U.S. policy interests. As the Intelligence Estimate noted, Castelo Branco enthusiastically supported the notion of a permanent Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF) and endorsed U.S. policy on Vietnam. Costa e Silva’s foreign minister, José de Magalhães Pinto, in a purported bid for popularity, backed away in both cases. Pinto argued that the defense and maintenance of order in any country should fall to its own armed forces. “Pinto, a former governor of the state of Minas Gerais, has built a successful career around his ability to sense a political trend,” the report observed. It continued: “He sometimes presses the nationalist-independent policies farther than Costa e Silva seems prepared to go, but . . . his own inclinations on these matters are of particular importance because he is using the Foreign Ministry as a vantage point from which to launch his campaign for the presidency in 1971.”⁴⁷⁸

Whether individuals in the Costa e Silva government were more or less assertive in their nationalist orientation, the regime itself remained clearly invested in claiming for itself the mantle of legitimate nationalism. Upon becoming minister of the interior in March 1967, for example, General Afonso de Albuquerque Lima declared it his mission to reaffirm “the principles that have drawn us together yesterday and today and that remain intact as an expression of our political and

⁴⁷⁸ National Intelligence Estimate, “Brazil,” Number 93-68, 3/21/68, National Intelligence Estimates, NSF, Box 9, LBJ Library.

moral idealism: nationalism.”⁴⁷⁹ Albuquerque Lima, according to Peter Flynn, was the leading voice of right-wing nationalism in the upper echelons of the military, embodying the strain of nationalism in the armed forces that dated back at least to the *tenentes* of the 1920s. “While resolutely hardline in his views of maintaining tight political control, he strongly advocated more attention to the northeast and Amazonas and was very suspicious of growing foreign control of the economy,” Flynn notes.”⁴⁸⁰ Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Orlando Geisel similarly espoused the virtues of nationalism to military subordinates at public events.⁴⁸¹ While the dictatorship was riven by subtle differences in how to enact its modernizing mission, Castelo Branco and Costa e Silva shared the view that nationalism ought to be a focused force rather than one put to tumultuous ideological ends.

Because of this disposition, journalist Fernando Pedreira argued in *O Estado de São Paulo* that Costa e Silva was basically following the “*juscelinista* formula,” the approach established by former president Juscelino Kubitschek. This doctrine, as Pedreira described it, was “nationalistic in the Amazon and ‘entreguista’ in the ABC,” referring to the industrial region in Greater São Paulo where foreign automakers established plants beginning in the late 1950s. By this he meant that the regime forcefully asserted Brazilian sovereignty when it came to disputes over territory and resources but was pliant in pursuit of foreign investment to build up the country’s industrial capacity. Pedreira posited that, “through their formation, military men, more so than technocrats, tend toward statism and a narrow, defensive nationalism that no longer corresponds to the country’s needs and potential. These tendencies are made worse by the opportunism of many who were not nationalists at the right moment and who now seem intent on making up for lost time.”⁴⁸² A column in *Jornal do Brasil* made

⁴⁷⁹ “Lima defende nacionalismo autêntico,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 18, 1967, 6.

⁴⁸⁰ Peter Flynn, “The Brazilian Development Model: The Political Dimension,” *The World Today*, Vol. 29, No. 11 (Nov. 1973): 487.

⁴⁸¹ “Geisel fala a oficiais sobre nacionalismo,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, April 14, 1967, 28.

⁴⁸² Fernando Pedreira, “A fórmula juscelinista,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 21, 1968, 4.

a similar point, pointing out that “nationalism in Brazil acquired, since the 1950s, a leftist connotation that led military men to reject it as a political doctrine. Since then, the military assumed patriotic positions in contrast to nationalist ones. But after 64, with the disappearance of avowed leftist action, some segments of the armed forces have become favorably disposed to the nationalist line to explain some national shortcomings.”⁴⁸³ In another column, Fernando Pedreira criticized the Costa e Silva government for pursuing a “right-wing nationalism, as self-conscious and anachronistic as that of the fiercest leftist adversaries of the so-called revolution.”⁴⁸⁴ Some of the same criticisms conservatives lodged against the nationalist movement in the 1950s—that it was immature, unrealistic, governed by passion rather than reason—were now being leveled against the regime in parts of the press.

Pedreira, for his part, correctly diagnosed the extent to which the regime’s basic economic philosophy was not so distinct from Kubitschek’s approach, itself a refinement of the model embraced by Vargas in the early 1950s: the state would continue to play a lead role in organizing and encouraging industrial development. If that meant assiduously courting foreign investment, so be it. But the nation would also assert itself in symbolic ways as a means of projecting confidence and regional influence, be it the construction of a new capital city under Kubitschek or the proposed occupation and development of the vast Amazon jungle under Costa e Silva. Just as in the late 1950s, the federal government invoked nationalism to justify modernization and development rather than structural reforms carried out in the name of social justice.

A social justice vision that encompassed a robust set of political rights was not only downplayed in the regime’s official discourse—it was attacked through a systematic policy of torture, intimidation, and repression aimed at dissenters, all in the name of containing the threat of

⁴⁸³ “Candidatura civil em 70 poderá unir os militares,” *Jornal do Brasil*, December 1-2, 1968, 6.

⁴⁸⁴ Fernando Pedreira, “O boneco de piche dos generais,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 20, 1968, 4.

subversion that purportedly imperiled the nation immediately before the 1964 coup. Indeed, a 1967 book entitled *Nacionalismo: novo ópio do povo* (*Nationalism: New Opiate of the Masses*) by journalist Paulo Torres captures how the armed forces and its supporters saw the stakes. In denouncing the supposedly dictatorial Goulart, Torres describes the type of nationalism that the dictatorship would define itself against throughout its existence: demagogic, xenophobic, and superficial.⁴⁸⁵ Such a loathsome depiction of the Goulart administration and the broader legacy of the second Vargas government provided a convenient foil for the regime, one invoked by every military president.

Institutional Act 5: The Regime Hardens

More than anything else, the Costa e Silva administration became known for Institutional Act 5 (AI-5), the so-called coup within the coup issued on December 13, 1968. While agents of the regime tortured opponents and cracked down on dissent from the beginning, it had sought to maintain the appearance of regular democratic order. By early 1968, however, opposition to the dictatorship was reaching a fever pitch. Carlos Lacerda, erstwhile supporter of the regime, was increasingly combative as head of the *frente ampla* (broad front), a civilian coalition of opposition to the government that included prominent figures like former presidents Kubitschek and Goulart. Historian Thomas Skidmore called this movement a “desperate lunge toward nationalism” by Carlos Lacerda, one doomed to fail given that the armed forces in power effectively neutralized his political appeal. Historian Thomas Skidmore called this movement a “desperate lunge toward nationalism” by Carlos Lacerda, one doomed to fail given that the armed forces in power effectively neutralized his political appeal. Skidmore saw Lacerda’s failed nationalist gambit as “a sure sign that the day for his political style had passed.”⁴⁸⁶ I would argue it also indicated the regime’s success at coopting the

⁴⁸⁵ Paulo Torres, *Nacionalismo, novo ópio do povo: pequenas reportagens*. São Paulo: Editora Obelisco, 1967.

⁴⁸⁶ Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil*, 54.

nationalist mantle and defusing its mobilizing potential, which had been evident under Vargas, Kubitschek, and, especially, Goulart.

Nevertheless, the potential of these leaders to destabilize the government worried American analysts, as indicated by former military attaché Vernon Walters' worried memo to Henry Kissinger that "a government formed by the opposition 'Broad Front' . . . would be at least as hostile towards us as Goulart's was prior to 1964. Such a government would by its policies scare off foreign investors thus depriving the capital hungry country of the resources it must have to keep development ahead of population growth."⁴⁸⁷

Student demonstrations also expanded with support from segments of the middle class and the church. Furthermore, in the industrial cities of Contagem in Minas Gerais and Osasco in São Paulo, workers went on strike for the first time since the 1964 coup to protest the government's anti-inflationary measures that had resulted in an acute wage squeeze. The political turbulence of the Goulart years, which the coup had intended to quell, seemed to have returned. By the end of the year, a provocation from an opposition member of congress provided the pretext for a harsh crackdown.

The fifth Institutional Act was by far the most draconian step the generals in power would take. It granted the executive branch the power to shutter Congress along with state and municipal assemblies; the ability to suspend habeas corpus in all cases of political crimes against national security, a vast category of infraction; and it mandated that the trial of political crimes be held by military courts with no other judicial recourse.⁴⁸⁸ In many ways the rampant imprisonment, torture, and disappearances ushered in during those final days of 1968 came to define a generation of

⁴⁸⁷ "Memorandum to Dr. Kissinger, From: V.A. Walters, Subject: Brazil," undated. National Security Council Files, Henry A. Kissinger Files, HAK Administrative and Staff Files - Transition. Box 1, "Brazil." Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library.

⁴⁸⁸ Maria Helena Moreira Alves offers an overview of the main provisions of Institutional Act 5 in *State and Opposition in Military Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988): 95-96.

militant Brazilians. AI-5 became a shorthand for the darkest days in Brazil's recent political history, the so-called *anos de chumbo*, or years of lead.

For members of the armed forces in 1968, however, IA-5 was a necessary step in recovering the promise of the so-called "revolution." A private exchange between Philip Raine, a U.S. foreign service officer, and Colonel Ferdinando de Carvalho of the Brazilian Army offers insight into this mindset. Assessing continuities from the Kubitschek period, Raine commented that the former president had done much for Brazilian economic progress, to which Carvalho "came closest to losing an otherwise cool composure." Kubitschek, he explained, "like most politicians . . . was used by certain groups interested only in their own gain. Brazilian development was interesting to them, but only if it worked in their direct benefit; they had no real interest in the nation's welfare." For Carvalho, the same groups that controlled Kubitschek had eventually taken in the late President Castelo Branco and President Costa e Silva, "both of whom had started out with truly revolutionary zeal but had been influenced by the forces which had corrupted the politicians before them, including Juscelino Kubitschek."

The Colonel did not elaborate on or identify the groups mentioned above, but, according to Raine, Carvalho chafed at the seemingly consistent "triumph of the São Paulo economic interests over the requirements of national integration, particularly development of the less developed parts of Brazil." Raine had the impression that "'public enemy' No. 1 or No. 2 for the Colonel are the São Paul industrialists," whose grip on national power remained as firm as ever to the detriment of balanced policymaking that could spur development benefitting all Brazilians. The "revolution," according to Colonel Carvalho, was to have changed all this, but it had not yet done so. Castelo Branco failed and Costa e Silva failed, frustrations that resulted in Institutional Acts No. 2 and 5. Both were exceptional measures, according to the Colonel, intended to put the "revolution" back on the rails. Raine suspected that Carvalho's strong bias against São Paulo private enterprise,

“presumably domestic and foreign,” could lead to greater state participation in the economy and tighter control over private capital—measures that a decade before would have been associated closely with the nationalist movement.⁴⁸⁹

Self-avowed members of the military hardline like Carvalho were wary of anything that might give Brazil the appearance of being a banana republic to outside observers. The implementation of IA-5 in December 1968, followed by a stroke that left the president incapacitated in September 1969 and the installation of a military junta threatened just that. Divisions within the armed forces over who should succeed Costa e Silva spelled trouble for the regime. Jostling for position, several candidates emerged, including General Afonso Augusto de Albuquerque Lima who, according to some scholars of the military, “represented a faction with clear ideological characteristics, rightwing and nationalistic in nature, with a significant presence within and beyond the armed forces.”⁴⁹⁰ Indeed, anticommunist nationalists in the Albuquerque Lima mold had attacked U.S. senators Ted Kennedy and Frank Church in the early 1970s for their criticisms of human rights abuses in Brazil, suggesting that anticommunism in Brazil did not always signify a uniformly pro-American position.⁴⁹¹ The weekly newsmagazine *O Cruzeiro* would later call Albuquerque Lima “an example of nationalism,” a reputation that led the fiercely anti-communist air force general João Paulo Burnier to refer to him as a socialist.⁴⁹² Albuquerque Lima, whose right-wing nationalism sometimes manifested itself in anti-American attitudes, and Burnier, a much more straightforward Cold War

⁴⁸⁹ Memorandum of conversation, Colonel Ferdinand de Carvalho and Philip Raine, “Brazilian Military and Politics,” March 15, 1969; Folder DEF-4-IADB, Box 1525; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁴⁹⁰ *A volta aos quartéis: a memória militar sobre a abertura*, 30.

⁴⁹¹ James N. Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010): 237-238, 335.

⁴⁹² Fernando Câmara Cascudo, “Albuquerque Lima: um exemplo de nacionalismo,” *O Cruzeiro*, March 27, 1974, 94; *A volta aos quartéis: a memória militar sobre a abertura*, 30.

ideologue who embraced the United States, represented two of the key cleavages within the armed forces.⁴⁹³

Albuquerque Lima was specific in his nationalist vision, one that appealed to a sizeable if not decisive segment of the armed forces. In 1970, with an eye toward establishing himself as a leading contender for the presidency, he laid out ten points that formed the basis of his ideological approach. The first was striking in how clearly it linked leftist ideas to foreign conspiracy: “combatting the exotic and subversive ideas of Russian, Chinese or Cuban communism, as well as the antitheses of other well-known rightwing tendencies.” The second point stressed the “courage to acknowledge that Brazil needs foreign technical [assistance] and capital, but the *decision* to apply these, in time and space, must fall exclusively to Brazilians.” Third, Albuquerque Lima called for economic independence so that the nation would never be forced to rely on foreign governments. Subsequent points stressed Brazilian energy independence, the defense of the Amazon, and industrial development. “Nationalism,” the general noted, “is indispensable in the fight being waged against underdevelopment and it is the duty of all Brazilians to unite around this idea before it is too late.”⁴⁹⁴ Albuquerque Lima is a key figure in understanding how nationalist and antidemocratic ideas of the heterogeneous tenente generation articulated themselves in the context of military rule. He was not successful in positioning himself as a leading presidential candidate, presumably because his nationalism simply did not mesh with the technocratic assessments of the regime’s economic advisors. However, his enduring prominence in the armed forces speaks to the popularity of such ideas, which never really went away.

⁴⁹³ For more on divisions within the military during the dictatorship see João Roberto Martins Filho, *O palácio e a caserna: a dinâmica militar das crises políticas na ditadura, 1964-1969* (São Carlos: Editora da UFSCar, Universidade Federal de São Carlos, 1995) and Maud Chirio, *A política nos quartéis: Revoltas e protestos de oficiais na ditadura militar brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2012).

⁴⁹⁴ See “10 pontos de Albuquerque,” *Fato Novo*, No. 1, April 31-May 6, 1970, 5.

While Albuquerque Lima presented an explicitly right-wing nationalist agenda in the pages of the military press, the dictatorship's perceived instability coupled with increasing international awareness of human rights violations threatened to undermine the government at home and abroad. Fortunately for those committed to preserving military rule, General Emílio Garrastazu Médici, who straddled the line between Albuquerque Lima's nationalism and Burnier's strident anti-communism, emerged as the consensus pick to become the next president. Albuquerque Lima, the strongest presidential contender outside the rank of four-star generals, according to Peter Flynn, had tried unsuccessfully to quell concerns that he was an extreme nationalist hostile to foreign business interests during the power struggle that followed Costa e Silva's stroke.⁴⁹⁵ Although he had widespread support in every branch of the armed forces, Albuquerque Lima was seen as simply too junior by the highest echelons of the military command to become chief executive. Médici took office as the economy flourished and civil society withered under harsh repression.

Médici: National Exuberance and the Economic Miracle, 1968-1973

Not all sectors of society in 1968 viewed the year's end in the same funereal light. For one thing, 1968 marked the beginning of Brazil's "economic miracle," a period of rapid development and economic growth that bolstered the regime's credibility and support among broad swathes of the population. Between 1968 and 1974, roughly coinciding with the Médici administration (October 1969-March 1974), Brazil's GDP grew at an average rate of 10.9 percent per year, a high mark by any standard. "If repression was the Médici government's gravest liability in international opinion," according to Thomas Skidmore, "the economic boom was its greatest asset."⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁵ Flynn, "The Brazilian Development Model: The Political Dimension," 488.

⁴⁹⁶ Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil*, 138.

Indeed, in its annual report for 1968, the American Chamber of Commerce for Brazil expressed optimism for 1969, entering that year “with renewed hope of better and more stable business conditions, the manner in which 1968 ended being a good augury.” Inflation was finally tamed, reduced to 24 percent at year’s end compared with 100 percent in 1964 at the start of the military regime. To Planning Minister Helio Beltrão these positive developments were the result of sound economic stewardship and the government’s “absolute control of the [economic] situation.”⁴⁹⁷ The director of the Brazilian mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development agreed in February 1969, noting that after IA-5 “in terms of general economic policies, I would say there has been a net improvement; the Finance Minister can now do by decree things that before had to go through Congress; they have been passing out decrees left and right, and most of them are to the good.”⁴⁹⁸ The regime used its litany of economic successes to support propaganda that effectively convinced the public that whatever the blights on the regime’s human rights record, it was leading Brazil toward fulfilling its potential as a hemispheric power.

It stands to reason that the business community would implicitly embrace IA-5, issued as it was in a climate of increasingly vocal resistance to the dictatorship’s economic policies from the Left. Through a series of robberies, kidnappings, and targeted assassinations, left-wing urban guerilla groups disillusioned by the prospect of working within the sanctioned two-party system waged war on the enemies they viewed as being two sides of the same oppressive coin: a brutal military government and a collaborationist business elite. Both served the interests of American imperialism, these groups alleged. Those who sustained and benefitted from the regime could draw comfort from knowing that the government’s repressive measures targeted “subversives” hostile to capitalism and its agents, foreign and domestic.

⁴⁹⁷ Cited in Annual Report of the American Chamber of Commerce for Brazil, “Report on Chamber’s Activities During 1968 for the 50th Annual General Meeting.” (São Paulo: January 30, 1969): 3.

⁴⁹⁸ Cited in Albert Fishlow, “Some Reflections on Post-1964 Brazilian Economic Policy,” in *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future*, ed. Alfred Stepan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973): 69.

For observers abroad, however, the resurgence of an official nationalist discourse in Brazil complicated the country's auspicious economic outlook. Joseph Novitske, writing in the *New York Times*, worried that the anti-imperialistic rhetoric sweeping Latin America could effectively unite the socialist presidency of Salvador Allende in Chile and the "staunchly anti-Communist Brazilian technocrat[s]" in the Médici administration against U.S. interests in the region. The column pointed out that in 1968 a new populist military regime in Peru nationalized the oil properties of the International Petroleum Company while a new Bolivian regime nationalized holdings of the Gulf Oil Company a year later. Allende himself won the presidency in 1970 after three tries in 18 years on a leftist nationalist platform. Meanwhile, Novitske noted, "the right-wing Brazilian military regime, which considers itself one of America's staunchest allies against communism, was driving hard shipping bargains to get greater share of freight traffic to the United States. It was also threatening to wreck the International Coffee Agreement rather than give in to United States pressure, which seeks to protect some American producers of instant coffee from imports of Brazilian-made soluble coffee."

Novitske attributed this trend to the hypersensitivity U.S. observers routinely attributed to "Latins," but also considered the upsurge in nationalism to be "the residue of irritating, sometimes humiliating, incidents." He cited the case of a Brazilian textile exporter who shipped several thousands of dollars' worth of raw toweling to a buyer in the United States, confident of its status under American customs regulations. Once the cargo had been carried to port, however, the exporter was informed that the Department of Commerce, apparently on consultation with American manufacturers of similar products, had changed the administrative interpretation of a certain regulation and that his cargo could not land. The continent had long experienced nationalism on the Left, but incidents like these motivated "nationalists of the right, who are also

hostile to United States business interests in South America, and they appear to believe, as in Brazil, in an authoritarian rule by an elite that runs a form of state socialism.”⁴⁹⁹

Secretary of State William Rogers was more measured in his assessment, arguing in *U.S. News & World Report* that Latin American nationalism was a positive force, even if it sometimes seemed directed against the United States. “In the past, there was an excessively paternalistic sentiment on the part of the United States,” he said, concluding, “the fact that Latin Americans feel responsible for their own future and take pride in their nationalities is a good thing.”⁵⁰⁰ Besides, dealing with Brazilian nationalism was not especially difficult, according to Arnold Nachmanoff, a member of U.S. President Richard Nixon’s National Security Council staff. In December 1970, he wrote a memo to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger with suggestions for how to improve relations with Brazil, noting that “the style of our relations with Brazil is almost as important as the substance.” In addition to specific policy recommendations on matters dear to Brazil—instant coffee exports, military aid, and foreign investment—, Nachmanoff offered three ways the government could acknowledge Brazil’s self-regard.

The first was increasing the frequency of consultations with Brazilian officials “to advance our mutual interests in the hemisphere. We can also make them think of themselves as one of our global allies.” The second recommendation was to schedule occasional high-level visits, “perhaps once a year,” while also dedicating more attention to the Brazilian ambassador. Finally, Nachmanoff advised inviting Médici for an official state visit. Nachmanoff also cautioned that while there was not strong public pressure against foreign investment in Brazil at the moment, “there are indications that the tide of economic nationalism which is prevalent elsewhere in the hemisphere will have its effect on Brazil. Here again, we should try to anticipate and minimize problems before they become

⁴⁹⁹ Joseph Novitske, “Latins of Left and Right Assail U.S.,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1970, Section 3, 1, 15.

⁵⁰⁰ “Rogers afirma que é bom o avanço do nacionalismo,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 18, 1970, 27.

political issues.”⁵⁰¹ Nachmanoff’s memo to Kissinger reveals concern over Médici’s potential estrangement from Washington. This suggests that the increasingly explicit nationalism that carried over from Costa e Silva to Médici led to an increased effort by American officials to effectively do something positive for Brazil. Médici’s perceived nationalism was granted the benefit of the doubt and considerable policy concessions by the White House in large part because U.S. officials recognized they had little choice but to work with the Brazilian regime. This was a different approach than the one employed in 1964 when the Johnson administration fomented opposition to the Goulart administration.

Although it never discarded the Vargas-inspired notion that national emancipation was largely a matter of industrial policy, under Médici, the government implemented policies in line with a peculiar understanding of the national interest. Decree-law 869, for example, issued on September 12, 1969, mandated “moral and civic education” as part of public school’s curricula. Although the measure was promulgated before he took office, Médici’s government took seriously the task of molding Brazilians along intensely conservative—anti-communist, heteronormative, and capitalist—lines. Implementing that law represented, according to General Moacir de Araújo Lopes, “a splendid act of true nationalism” with the potential to halt “attempts underway to degrade women and ostracize the family, facts observable in infamous degraded societies: Sodom, Gomorrah, Babylon, Rome, and Pompei.”⁵⁰² The dictatorship was born from the armed forces’ belief in itself as the only bulwark against communist subversion, but as both Ben Cowan and Victoria Langland have demonstrated, the military regime’s conception of subversion was so broad as to include what it saw as moral deviance.⁵⁰³ Decree-law 869, with its emphasis on civic virtue, thus represents the

⁵⁰¹ Memo; Arnold Nachmanoff to Henry Kissinger, “Relations with Brazil”; December 1, 1970; Senior Review Group Brazil Program Analysis 12-1-70 [1 of 2]; Box H-049; National Security Council Institutional Meeting Files; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

⁵⁰² “Ensino leigo é condenado,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, February 5, 1970, 6.

⁵⁰³ See Benjamin A. Cowan, *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016) and Victoria Langland, “Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails: Reading Sex and

melding of national identity with moral panic around questions of sexuality, gender, and political ideology.

The decree also attests to how the regime had moved beyond what it saw as the immediate task of addressing the fiscal crisis bequeathed by the Goulart administration during the early years of military rule toward the more ambitious goal of shaping the Brazilian body politic. As the weekly newsmagazine *O Cruzeiro* reported in 1971, Médici presented his cabinet with plans to implement what he called a social democracy in Brazil by 1974, with the goal of “humanizing and democratizing society, allowing millions of Brazilians to share in the nation’s riches,” as Minister of Agriculture Cirne Lima explained.⁵⁰⁴ Whereas the Castelo Branco government emphasized the restoration of political stability, Médici committed himself to a comprehensive reformulation of Brazilian democracy, plans that did not amount to much.

Speaking at the nation’s foremost war college, the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG), Médici invoked former president Eurico Gaspar Dutra (1946-1951) as an example of a sober leader charged with reestablishing democratic norms. The comparison was not a perfect fit: Dutra succeeded Vargas’ authoritarian Estado Novo dictatorship while Médici was part of a regime that had overthrown the democratically-elected president. Nevertheless, Médici insisted on the comparison: “Dutra sought to unite the political class to restore democracy. May God help me, in my appeal to the union of all classes, so that I might help build in Brazil a developed, democratic, independent and free society.” Médici also stressed that “the valorization of the Brazilian man” was a guiding objective for his government, to be accomplished by “integrating everyone in the national effort.” The dictatorship’s supposed ability to unite Brazilians along patriotic lines was stressed in *O Verde-Oliva*, a public relations news bulletin put out by the army:

Revolution in 1968 Brazil,” in *In from the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008): 308-49.

⁵⁰⁴ “Os novos lances da revolução,” *O Cruzeiro*, July 21, 1971, 90-91.

Every day, in the remote outposts of the Amazon border, an emotional patriotic spectacle takes place . . . when soldiers, children, the sons of *caboclos* [a person of mixed indigenous Brazilian and European ancestry] and Indians gather around the mast to salute the National Flag. Lost in the immensity of the jungle, with the aim of defending the border, working under conditions that are difficult to describe, months on end, man only avoids feeling unsafe amid the dangers that surround him because the image of the fatherland is ever present.

Anywhere in the jungle, the newsletter dubiously proclaimed, “adults and children can sing the verses of the National Anthem, vibrant and conscious of the greatness of Brazil.”⁵⁰⁵ Médici assured the opposition that they had the right to manifest their opinions, but it was not clear how dissenting views would be reconciled with the regime’s grand national vision, premised on a docile, depoliticized, but patriotic civil society.⁵⁰⁶ As opposed to the early years of military rule when the government engaged in a concerted effort to dismiss the nationalist claims of the pre-1964 Left and present itself as the true guarantor of the national interest, Médici’s speech suggests a regime confident in its authority to define and police the boundaries of legitimate nationalism.

Even within the regime of exception that was the dictatorship, Médici stood apart, according to the PCB. The party had been underground since 1964 but it had established covert ties to the MDB, just as it had with the PTB and PSB when formally barred from electoral competition in the past. This collaboration with the MDB was the main pillar of the PCB’s post-1964 strategy. In December 1973, the party’s central committee issued a declaration that called for a “patriotic front against fascism,” arguing that Médici had abandoned the liberal economic agenda of his two predecessors to embrace an openly fascist program. The regime “opens the country to foreign spoliation and domination” with an “economic policy based on intensifying the exploitation of the working class, favoring the interests of monopolies, particularly foreign ones, and latifundios [and]

⁵⁰⁵ “Onde o Brasil começa,” *O Verde-Oliveira*, No. 4, December 1973, 1.

See: <http://pt.calameo.com/read/00123820616a3aa7e0b05>

⁵⁰⁶ See “Médici assegura o direito de oposição” and “Médici apela para que todos se unam,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 11, 1970, 5-6, 38.

an expansionist foreign policy intimately linked to the interests of North American imperialism and accompanied by an insistent chauvinistic [propaganda] campaign.”⁵⁰⁷ The dictatorship had always been entreguista, according to the Left, but Médici had made clear the fascist project at the heart of the military regime, according to the PCB. Somewhat jarringly, however, while denouncing the regime’s abandonment of even the pretense of democracy, the PCB looked to the legislative elections to be held in November 1970 as a forthcoming opportunity to repudiate the dictatorship.

Other segments of the Left–Trotskyist groups, for example—refused to have any part in elections under military rule, arguing that doing so would only legitimize what they saw as a regime of exception. The PCB, with its links to the MDB, the only sanctioned opposition party, saw elections as a key way of chipping away at public support for the regime, which had accrued significantly during the years of the economic miracle.⁵⁰⁸ Their efforts were wasted as the 1970 congressional elections, ostensible displays of democratic normalcy, were marred by harsh government repression, harassment of the opposition, and official intimidation, what Peter Flynn called a “cynical farce.”⁵⁰⁹ With the MDB holding only thirty percent of seats in congress and 8 of 66 senate seats, the party had no realistic shot at any legislative wins—“with this delegation, the MDB can’t even ask for a recount,” mused a senior senator.⁵¹⁰ The ballot box had not shown itself to be a viable way to contend for power as the regime hardened.

Leftists critiqued their peers and the formal opposition alike for failing to effectively counter the alluring and pervasive official narrative of economic prosperity. In 1972, a group of Brazilian exiles in Paris who had established ties with the Fourth International, a Trotskyist entity devoted to international communism, created a magazine called *Outubro*. Its inaugural issue presented a

⁵⁰⁷ “Resolução política do comitê central – Por uma frente patriótica contra o fascismo,” *Voz Operária*, No. 106, December 1973, 1.

⁵⁰⁸ Jacob Gorender, *Combate nas trevas. A esquerda brasileira: das ilusões perdidas à luta armada* (São Paulo: Ática, 1987): 119.

⁵⁰⁹ Peter Flynn, *Brazil: A Political Analysis* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978): 483.

⁵¹⁰ “...e fez-se o Arenão,” *Veja*, November 25, 1970, 21.

historical overview of the international struggle for communism, noting that the closest Brazil had come to social revolution—the Goulart administration—was in fact a moment of feeble reformism, bourgeois theatrics in the guise of structural change. Still, “despite the timidity of such measures, the revolutionary movement of the working masses that inspired them was more than enough to provoke the other factions of the ruling class under the encouragement and guidance of imperialists.”⁵¹¹

The second issue of the magazine contained a thorough analysis of the dictatorship’s economic policies, focusing especially on the economic “miracle.” It acknowledged that while the opposition press was periodically able to make the case that the working class was not benefitting from economic growth, it failed to offer any serious solutions to reverse or forestall the regime’s agenda. The core of the magazine’s critique of the regime was that, as a “direct agent of imperialism in Brazil,” the government had neglected to foster an internal domestic market in favor of international exports. In other words, no real steps had been taken to ensure that Brazilian consumers could afford the goods being produced in the country—real increases in the minimum wage, for example—while policies were put in place to facilitate the activities of multinational corporations concerned above all with the demands of a global market.⁵¹² Its analysis of the dictatorship’s economic model was comprehensive, its criticisms clear and convincing, but *Outubro* presented no alternative strategy to highlight the disconnect between the regime’s discourse of abundance and the reality that working people were seeing effective reductions in their salaries as a means of containing inflation. The magazine, along with its ideological brethren in Brazil, were confronted with the reality that simply pointing out the regime’s subservience to foreign interests did little to sway public opinion against the regime. This was due in large part to authoritarian

⁵¹¹ “Pela construção de um partido operário revolucionário no Brasil,” *Outubro*, No. 1, April 1972, 9.

⁵¹² “O ‘milagre econômico’ e a classe trabalhadora,” *Outubro*, No. 2, October 1972, 48.

control over the public debate but also to the fact that the regime was presiding over economic indicators objectively deemed a success. The regime's claim to the nationalist mantle was bolstered by the fact that it had apparently jumpstarted economic development. In addition to their attitudes regarding elections, these two distinct camps on the Left also differed in the nature of social change they wished to see. The remnants of the PCB stressed democratic and antiimperialist reforms while the other, led by the PC do B and a multitude of smaller agglomerations, took up arms for socialist revolution.⁵¹³

For its part, the MDB, the only sanctioned opposition party, reaffirmed its embrace of nationalist principles. The party's 1972 statement of principles, the first since the original document adopted in 1967, reflected continued support for many of the causes that had animated progressive actors since the end of World War II, including support for an independent foreign policy, meaningful increases in the minimum wage, an expanded welfare state, and an autonomous labor movement. It also, as Maria D'Alva G. Kinzo has noted, emphasized "the nationalization and state monopoly over the prospection and production of all kinds of natural resources; local control of the production of energy, transportation, mining and infrastructural industries considered a vital priority, . . . the fight against the increasing participation of foreign capital in the economy; the fight against all forms of imperialism," among other measures that carried over almost verbatim from the nationalist movement of the late 1950s.

It is notable how many of the party's stated aims in 1972 aligned with the FPN's agenda a decade before. But, just as the nationalist movement realized as the possibility of meaningful influence emerged under Goulart, the coalition for progressive reforms was usually more fractious than it appeared. As Kinzo argues, "the fact that the MDB was far from having chances of reaching power allowed it to assume the defence of principles and policies which if they were to be put into

⁵¹³ Pacheco, *A formação da esquerda no Brasil*, 248.

practice would certainly clash with the interest of several groups within the party.”⁵¹⁴ This had been the case as the national political mood polarized in 1963-1964 and the big-tent nationalist movement began to lose adherents fearful of where such policies might actually lead under an avowedly leftist orientation. Nevertheless, Kinzo writes, “if the MDB policies established in its programme had little possibility of implementation, at least they served as a guide for the party’s opposition discourse and criticisms of the government’s socio-economic policies.”⁵¹⁵ While the MDB preserved much of the rhetoric and policy prescriptions of the progressive nationalist coalition that coalesced after the suicide of Getúlio Vargas, nationalism did not serve as the opposition’s secret weapon at the height of the regime’s repression. This was due especially to the fact that the government thoroughly stymied dissident voices but also because it had created a plausible case for its own nationalist vision.

Indeed, in addition to economic growth and the hardening of the repressive apparatus, the Médici government became notable for presiding over two events that allowed the regime to project national grandeur: Brazil’s victory in the 1970 FIFA World Cup, held in Mexico City, and the 1972 sesquicentennial celebration of national independence.⁵¹⁶ Against the backdrop of solid economic growth, Brazil’s third international soccer title sparked a patriotic frenzy. Musical duo Dom e Ravel were inspired by the popular jubilation to write what became their most famous song, “Eu te amo, meu Brasil” (“I love you, my Brazil), later performed by Os Incríveis. The song was a sensation, selling over 600,000 records and becoming a standout during the 1971 Carnival season. The lyrics were exuberantly patriotic and projected optimism about the country’s future: “The sky of my Brazil has more stars / The sun of my country more splendor / The hand of God has blessed / In Brazilian lands I’m going to plant love.” Indeed, with verses like, “I love you my Brazil, I love you/My heart is

⁵¹⁴ Maria D’Alva G. Kinzo, *Legal Opposition Politics under Authoritarian Rule in Brazil, The Case of the MDB, 1966-79* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988): 54.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Notable works on these topics include Carlos Fico, *Reinventando o otimismo: ditadura, propaganda e imaginário social no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1997) and Janaina Martins Cordeiro, *A ditadura em tempos de milagre: comemorações, orgulho e consentimento* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 2015).

green, yellow, white, blue, indigo,” Dom e Ravel’s song captured the general love of country the regime sought to inculcate, a vision largely devoid of conflict or disaffection.

In a clear indication of how the dictatorship sought to coopt the nationalist fervor, Minister of Education Jarbas Passarinho dubbed “Eu te amo, meu Brasil” the official anthem of Brazil’s youth. The songwriting duo, young men originally from the Northeast who had grown up in poverty, were then commissioned by the regime to write a song promoting the government’s literacy project, MOBREAL (Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização). That song, entitled “Você também é responsável” (“You too are responsible”), proclaimed that, “the nation deserves greater direction / Let’s march to the fight with pencil in hand / I’m Brazilian, I long for a place, I ask you to stop to hear my song: You too are responsible.” Dom e Ravel—and through them, the federal government—were summoning young Brazilians to a national mission to ensure material progress, one that began with knowing how to read and write.⁵¹⁷

It is not hard to see why Dom e Ravel were good poster children of the military regime and especially potent symbols for the Médici administration. Their songs were catchy and they shared a captivating backstory as impoverished migrants from the Northeast, suggesting that hard work could pay off in the Brazil of economic miracles. More importantly, they artfully translated the nationalist frenzy of the early 1970s into music people wanted to consume and in the precise terms of harmless and uncomplicated self-assuredness the dictatorship wanted to project. This suited what I have called the regime’s patriotic authoritarianism, the combination of a conservative view of nationalism—a passive, abstract feeling rather than a reformist drive—with anti-democratic politics that deemphasized civic engagement beyond superficial displays of national pride.

While the Médici government was largely successful in exuding success and optimism (a goal aided by the total annihilation of the armed resistance), it was also criticized by erstwhile supporters

⁵¹⁷ See Afrânio Brasil Soares, “Dom e Ravel: o sucesso é verde-amarelo,” *O Cruzeiro*, March 31, 1971, 94.

of the regime. By 1970, for example, observers bemoaned the fact that the government had not sufficiently interrupted the march toward statism initiated under Vargas in the 1930s. Fernando Pedreira, writing in *O Estado de São Paulo*, was especially critical, frequently invoking the Vargas era in his critiques of the regime's statism. He wondered in one column what else could have been expected from handing control of the government to the very bureaucracies it produced, namely the armed forces and civilian technocrats. "It is no wonder," he noted, "that our politicians, in uniform or not, deformed by the old paternalism and the new mindset, only know how to survive by clinging to the machinery of the State and seeking to extend its tentacles ever further."⁵¹⁸ Nationalism, from this perspective, served as a convenient ideological justification for any government action, a pretext for perpetually increasing the federal bureaucracy. Vargas had employed the same rhetorical tactic, Pedreira observed, which served not to strengthen Brazilian democracy but to cover Vargas' abuses under the appealing cloak of nationalism.⁵¹⁹ Pedreira, and others, worried about the federal government's embrace of nationalism as a discursive strategy. The last time nationalism had served that purpose, they argued, demagoguery and populism drove public policy rather than reason and objectivity.

Comparing the military government to the previous authoritarian Estado Novo regime (1937-1945) of Getúlio Vargas, historian Thomas Skidmore attributed the less overtly nationalistic quality of the former to "the more favorable international economic scene of the late 1960s." Indeed, he asserts that the dictatorship generally disavowed the nationalism of the populist era that preceded them.⁵²⁰ In fact, however, what the regime consistently renounced was a particular application of nationalist rhetoric—what Roberto Campos called temperamental nationalism. I argue that there was more nationalism to economic policy than Skidmore seems to acknowledge, particular under

⁵¹⁸ Fernando Pedreira, "O Estado burocrático," *O Estado de São Paulo*, April 19, 1970, 4.

⁵¹⁹ Fernando Pedreira, "O que esperamos," *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 31, 1970, 4.

⁵²⁰ Thomas E. Skidmore, "Politics and Economic Policy Making in Authoritarian Brazil, 1937-71," in *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, and Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973): 41, 43.

Médici. Several decree-laws passed early in the third military government caused American businessmen and consular officials to express concern over the “creeping nationalism within the [Brazilian government].”⁵²¹ Decree-law 401, for instance, issued on December 30, 1968, made subtle but significant changes to Brazil’s system of corporate taxation, leading American consular officials to complain that the new arrangement “no longer [permitted] companies to write off foreign exchange losses as operating expenses” and to view the measure as “a strong disincentive to new investment from abroad.”⁵²² Consular officials reacted similarly to decree-law 494 of March 10, 1969, calling it a “threat to foreign investors’ confidence.”⁵²³ Other decree-laws issued around the same time received the same dire assessments from American businessmen and consular officials in Brazil.

The Médici government clearly sought to claim the nationalist mantle, both by addressing criticisms that the military government was denationalizing the Brazilian economy and investing heavily in projecting national exuberance. As Carlos Fico has argued, the Médici government in particular insisted on portraying the 1964 coup as the beginning of a new timeline for Brazil’s political history. The government’s aggressive policies were making up for lost time in steering the nation toward the future greatness for which it was destined. Such action, by itself, according to the president, legitimized the military’s entrance in the political sphere.⁵²⁴ This was an inherently nationalistic argument, one that harkened back in key ways to the tenente tradition of the 1920s, which argued that Brazil possessed all of the ingredients to become a major power but was held back by a corrupt political establishment. According to this line of thinking, the military was uniquely

⁵²¹ Rio 2066, 3/19/69, from William Belton to US Sec State, E12 Braz, 1967-1969. General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, MD.

⁵²² “Paulista Business Community Views on Economy-Credit Problems May Develop,” 1/24/69, RG59, E8 Braz NSS. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵²³ “Land purchase restrictions for foreign-owned companies or nonresidents,” Rio 2038, 3/10/69, RG59, E12 Brazil, 1967-1969. National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

⁵²⁴ Fico, *Reinventando o otimismo*, 77.

positioned to ensure Brazil's modernization even if at the expense of the traditional elements of liberal democracy.

However, in a comprehensive analysis of the U.S. government's approach to the Médici government (undated but probably prepared in 1970), American officials wondered about the regime's ability to meet its stated goals of social and institutional reforms: "Solution of such structural problems, which represent the greatest challenge now facing the Médici government, is not guaranteed by continued economic growth." The report also worried about the political climate in Brazil, noting that "efforts by the military government to restructure the political system have closed the system, eliminated effective political expression and helped stimulate urban terrorism, the kidnapping of foreign diplomats, including U.S. officials, and other clandestine political activity. The government has become increasingly authoritarian. It is now supported only by the military itself and economic elite groups."⁵²⁵ Indeed, as Osvaldo Sunkel argued in *Foreign Affairs* in 1972, the Brazilian government implicitly agreed to service the needs of foreign companies who were being given a free hand to operate as they saw fit. "This means not only the provision of infrastructural investments necessary for their expansion," Sunkel explained, "but also the political and police repression needed to suppress the growing reaction and resentment to advancing denationalization, widening inequality and increasing marginalization."⁵²⁶ These dire assessments were mitigated by the regime's success in associating itself with national achievements like the World Cup win and the economic miracle. Indeed, these factors contributed to Médici's general popularity. That they eventually wore off spelled bad news for his chosen successor, General Ernesto Geisel, seen as a

⁵²⁵ Analytical summary; "Brazil Program Analysis"; undated; Senior Review Group Brazil Program Analysis 12-1-70 [1 of 2]; Box H-049; National Security Council Institutional Files Meeting Files; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

⁵²⁶ Osvaldo Sunkel, "Big Business and 'Dependencia': A Latin American View," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Apr., 1972), 529-530.

moderate closer to Castelo Branco than Costa e Silva and Médici, as well as for the future of the regime.

Further complicating matters for the government was the oil crisis that began in late 1973. Critiques of the regime's economic model had emerged from foreign observers like Robert McNamara, the head of the World Bank and former Secretary of Defense, who argued that the economic benefits of Brazil's growth favored a tiny portion of the population, a position that echoed the arguments of the dictatorship's Brazilian critics. These denunciations were annoying but not necessarily fatal for the miracle's survival. However, when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), led by Saudi Arabia and a coalition of Arab states, put in place an oil embargo on major industrialized countries like the United States, Canada, Japan, and the United Kingdom, the Brazilian economic model was thrown into question. The embargo, which one of President Nixon's advisors called "an Energy Pearl Harbor," caused the price of crude oil to quadruple.⁵²⁷ "Since at the time Brazil was relying on imports for over 80 percent of its oil consumption," Werner Baer explains, "the country's total import bill rose from US\$6.2 billion in 1973 to US\$12.6 billion in 1974, and the trade balance changed from a slight surplus in 1973 to a deficit of US\$4.7 billion in 1974, and the . . . deficit of US\$1.7 billion [jumped] to one of US\$7.1 billion."⁵²⁸ Coming to power against this volatile backdrop, Geisel would have to make difficult choices early on in his administration.

This chapter has examined the shifting approach to nationalist discourse under the first three military governments. After what U.S. officials called a "uniquely close relationship" with Castelo Branco, tensions between Brazil and Washington mounted as Costa e Silva and Médici embraced a

⁵²⁷ Cited in Meg Jacobs, *Panic at the Pump: The Energy Crisis and the Transformation of American Politics in the 1970s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2016): 3-4.

⁵²⁸ Werner Baer, *The Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2001): 87.

more openly nationalistic line that, while not causing meaningful damage in relations between both countries, caused the Nixon administration to worry about its influence over the other hemispheric giant.⁵²⁹ I have argued that each of the first three presidents of the military regime sought to present themselves as not just nationalistic but as uniquely positioned to define and claim what legitimately constituted nationalism. While the Castelo Branco administration's attempts on that front were mostly defensive in nature, frequently defining itself against the Goulart government (and the Vargas style of politics more broadly), under Costa e Silva a more assertive type of nationalism became evident, a tendency that carried over into the Médici administration. I have suggested that the regime's claim to the nationalist mantle did not fully "stick" in the public consciousness until the so-called economic miracle, which seemed to suggest that the nation was finally on its way to becoming a genuine hemispheric power. Rightwing nationalism proved most potent when it underscored other conservative ideas, in this case, that economic liberalization was the only way to place Brazil on more solid fiscal ground.

Despite the differences in style between military presidents, a persistent self-consciousness is evident. They all sought to present themselves as purveyors of rational and responsible policies, as midwives of a truly modern Brazil that could live up to its potential as a regional, if not global, heavyweight. Each downplayed the role of civic engagement in political life, stressing instead anodyne displays of national pride. Indeed, the regime was defined by what I have called patriotic authoritarianism, that is, the combination of a conservative view of nationalism—a passive, abstract feeling rather than a reformist drive—with anti-democratic politics dedicated to containing subversion in its many forms. This approach would endure into the next decade of military rule.

⁵²⁹ Analytical summary; "Brazil Program Analysis"; undated; Senior Review Group Brazil Program Analysis 12-1-70 [1 of 2]; Box H-049; National Security Council Institutional Files Meeting Files; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

On September 15, 1973, Ernesto Geisel addressed the ARENA party convention in Brasília to formally accept the nomination for president of Brazil. The stern military man had been the president of Petrobras from November 1969 until July 1973. Before that he had served as Chief of the Military Staff under Castelo Branco from 1964 until 1967. He could expect no serious electoral competition: chosen by Médici and the upper echelons of the military command, Geisel was virtually guaranteed to be the next in a succession of generals to lead the country since the coup of 1964.

But Geisel did not run unopposed. The MDB, the severely constrained party of the opposition, fielded Ulysses Guimarães in a symbolic repudiation of military rule. In a speech entitled “Navegar é preciso. Viver não é preciso” (“Sailing on is necessary. Living is not.”), Guimarães stressed the party’s commitment to social justice and a more equitable distribution of economic gains accrued during the years of the “miracle.” He his bid an anti-candidate campaign for the presidency. “It is intolerable to mystify a nation on the pretext of developing it,” he exclaimed, “reducing it to a repository of wealth” for a megalomaniacal government and foreign economic powers “denationalizing our industry and drawing from the country undeserved profits.” Such language drew heavily from the nationalist principles expressed by the FPN a decade prior, placing the charge of denationalization at the center of the opposition’s discursive attacks on the government. Despite the notable sense of indignation aroused by Ulysses Guimarães, the electoral college voted 400 to 76 to ratify Geisel as president, with 23 abstaining over the candidacy of Guimarães.

Geisel’s acceptance speech presented an assessment of the changing world stage, a scenario defined in part by the rise of “singular new protagonists, the great multinational companies—whose potential for good, or possibly for ill, we cannot yet determine.”⁵³⁰ Whatever its effect, foreign investment in Brazil was significant: between 1967 and 1973 it had grown at a rate of 5.5 percent,

⁵³⁰ Ernesto Geisel, “Discurso perante a Convenção Nacional da ARENA” (speech, Brasília, September 15, 1973), Biblioteca da Presidência da República, <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/ex-presidentes/ernesto-geisel/discursos-1/1973/01/download>

from 1.6 billion dollars in 1967 to 3.4 billion in 1973. The consequence of this, as Peter Evans has written, is that “international capital [became] an integral part of the domestic Brazilian economy, and the representatives of international capital [became] an integral part of the Brazilian political and social order.”⁵³¹

Two days after Geisel accepted the presidential nomination, a major newspaper still brimming with coverage of his “realistic” and “honest” convention speech included an appraisal of the Minister of Planning’s view on multinational corporations in Brazil. “[João Paulo dos Reis] Veloso says that multinationals do not concern government,” read the self-descriptive headline.⁵³² A U.S. State Department dispatch noted that despite the innocuous title, the article’s publication showed that “concern over the role of direct foreign investments does exist and that the government is sensitive to criticism of its favorable, though selective, policies toward foreign investors.” The document also pointed out that Geisel had struck an even “stronger note of caution” in his address to the ARENA convention.⁵³³

That same caution was observable elsewhere. A 1974 article published in the official informational journal for legislators, for example, entitled “Multinationals and the Denationalization of the State and Sovereignty” cited Geisel’s ambivalent appraisal of multinational corporations when it called for a “patriotic awareness in the defense of the national good, [the latter] exposed to the ruinous interferences of foreign groups.”⁵³⁴ Geisel touted Brazil as a place where foreign business and bankers could make “profitable and guaranteed” investments—part of his plan

⁵³¹ Peter Evans, *Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979): 9.

⁵³² Veloso was one of the few cabinet holdovers from the outgoing Médici administration. Êmilio Garrastazu Médici was not particularly happy with the decision of who would succeed him. “Veloso diz que multinacional não preocupa governo,” *Jornal do Brasil*, September 17, 1973, 4.

⁵³³ “Planning Minister’s Views on Multinational Companies,” 9/28/73, from Crimmins, American embassy in Brasília, RG59, INCO 6 BRAZ, XRFN 9 BRAZ.

⁵³⁴ Paulo Bonavides, “As Multinacionais e a Desnacionalização do Estado e da Soberania,” in *Revista de Informação Legislativa* vol. 11, no. 44 (October-December 1974): 24.

to attract foreign capital in order to counter the alarming rise of global oil prices—while making it abundantly clear that the power to “spell out the rules of the game” rested with his administration, a remark that seemed to betray a mild defensiveness. Geisel also stressed the development of Brazilian computer, petrochemical and mining industries as major goals of his tenure.⁵³⁵

It was in this political climate that Geisel came to office, seemingly hedging on the extent to which foreign investment by multinational corporations, long a central component of Brazil’s modernizing ambitions, would guide the orientation of economic policy going forward. If the price of attracting such capital was total obsequiousness in the policy realm, Geisel’s rhetoric suggested he might be unwilling to go along. These were portentous decisions given that the economic “miracle” confronted an existential threat in the global oil crisis that began in November 1973.

⁵³⁵ Bruce Handler, “New Chief Tells Plans for Brazil,” special to the *Washington Post*, *Washington Post*, March 21, 1974, A19.

CHAPTER 5

Demons, Old and New

The Struggle for Legitimacy at the Twilight of Military Rule (1974-1985)

There has never been any doubt in my mind that Brazil's diplomats speak for a nation of greatness—a people taking their place in the front rank of nations, a country of continental proportions with a heart as massive as its geography, a nation now playing a role in the world commensurate with its great history and its even greater promise. My country welcomes Brazil's new role in world affairs.

— U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, February 1976⁵³⁶

We see our young people poisoned, just like sixteen years ago, by a superficial nationalism and grassroots organizations of emancipatory ideology.

— Senator Jarbas Passarinho, April 1980⁵³⁷

From the moment it began consolidating its power, the dictatorship had sought to present itself as the only type of regime capable of delivering on Brazil's natural potential as a hemispheric power. Such was the implication in Roberto Campos' admonishment in 1974 that, "if we had embraced pragmatic instead of ideological nationalism earlier, the Brazilian [economic] miracle would have occurred much sooner."⁵³⁸ Previous democratic governments, playing to the unsophisticated passions of the masses in order to accrue political power, could never have taken the difficult steps necessary to produce sustainable development, according to this reasoning. Unlike the armed forces, the traditional political class was too venal to place the interests of the nation above those of a narrow and well-connected elite. This mentality produced the tacit bargain of military rule: apolitical acquiescence from the population in exchange for material prosperity and economic growth. Between 1968 and 1973, this argument seemed to bear out; the economy

⁵³⁶ "Brazil and the United States: The Global Challenge," Toast by Secretary Kissinger at Brasilia, *The Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 1916, March 15, 1976, p. 322; Public Papers of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, 1976 and January 1977; Available online via Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library at:

<https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/dosb/1916.pdf - page=12>

⁵³⁷ "Passarinho não admite maniqueísmo," *Folha de São Paulo*, April 1, 1980, 5.

⁵³⁸ Roberto Campos, "À la recherche du temps perdu...", *O Estado de São Paulo*, May 15, 1974, 5.

flourished and the unemployment rate approached zero. But this self-aggrandizing narrative was fatally undermined by the end of the economic miracle in the mid-1970s, a consequence of the various oil shocks and debt crises that roiled the international political landscape.

This chapter examines the presidencies of Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979) and João Figueiredo (1979-1985), concluding with the end of military rule in 1985. This period was one of constrained democratic opening and renewed nationalist self-affirmation on the Right and parts of the Left. Beginning under Geisel, the regime's economic successes slowed, drying up support among professionals and the middle class that had seen their living conditions improve during the Médici government. Amid the receding tide of economic growth, the dictatorship doubled down on its nationalist discourse, placing new qualifications on its generally friendly relationship with the United States and taking steps to prop up domestic industry against the incursions of foreign capital. Giving in to public pressure and successive promises to liberalize the regime, in 1979, João Figueiredo, the last general-president of the military regime, decreed a broad amnesty for those who had been persecuted by the regime and state agents accused of human rights violations (the latter has remained a controversial point for decades since the legal standing of a self-amnesty is contested).

Prominent exiles returned to Brazil just as the nation was undergoing a rebirth of multiparty politics, a canny move by the Figueiredo government intended to divide the regime's critics and thus dilute support for the opposition MDB in the two-party system in place since the second Institutional Act of October 1965. Like every military president before them, Geisel and Figueiredo promised to unwind the military regime, but they were taking concrete steps in that direction in ways that encouraged, whether they wanted to or not, a cultural and sociopolitical effervescence animated by new claims for democratic rule and pluralism. But the government's goal with *distensão*, as the process of easing dictatorial repression was called, was not to transform the regime but to allow it to live on indefinitely, according to Suzeley Kalil Mathias. By embracing a liberalizing agenda endorsed

by the regime's powerful civilian allies, the government sought to disassociate the military from torture and other excesses and to ultimately establish a tutelary democracy that would formally allow for greater civic engagement while preserving the ability of elites to steer political events.⁵³⁹ The process of democratization was thus constrained by design.

Despite the regime's obvious machinations, however, civil society hummed with a sense of renewed optimism. Old-line nationalist leaders like Leonel Brizola sought to reclaim the mantle of nationalism, hoping to capitalize on popular memory of the pre-1964 political landscape and enduring affection for the *trabalhista* leaders of yesteryear. Younger leftist militants in the labor movement, for their part, along with allies in other grassroots social groups, embraced proletarian internationalism as a way of moving past the contest for legitimate nationalism that had defined political discourse for a previous generation. This dynamic vis-à-vis nationalism—the regime's reassertion, the old Left's attempt to reclaim, and the incipient movements' rejection—sums up the period from Geisel's inauguration through the end of the dictatorship. As nationalism once again became a political banner up for grabs, some political forces saw it as the key to activating a new popular politics while others saw its negation as the path to building a grassroots mass movement premised on transnational solidarity.

I analyze both official discourse, much of which harkened back to the rhetoric of nationalist elements in the armed forces under Kubitschek and the independent foreign policy articulated in the early 1960s by Quadros and Goulart, as well as the rejuvenated and reconstituted Left that took advantage of perceived opportunities to organize and step up its attacks on a regime it still saw as submissive to the interests of American imperialism. Sensing weakness in the government and deciding that the mantle of "legitimate" nationalism was once again up for grabs, the formal

⁵³⁹ Suzeley Kalil Mathias, *Distensão no Brasil: O projeto militar (1973-1979)* (Campinas: Papirus, 1995): 39.

opposition in the MDB decided to resuscitate the nationalist arguments that had come to dominate political discourse in the second half of the 1950s.

The virtual collapse of the dictatorship's economic model opened the regime up to renewed attacks from traditional opponents like former *trabalhistas* and nationalists as well as newer forces like the labor unions in the greater São Paulo region. Suddenly, the authoritarian insistence by dominant sectors of the military that it alone represented legitimate nationalism was thrown into question. Just as Ernesto Geisel, perhaps the staunchest nationalist of the military presidents, sought to assert a more independent position for his country on the world stage, the regime itself was increasingly seen as powerless to extricate itself from Washington's orbit. There were points of disagreement between Brasília and Washington—the nuclear issue, for example—but the popular narrative that caught on as the economy faltered was that the government was bound to an international economic system that did not guarantee rapid recovery. The Left had always seen the dictatorship as an outgrowth of United States imperialism in Latin America, a coercive force that did not serve the interests of most Brazilians. During the period discussed in this chapter, that view became ever more prevalent, much to the dismay of regime apologists who feared the resurgence of old demons that had long bedeviled the national political discourse and the emergence of new more terrifying ones.

Geisel: A "Great Nation, prosperous and cohesive, generous and just," 1974-1979

The Geisel government was marked as much by the president's character as by the end of the so-called economic miracle. Ernesto Geisel was an austere and respected general with a reputation for dispassionate decision-making who, according to Bernardo Kucinski, deemed himself preordained to save Brazil from underdevelopment.⁵⁴⁰ As one general recalled, Geisel disliked

⁵⁴⁰ Bernardo Kucinski, *Abertura: a história de uma crise* (São Paulo: Ed. Brasil Debates, 1982): 19.

Americans and “had basically a hostile attitude toward them,” but he never let that antipathy influence his decisions.⁵⁴¹ Graham Hovey, the *New York Times* correspondent critical of the regime’s abuses, referred to Geisel as a “cautious conservative—the least ‘military’ of the four army generals who have served as President since the overthrow of João Goulart in 1964.”⁵⁴² Geisel’s apparent moderation was best represented by his stated commitment to gradually extricate the military from the political sphere. This involved a two-step plan concocted by his confidant General Golbery do Couto e Silva involving an indirect election of a civilian president in 1984 followed by the direct election of his successor five years later. Geisel’s stated goal was to restore the apolitical integrity of the armed forces but, according to Kucinski, he also intended to neutralize the political aspirations of what he considered to be dangerously hardline junior officers who might one day take power if the military remained in control.⁵⁴³ Geisel, however, steadfastly rejected the notion that military men ever nurtured any political ambitions.⁵⁴⁴ Whatever his motivations, the imposing new president sought to shift the dynamics of military rule in Brazil.

During his inaugural speech as president on March 15, Geisel devoted himself to the mission of steering Brazil toward “its highest purpose as a Great Nation, prosperous and cohesive, generous and just.”⁵⁴⁵ That task fit with the military’s implicit ambition in politics: to ensure the nation lived up to its potential as a hemispheric power. Indeed, as the country observed the ten-year anniversary of the 1964 coup less than a month after Geisel took office, conservative forces maintained that the so-called “Revolution” had ushered in an era of unprecedented development, an achievement that allowed the regime to claim the mantle of legitimate nationalism. With Goulart’s fall, according to

⁵⁴¹ Interview with retired general Ivan de Souza Mendes in *A volta aos quartéis: a memória militar sobre a abertura*, 162.

⁵⁴² Graham Hovey, “Brazil: Cost of Growth,” *New York Times*, July 9, 1974, 37.

⁵⁴³ Kucinski, *Abertura: a história de uma crise*, 20.

⁵⁴⁴ Paul H. Boeker, *Lost Illusions: Latin America’s Struggle for Democracy, as Recounted by its Leaders* (New York: Markus Wiener, 1990): 268. Boeker’s book contains a fawning though still revealing retrospective interview with Geisel on pages 265-273.

⁵⁴⁵ “Fala o novo presidente,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 16, 1974, 5.

an editorial in *O Estado de São Paulo*, “false nationalism, totalitarian at its root, gave way to healthy nationalism, democratic and opposed to jacobinisms.”⁵⁴⁶ Army Minister Vicente de Paulo Dale Coutinho stressed the regime’s commitment to national sovereignty and economic development. In embracing what he called the “Amazonian challenge”—making the vast jungle available to commercial interests—the military demonstrated its unmatched aptitude for meeting challenges that had befuddled previous governments.⁵⁴⁷ President Geisel, for his part, expressed hope that the pre-1964 “winds of insanity and violence, tragically dividing the Nation,” would never again lead Brazil astray.⁵⁴⁸

To Hovey of the *New York Times*, Geisel seemed honest when he asserted that a modern, dynamic economy demanded a climate of greater political freedom. Fernando Pedreira, editor-in-chief of the conservative *O Estado de São Paulo*, also thought Geisel sincere in his aim of reforming the regime.⁵⁴⁹ In *The New Yorker*, Geisel was presented as fortuitously lacking the “caudillo-like inclinations” of his predecessor.⁵⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Hovey reported on shortcomings in the new president’s liberalizing agenda, known as *distensão*, which called for a “slow, gradual, and secure” political opening, as the president put it. For example, journalists had been given to understand that they would have more latitude to comment on economic policy, yet censors excised Geisel’s calls for better income distribution from news reports on his first cabinet meeting. Dissidents continued to vanish despite claims that the repressive apparatus was being reined in.⁵⁵¹ It was not clear to international observers whether Geisel was simply halfhearted in his embrace of this new line or whether the police state had assumed a life of its own beyond the president’s reach. Most important for Geisel’s political survival, according to Hovey’s reporting, was the fact that the high military

⁵⁴⁶ “Dez anos de Revolução,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 31, 1974, 3.

⁵⁴⁷ “No aniversário, a mensagem dos militares,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 31, 1974, 4.

⁵⁴⁸ “Geisel: resultados são positivos,” *Folha de São Paulo*, April 1, 1974, 4.

⁵⁴⁹ See Fernando Pedreira, “Decompression in Brazil?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Apr., 1975), 498.

⁵⁵⁰ Tad Szulc, “Letter from Brasília,” *The New Yorker*, March 10, 1975, 77.

⁵⁵¹ Graham Hovey, “Brazil: Cost of Growth,” *New York Times*, July 9, 1974, 37.

command that selected Geisel as president would not tolerate a more equitable distribution of economic gains if it meant sacrificing the rapid growth of the previous years. The 1973-1974 oil shock threatened to bring the economic miracle to a crashing halt, but those in power were loath to see their greatest accomplishment—economic stabilization and growth—come to an end.

There were already indications in the early 1970s that the global politics of oil were shifting in far-reaching ways, as Karen R. Merrill points out.⁵⁵² The decade began, for example, with a precipitous drop in the value of the U.S. dollar. Since American currency was used to purchase oil on the global market, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) suddenly had a shared interest in driving up the price of oil. Another concern was that OPEC might at some point manipulate the global oil supply as a tool of political retribution, a possibility a U.S. State Department energy specialist warned about in April 1973.⁵⁵³ This was precisely what happened in October 1973 after President Richard Nixon provided Israel with fighter jets in response to the surprise attack by Egypt and Syria that came to be known as the Yom Kippur War. As Merrill notes, “overnight, OPEC raised the price of its oil from \$3 to \$5.11 per barrel, and on October 19 the Arab states within the organization decided to cut off oil entirely to the United States . . . By January 1974, a barrel of oil cost more than \$11—almost four times the price it had been just three months earlier.”⁵⁵⁴ Such a drastic spike in oil prices sent shockwaves across the global economy, ushering in “a new era of diminished expectations,” as Karen R. Merrill has written of the American situation. The same held true for Brazil. Confronted with this explosion in the cost of oil, Geisel was forced to either accept lower growth to keep the trade balance from spiraling out of control or sustain the

⁵⁵² Karen R. Merrill, *The Oil Crisis of 1973-1974. A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007): vii, 20.

⁵⁵³ See James Akins, “The Oil Crisis: This Time the Wolf is Here,” *Foreign Affairs*, 51 (April 1973): 462-490.

⁵⁵⁴ Merrill, *The Oil Crisis of 1973-1974*, 22.

rates of previous years by sacrificing foreign reserves and taking on higher debt.⁵⁵⁵ The government chose the latter.

With the decision to accept a ballooning national debt in the short term, the government sought out to address the issue of energy production, which it regarded as a source of instability in the long run. Lessening Brazil's dependence on foreign oil imports became a top priority both to mitigate the cost of the crisis and to assert Brazilian independence on the world stage. Geisel, who had served as chairman of the board of Petrobras between 1969 and 1973, deemed it imperative that the country find new domestic fuel sources. Drilling in the Campos Basin off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, Petrobras struck black gold in November 1974. As Tyler Priest, a historian of the oil and gas industry, described it, "this well, in 413 feet (126 meters) of water and 62 miles (100km) from shore was a major turning point for Petrobras and Brazil."⁵⁵⁶ Indeed, *World Oil* magazine remarked some years later that "the naturally optimistic Brazilians thought they had found the giant that existed in their country."⁵⁵⁷ Intent on accelerating the timeframe to bring its new oil discoveries to fruition, Petrobras invested in a number of technological innovations. Less than a decade later, Brazil's national oil company was "the world leader," according to Priest, in the technology needed to make deepwater finds like the Campos Basin productive.⁵⁵⁸

It was notable that the military regime exalted Petrobras as an engine of national emancipation during the oil crisis when most of the liberal economists and free-market technocrats who supported the regime had criticized the national oil company as a statist boondoggle ever since its inception under Vargas. The armed forces, orthodox economists, and the business community had all agreed

⁵⁵⁵ Baer, *The Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development*, 87.

⁵⁵⁶ Tyler Priest, "Shifting Sands: The 1973 Oil Shock and the Expansion of Non-OPEC Supply," in *Oil Shock: The 1973 Crisis and its Economic Legacy*, eds. Elisabetta Bini, Giuliano Garavini, and Federico Romero (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016): 128.

⁵⁵⁷ Cited in *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ See Priest, "Shifting Sands: The 1973 Oil Shock and the Expansion of Non-OPEC Supply," 128-130.

in 1964 that the social and political reformism of the Left did not constitute a legitimately nationalist agenda. They disagreed over the role of the state in fostering economic development.

Indeed, despite Geisel's reputation as a nationalist, the attempts by his technocratic advisors to preserve economic growth produced some of the same criticisms first voiced near the end of the Castelo Branco administration, namely that the regime was favoring foreign interests in an effort to maintain a semblance of balance in its trading relations. In part to dispel this notion (and, no doubt, due to his own statist inclinations), the Geisel government not only maintained but expanded the government's role in the economy; under Geisel, "state intervention in the economy, in the form of direct ownership of [state-owned enterprises] reaches a historical peak," as Aldo Musacchio and Sergio G. Lazzarini point out.⁵⁵⁹ Yet the *New York Times* reported on anonymous grouching from the business community, whose members complained about the indecisiveness of Geisel's economic team.⁵⁶⁰

In January 1974, a roundtable meeting of politicians and influential figures in finance and business convened to discuss the role of multinational companies in the Brazilian economy. First to speak was Theophilo de Azeredo Santos, president of the Latin American Federation of Banks and the banking union of the state of Guanabara: "Just as there has been a long-running campaign in Brazil against nationalism, associating it with provincialism, political oversimplification, a myopic vision of reality, etc., so too has it become fashionable to characterize the debate over multinationals as irrational in the face of factors many see as irreversible," like the increasing concentration of resources and technology in the hands of a few foreign companies. Santos did not doubt the virtuous effects of multinational capital on the Brazilian economy, but he argued that the business community should not passively expect foreign corporations to respect the integrity of domestic

⁵⁵⁹ Aldo Musacchio and Sergio G. Lazzarini, "The Reinvention of State Capitalism in Brazil, 1970-2012," in *New Order and Progress: Development and Democracy in Brazil*, ed. Ben Ross Schneider (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 112.

⁵⁶⁰ Jonathan Kandell, "Brazil Businessmen Score Geisel's Politics," *New York Times*, June 12, 1976, 44.

industry. Left unchecked, multinational companies could fatally undermine their Brazilian competitors, endangering the system of private enterprise. “Whatever the origin of capital for any company (domestic, foreign, public, private, mixed),” he concluded, “entities that operate in our country should serve our community and not just serve themselves.”⁵⁶¹

Santos’ thoughts reflect the broader attitudes of financial, business, and political elites who no longer saw the insertion of foreign capital in the Brazilian economy as an unmitigated good. This skepticism of multinational corporations had been mounting in the so-called Third World since at least the beginning of the decade and stemmed, as Raymond Vernon observed in *Foreign Affairs* in 1971, from “powerful psychic and social needs on the part of elite groups in host countries, including the desire for control and status and . . . to avoid a sense of dependence on outsiders.”⁵⁶² In April 1975, for example, the governor of Pará accused the federal government of prioritizing foreign markets in its economic plans for the Amazon at the expense of traditional activities “that sustain the great masses in the interior of the state.”⁵⁶³ The acceleration of large-scale agribusiness in the region, profitable yet intensely disruptive, helped Brazil’s trade balance while endangering established ways of life.

The lingering effects of the oil shock laid bare the fragility of the regime’s economic model, forcing a reckoning with the implications of foreign capital. A 1977 survey of businessmen gathered for the fourth Conference of Productive Classes (Conferência Nacional das Classes Produtoras, or CONCLAP) captured their ambivalence. Asked about the impact of multinational corporations on Brazilian development, 53.7% considered them “a reality we must contend with” while 19.8% considered them harmful and only 17.6% considered them good. Furthermore, 66.9% called themselves nationalists while 19.4% called nationalism irrelevant and 6.6% rejected it outright. This

⁵⁶¹ Mario de Moraes, “Multinacional em debate,” *O Cruzeiro*, January 16, 1974, 88.

⁵⁶² Raymond Vernon, “The Multinational Enterprise: Power versus Sovereignty,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Jul., 1971), 736.

⁵⁶³ “Modelo de desenvolvimento beneficia grupos de fora,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, November 9, 1975, 39.

embrace of nationalism by itself does not reveal much about the political orientation of the businessmen, 49% of whom called themselves centrists against 23.5% of the left or center-left and 24.2% of the right and center-right (a majority favored a quicker return to democracy). It does, however, hint at the renewed palatability of a label largely discredited after 1964. Enough time had elapsed, it seems, that one could claim to be a nationalist without having to qualify or explain the term for fear of being associated with leftist political activity.

Another intriguing detail to come out of CONCLAP was who the businessmen named as their favored successor to Geisel. Only 12.9% named João Baptista Figueiredo, the general who eventually got the nod, while 19.5% opted for Senator Magalhães Pinto (the only civilian on the list) and 23.6% named General Euler Bentes Monteiro.⁵⁶⁴ In 1967, Monteiro had been named head of the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE), a government agency created under Kubitschek to foster economic growth in an impoverished region of the country. He quickly rallied the agency's professional corps—over a thousand employees eyed with suspicion after the coup for their work in an area that had become a hotbed of leftist agitation under Goulart—and earned a reputation as an efficient administrator interested in carrying out the agency's reformist charter. He resigned in 1969 over disagreements with the finance minister, Antônio Delfim Netto, whose policies, he said, “hindered the process of national integration.” In addition to the regional ties he acquired in the northeast, Monteiro developed an intensely nationalistic reputation, in part due to his closeness with Afonso de Albuquerque Lima, the leading exponent of an assertive explicit nationalism in the armed forces, and Severo Fagundes Gomes, the former director of the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art who in 1974 was named head of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Indeed, after leaving the government, Gomes, the ex-minister of industry and commerce, set about

⁵⁶⁴ “O que querem os empresários,” *Veja*, November 9, 1977, 134-135.

mounting a campaign on Monteiro's behalf, wooing influential figures in ARENA and key members of the MDB like Tancredo Neves.

The weekly newsmagazine *Veja* considered Monteiro's standing among the businessmen shocking given his avowed nationalism and his advocacy for greater state involvement in the economy. Their support perhaps had to do with the outline of Monteiro's prospective agenda of democratizing reforms put forth by his allies. Monteiro himself, however, was not optimistic about his ability to enact sweeping changes, noting in private that "if President Geisel himself, who has the army's full support, could not accomplish 50% of what he proposed, imagine me!"⁵⁶⁵ In addition to Brazilian industrialists who now openly fretted about being sidelined by global competitors with greater resources, a concern first raised in the early years of military rule, opposition figures and independent news publications worried about the power of multinational companies in Latin America, particularly after the 1973 coup that overthrew Chilean president Salvador Allende. In 1977, *O Estado de São Paulo* contemptuously referred to this broad trend as the "rebirth of nationalism."⁵⁶⁶

Thus, during the Geisel government began, multinational corporations were being criticized from many directions. "The open-door strategy followed since 1964, and especially since 1967, had provided opportunities for foreign, particularly United States, investment, and for foreign penetration of the economy far beyond anything that would have been allowed previously by Brazilian nationalists, civilian or military," Peter Flynn notes, leaving implicit the authoritarian nature of the dictatorship's economic policymaking. This was "the very essence of the model chosen but brought growing criticism from what may broadly be described as the spokesmen of the more nationalist bourgeoisie, especially in São Paulo."⁵⁶⁷ The Brazilian businessmen that Flynn refers to

⁵⁶⁵ "O surpreendente prestígio do general Bentes," *Veja*, November 9, 1977, 134-135.

⁵⁶⁶ "Os riscos da mobilização," *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 13, 1977, 3.

⁵⁶⁷ Flynn, "The Brazilian Development Model: The Political Dimension," 486.

were concerned with the health of their own profits relative to foreign competition. They arrived at a nationalist position by equating their success with the national interest, a far cry from the nationalism of the Left which dismissed any nationalist project that did not stipulate social and political reforms.

Concern about the seemingly ever-expanding role of foreign businesses in Brazil's economy resulted in a number of roundtables and forums debating the regime's development model and even a congressional investigation into the actions of multinational corporations. State direction of economic activity, which Graham Hovey, the *New York Times* correspondent, noted had always been an underappreciated part of the economic miracle, was likely to assert itself even more as the growth rates faltered. "Government intervention and control of the economy will continue to expand for the foreseeable future and will probably take on more of a nationalist character," Hovey predicted.⁵⁶⁸ This new outlook differed sharply from the first ten years of military rule and would last from the Geisel government through the Figueiredo government.

Indeed, while the MDB was frequently riven by internal divisions, the only legal opposition party largely agreed that its unexpected success in the November 1974 congressional elections stemmed from the more forceful oppositional campaign it waged against the government. Of 364 total seats, the MDB won 172 to ARENA's 192. From controlling 28 percent of seats after the 1970 election the MDB now rocketed to 47 percent. In the senate, where two-thirds of the members were up for reelection, the MDB won sixteen of the twenty-two races. Indeed, even though the regime's candidates had all prevailed in the October elections for governor, "the size of the MDB sweep surprised even the most optimistic of the MDB strategists," as Thomas Skidmore noted.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ Graham Hovey, "Capitalism, Brazil-style," *New York Times*, July 3, 1974, 31.

⁵⁶⁹ Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule*, 173.

With the victory of the opposition, political scientist Francisco Weffort observed that “something that in other times was referred to as political activity” had returned to congress after so many years of one side setting the agenda.⁵⁷⁰ In a comprehensive assessment of the various proposed explanations for the MDB’s success, political scientists José Álvaro Moisés and J. A. Guilhom Albuquerque wrote that the very least that could be said was that the opposition party, more than ever before, “was able to represent the popular political aspirations of different segments of the population.” The argument that the MDB’s victory was really a validation of the regime since it had created the two-party system in the first place belied the fact that the MDB had run almost entirely against the ten-year legacy of the dictatorship, Moisés and Albuquerque observed.⁵⁷¹ An American reporter wrote that officials in the Geisel administration actually seemed pleased with the result of the elections (“The Brazilian military dictatorship . . . may well be the only government in the world to be quietly delighted over what amounts to a widespread defeat at the polls”) since it reaffirmed the president’s belief in the possibility of a gradual, controlled return to democracy and the military’s eventual exit from the political sphere.⁵⁷² Whether or not this was self-serving spin on the part of the government, the takeaway from the elections was clear: the opposition had made the contest a referendum on the regime and the regime lost.

In a sign of his ambivalence toward the United States, Geisel avoided Washington during his various trips abroad in 1976, a whirlwind travel itinerary that included visits to France, Britain, and Japan to improve trade relations, court foreign investment (much as Kubitschek had done prior to taking office), and “transmit a new image of Brazil,” as a leading weekly newsmagazine put it.⁵⁷³ In France, President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing declared having “no doubt at all that Brazil is destined

⁵⁷⁰ Francisco Weffort, “O impasse da oposição,” *Opinião*, March 28, 1975, 3.

⁵⁷¹ José Álvaro Moisés and J. A. Guilhom Albuquerque, “Os divertidos receios dos elitistas e as doloridas esperanças populares,” *Opinião*, December 27, 1974, 17.

⁵⁷² Tad Szulc, “Letter from Brasilia,” *The New Yorker*, March 10, 1975, 72.

⁵⁷³ “As duas viagens de Geisel,” *Veja*, May 5, 1976, 16.

to be one of the protagonists [of] the new world order.” British Prime Minister James Callaghan “a leader among developing countries and an effective partner in international negotiations.” These were the types of plaudits the regime prided itself in receiving, sentiments that bolstered the military’s self-image as the only national institution capable of steering Brazil toward its perceived destiny.

Nevertheless, the trip was not without the occasional embarrassment for Geisel and the regime he represented. During a press conference with the French president, Geisel was asked by a reporter with *O Estado de São Paulo* if the poor showing of the regime’s party in the 1974 legislative elections stemmed from the fact that the government had not fulfilled its “democratic commitments.” Geisel opted not to reply.⁵⁷⁴ Later, as he stepped out of an official vehicle at the Hôtel de Ville, Geisel was confronted by a long-haired young man in shabby clothes who proceeded to denounce the president before being subdued by security forces. Some fifty demonstrators, including five members of the municipal government affiliated with the French Socialist Party, then began singing “L’internationale” and chanting “*Geisél fasciste, Geisél assassin.*”⁵⁷⁵ In London, a leftwing faction of the Labor Party vocally denounced Geisel’s visit. Official statements lauding the Brazilian regime on Geisel’s trip abroad contrasted with demonstrations against the president and the dictatorship.

Widespread concern over the oil shock and the perceived denationalization of the economy fed into a growing perception that the regime had concentrated too much power in its hands at the expense of the legislature (that is, the purported representative of the popular will). Geisel’s National Development Plan (II PND after Médici’s more successful original PND) was yet another example of this trend, which had been evident since 1964. The II PND included bold proposals to continue Brazil’s march toward becoming a hemispheric power, including developing nuclear and other forms

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 21.

of alternative energy, petrochemical plants, heavy industry, building new roads and railways, expanding mining operations, and creating new research centers, among other ambitious and imperious measures. The PND was an inherently authoritarian document, as Jorge Caldeira notes, in that it gave the federal government almost absolute control over economic activity with no consideration of nettlesome details like cost, viability, and public disposition for its major objectives.⁵⁷⁶ Under the stewardship of Finance Minister Mário Henrique Simonsen, the PND perfectly encapsulated the regime's insulated (critics called it arrogant) technocratic fervor that did little to assuage a business elite that had supported the coup in 1964 and now fretted over the pronounced role of multinational corporations in the Brazilian economy. Even accounting for significant changes to the national and global economy since the early 1960s, it bears mentioning that the dictatorship was meddling in the economy in ways that would have been unthinkable under Goulart.

In addition to an economic agenda increasingly seen as detached from public input, the constricting effects of Institutional Act 5, which had been envisioned as an emergency measure, lingered. The result was a moribund atmosphere of restrained cultural expression and stilted political discourse that, according to Severo Fagundes Gomes, the minister of industry and commerce, combined to limit the prospects of popular national affirmation. The regime's economic model had distributed the benefits of growth unequally in terms of class but also in terms of geography. This, Gomes argued, partly explained what he saw as a rise in regionalist sentiment. With decisions regarding economic investments and development policies deemed the exclusive purview of the executive branch, regionalist sentiment represented a "vicarious form of national affirmation, the desire for an identity, [and] the preservation of culture."⁵⁷⁷ Elsewhere, he argued that the private

⁵⁷⁶ Jorge Caldeira, *História da Riqueza no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Estação Brasil, 2017): 567-568.

⁵⁷⁷ Carlos Alberto de Oliveira and D'Alembert Jaccoud, "A sociedade deve estar unida," *Veja*, July 28, 1976, 3-4.

sector's complaints regarding the government's creeping statism were misplaced and that the broader denationalization of the economy was the real danger.⁵⁷⁸ Gomes represents a strain of thought among elites, but also popularly felt, that Brazilians were starting to chafe at being compelled to embrace a foreign development model copied uncritically by leaders unresponsive to popular will.

Concern about Brazil's diminishing status manifested in other ways as well. In 1975, for example, *Folha de São Paulo* published a two-page manifesto issued by an entity that called itself the Nationalist Party. While no third party could meaningfully operate as long as Institutional Act 2 remained in effect, the Nationalist Party is an intriguing illustration of the perceived potential of the nationalist label as a mobilizing force as the dictatorship's bases of legitimacy were eroding. Indeed, the mid-1970s constituted a turning point for the regime, undermined by economic decline and the toll of its repression. It was thus not surprising that a political party might seek to claim the mantle of legitimate nationalism. Rather, it was a logical consequence of this history of nationalism in post-war Brazilian politics. The Nationalist Party was ultimately revealed to be a vehicle for the presidential ambitions of Magalhães Pinto, the senator for ARENA and former governor of Minas Gerais who dreamed of becoming Geisel's civilian successor and upholding the legacy of the regime. Given the opportunity Geisel's liberalizing agenda seemed to afford, someone was bound to put forth a new attempt to claim nationalism.

U.S.-Brazil Relations

"What is the future course of nationalism in Brazil and how will it affect the United States? The answers are not clear, and in this lies the United States' hope."⁵⁷⁹ So wrote Robert W. Fontaine in 1974, strenuously pursuing positive news. Per Robert Wesson, writing in 1981, "if on some future

⁵⁷⁸ José Fernandes Dias, "As advertências de Severo," *Opinião*, July 23, 1976, 12.

⁵⁷⁹ Robert W. Fontaine, *Brazil and the United States: Toward a Maturing Relationship* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1974): 53.

occasion the Brazilian leadership should decide to turn their country toward strong, even violent nationalism, it could readily and rapidly do so. Such a turn is quite conceivable if it appears that economic collaboration with the United States has become unrewarding . . . The president would have only to turn the wheel, and the country would follow, perhaps gleefully.”⁵⁸⁰

These assessments of nationalist appeals in Brazil are strikingly different than anything American observers would have predicted or expected to find in the immediate aftermath of the coup. They reflect mounting tensions between both governments and a realization that the political factors that led to Goulart’s downfall had shifted. Following Goulart’s ouster, the expectation among Brazilian conservatives, the business community, and in Washington was that Brazil would leave behind the volatile politics of populist nationalism in favor of a more subdued, or “rational,” approach to national development. No outside observer in academia, business, or government characterized the military’s nationalistic tendencies as inherently pro-Soviet as they had with Goulart. Nevertheless, the resurgence of open nationalist appeals represented a worrisome trend for the American government.

Despite Geisel’s personal reservations regarding the United States, his administration maintained a good working relationship with Nixon and Ford. In early 1974, shortly before Geisel took office, observers were struck by U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s congenial reception of Latin American nationalism during an official visit to the region. President Richard Nixon was seen as hard-nosed and not amenable to tough negotiating tactics from third-world governments. Kissinger himself was broadly unpopular in Brazil. It was thus surprising when the secretary of state approved of a proposal from the government of Peru to offer a much smaller indemnification than expected for the expropriation of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, which owned mines, refineries, and railways in that country. Also surprising was Nixon’s willingness to renegotiate a treaty with

⁵⁸⁰ Robert Wesson, *The United States and Brazil: Limits of Influence* (New York: Praeger, 1981): 71.

Panama regarding sovereignty rights and the Canal Zone. “Even with mostly symbolic force as of now, the recognition of the legitimacy of nationalism, done with the immediate aim of improving Kissinger’s standing in the ‘new dialogue’ with Latin America, is already a sharp turn,” wrote Newton Carlos in *Folha de São Paulo*. Carlos noted that Nixon had come to power at a moment when Latin American governments seemed united in their resistance to giving multinational corporations free reign in their territories, an unprecedented development.⁵⁸¹ Like so many in the native business community, Brazilian political leaders had begun to question whether the regime’s absolute embrace of foreign capital, and the political alignments that entailed, was an unmitigated good.

Later that year, Geisel’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira, who one scholar called “a somewhat tactless nationalist,” met with President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger at the White House.⁵⁸² Silveira reported happily to the president that he had been getting along well with Kissinger since coming to office earlier that year. “We are trying to be ever more democratic,” he announced. “Of course we had our revolution [but] in Brazil, the military never directly took over the government as they did in Argentina.” Silveira then invited Ford for a visit, saying, “you are the typical person who would be liked in Brazil. Our peoples are closer than we would admit.” Kissinger interjected: “They are a bit nationalistic too. They think God is a Brazilian.” Silveira agreed that Brazilians are indeed patriotic, noting that “we like the flag; we like military music. We have less terrorism than elsewhere.” Also, a misinformed Kissinger added, “you haven’t had a tradition of civil disruption.” The president then asked: “are your students quieter?” to which Silveira replied, “students are the same everywhere. But our students are ambitious. Other Latin Americans want to be heroes; ours want to work.” The meeting ended with Kissinger mentioning that Brazil was likely to face serious economic challenges in the years ahead

⁵⁸¹ Newton Carlos, “O reconhecimento do nacionalismo,” *Folha de São Paulo*, February 21, 1974, 2.

⁵⁸² Wesson, *The United States and Brazil*, 61.

due to the oil shock and its attendant consequences. “Would it help if I would say that I am very impressed with your economic progress?” asked President Ford. Silveira indicated that it would.⁵⁸³

This conversation reflects several aspects of U.S.-Brazil relations in the mid-1970s. First, Silveira’s self-conscious treatment of the lack of democratic liberties under the military regime suggests an understanding that the American government would not condone such abuses indefinitely, or at least that it was sensitive to being seen as abetting violations of human rights. Second, the notion that Brazilian students sought above all to be good employees rather than starry-eyed revolutionaries underscores the regime’s ideal of an apolitical society focused not on a democratizing social justice agenda but on an individualistic pursuit of material prosperity. This perspective was reiterated two years later by a Johnson & Johnson executive who stated enthusiastically that “the Brazilian labor force is very amenable to work. Brazilians are very interested in their country’s growth and like to work without taking into account whether their employer is foreign.”⁵⁸⁴ What this perspective overlooked, of course, was the fact that the regime had made spontaneous political organization a liability for average people. Brazilians, like any group, are not inherently apolitical. Rather, during the dictatorship, popular politics were heavily circumscribed under the assumption that the masses could not be trusted to elect responsible leaders or advocate for sensible policies. This was the same logic many of the regime’s ideologues used to dismiss what they called the “temperamental nationalism” that had defined the immediate pre-1964 period, an inclination they deemed irrational and reckless.

Under Kissinger’s foreign policy sway, which continued in the Gerald Ford administration (1974-1977), the United States was officially receptive of the more assertive line adopted by Latin

⁵⁸³ Memorandum for the President’s File; “Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Antonio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira; 09/29/1974; Box 6 Memoranda of Conversations - Ford Administration; National Security Adviser Memoranda of Conversations, 1973-1977; Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library. Available online at: <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1552811.pdf>

⁵⁸⁴ Quoted in “Brasil: ‘uma superpotência em surgimento,’” *Opinião*, March 11, 1976, 7.

American governments vis-à-vis foreign capital. “There has never been any doubt in my mind,” Kissinger remarked in a toast during a visit to Brasilia in 1976, “that Brazil’s diplomats speak for a nation of greatness—a people taking their place in the front rank of nations, a country of continental proportions with a heart as massive as its geography, a nation now playing a role in the world commensurate with its great history and its even greater promise. My country welcomes Brazil’s new role in world affairs.”⁵⁸⁵ This sentiment—music to the ears of regime apologists in Brazil—was part of a broader strategy devised by Kissinger to destigmatize U.S. foreign policy, deemed imperialistic and chauvinistic by critics around the world. By empowering countries like Brazil, China, South Africa, and Indonesia to play more active roles in their respective regions, Kissinger hoped to fortify the role of the United States as ultimate arbiter of global affairs. As Matias Spektor has carefully shown, this strategy was mostly successful in Brazil during the Geisel administration, not least because Kissinger developed a close working relationship with Brazil’s minister of foreign affairs.⁵⁸⁶ This strategy also stroked the ego of the regime’s leaders who craved greater international recognition for Brazil and believed they were the only ones capable of attaining it.

In order to ensure continued U.S. support and to make Brazil an attractive destination for multinational capital, the regime and its allies in the business community continued downplaying violations of human rights. Indeed, the notion that the surest path to industrial and economic development lay through foreign investment and imported technological know-how was a consistent pillar of government policy through twenty-one years of military rule, a position that echoed the brand of nationalism championed in the late 1950s by Juscelino Kubitschek. Kubitschek and the generals, to differing degrees, harbored suspicions about the long-term intentions of the United

⁵⁸⁵ “Brazil and the United States: The Global Challenge,” Toast by Secretary Kissinger at Brasilia, *The Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 1916, March 15, 1976, p. 322; Public Papers of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, 1976 and January 1977; Available online via Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library at: <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/dosb/1916.pdf> - page=12

⁵⁸⁶ See Matias Spektor, *Kissinger e o Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2009).

States and the impact of multinational capital. Unlike Brazilian leftists, however, they did not contemplate an alternative to this model in the short to medium term.

The election of Jimmy Carter on November 2, 1976 marked a turning point in relations between the United States and the military regime. Disputes over nuclear policy and human rights took center stage and produced unprecedented friction between the erstwhile allies. Carter himself also represented a break from the surreptitious realpolitik of Nixon and Ford. His choice for Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, a liberal who advocated for rapprochement with the Soviet Union, was a far cry from the powerful Henry Kissinger, who used his considerable wit and affability to disguise ruthless Cold War calculation. “We are now free,” Carter declared in 1977, “of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear.”⁵⁸⁷ At least in symbolic terms, Washington would no longer unquestionably support anti-democratic regimes around the world. Upon Carter’s election, James N. Green notes, “the words ‘arrest,’ ‘torture,’ and ‘repression,’ which an informed public had previously associated with Brazil, became synonymous with the description of the military regimes that had assumed power throughout Latin America.”⁵⁸⁸ Respect for human rights suddenly became a metric by which observers gauged the U.S. relationship with countries in Latin America and around the world.

This was a message the administration hoped to deliver in person. From May 30 to June 12, First Lady Rosalynn Carter visited Jamaica, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Brazil. An internal White House memo spelled out the reasoning for each country: Jamaica, “a Caribbean leader”; Costa Rica, “a Central American democracy”; Venezuela and Colombia, “democracies”; Peru and Ecuador, “good human rights records, committed to returning to civilian

⁵⁸⁷ Cited in Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 263.

⁵⁸⁸ Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 6.

government in 1978”; Brazil, “the largest and most populous country in Latin America.”⁵⁸⁹ White House records imply the administration received or anticipated complaints from the overlooked Chilean government, but the message was clear: the new president was downgrading the U.S. relationship with stark dictatorships, represented in the region by Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina. The administration seemed only to be engaging with Brazil due to its hemispheric size and influence.

Sending the First Lady to Latin America as his personal envoy carried certain risks for President Carter. Some in the region questioned the president’s diplomatic priorities, not to mention his tact. He and his Secretary of State were heading to Europe while his wife (presumably a peripheral figure in the administration) was dispatched to Latin America.⁵⁹⁰ The Geisel administration chafed at the new government’s air of moral and political superiority. Brazil was not just another Latin American republic, according to the basic nationalist tenet embraced by the military regime. Its domestic affairs were not to be meddled with by a First Lady who engaged not once but twice with dissidents, first when she was handed a letter of grievances from striking students at the University of Brasilia (government officials dismissed it as a forgery) and promised to deliver it to the president, and second when she met with two American missionaries in Recife who had been arrested and beaten by local authorities mere days before the First Lady’s arrival.⁵⁹¹

Sexism undoubtedly compounded the annoyance of Brazilian officials. Before the visit, Florida congressman Dante Fascell had reached out to the White House to discuss press strategy regarding the First Lady’s trip since he was getting “bad vibes re[garding] the seriousness of her visit from U.S. newsmen, the diplomatic corps (staff level), and Latins on the street.” As Jane Franks, Deputy Secretary for the Cabinet, put it in a note to Associate Press Secretary Jerry Schecter, “because

⁵⁸⁹ Memo, “Mrs. Carter’s Trip,” #10A, May 16, 1977, Records of the Office of the National Security Advisor, Brzezinski Material, Collection 13, Box 12, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁵⁹⁰ See “Primeiro contato,” *Veja*, May 11, 1977, 27.

⁵⁹¹ For more on the latter incident, see “Calvário no Recife,” *Veja*, June 1, 1977, 22-23.

she is a woman, Fascell believes that we've got to define more clearly what she's going to do."⁵⁹² After the First Lady's visit, the governor of Pernambuco, fuming over how he had been depicted in the U.S. press after the incident with the two American missionaries, held a press conference in which he suggested the United States "mind its own borders." He called the missionaries' ordeal a "trivial fact" and placed the blame on "people who profess exotic ideologies, diametrically opposed to the spirit of the Brazilian people who hope for a weak government in Brazil." The governor concluded by challenging critics around the world to find another "people who, as we did, secured their independence and solved their problems without bloodshed."⁵⁹³ Linking "exotic ideologies" and unrest was, of course, a tried and true discursive strategy of conservative Brazilians. The idea that Brazil had discovered a harmonious solution to the essential problems facing the nation was a more recent trope, inaugurated with the 1964 coup. It implied that the military regime was uniquely capable of addressing the nation's intractable challenges, that it alone could credibly represent and deliver upon the aspirations of what it deemed to be legitimate nationalism.

Brazilian officials were certainly not accustomed to being challenged by prominent women, particularly one representing a new administration clearly set on challenging the regime's human rights record. Rosalynn Carter's presence in Brazil encouraged the broad opposition to the dictatorship while confirming many of the regime's concerns about the new order in Washington. Nevertheless, despite its discomfort with Rosalynn Carter's visit and other strains on the U.S.-Brazil relationship, the Geisel administration sought to publicly downplay any fissures. When Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira met with the U.S. Secretary of State, he proclaimed that "in Brazil there is no anti-American sentiment and the government strives to ensure that no such sentiment arises."⁵⁹⁴ It was clear, however, that the issue of human rights raised by

⁵⁹² Note, from Jane Frank to Jerry Schecter, #8, May 16, 1977, Records of the Office of the National Security Advisor, Brzezinski Material, Collection 13, Box 12, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁵⁹³ "Do Recife para o mundo," *Veja*, June 22, 1977, 20.

⁵⁹⁴ "A mensageira," *Veja*, June 8, 1977, 25.

Jimmy Carter would remain an impediment to fully amicable relations between both countries. The Carter administration, in other words, represented a fundamental shift in the relationship between the two hemispheric powers.

In November 1977, the newly-created weekly leftist newspaper *Em Tempo* used the one-year anniversary of the U.S. presidential election to ask, “what are Jimmy Carter’s intentions in raising so high the banner of human rights?” The paper observed that not much had substantively changed in a year, but the tone of Latin American governance had shifted. Dictators started to employ terms like “constitutional normalization,” for example. Carter had signed on to several international human rights treaties that had awaited U.S. support for years and “pulled the ideological and political rug” out from under dictatorial regimes around the world. According to *Em Tempo*, these efforts served to “reconfigure the hateful image of North American imperialism bequeathed by the war in Vietnam and the CIA’s ‘destabilizing’ actions, like the one that caused the fall and death of Allende in Chile.”⁵⁹⁵

The paper did not see such actions as stemming merely from the benevolence of the American president, however. Rather, they were interpreted as the early stages of a new strategy to contain progressive advances in Latin America. As heinous reports of torture mounted, the United States could no longer simply ignore the question of human rights violations in its own backyard, especially because such abuses purportedly fueled the “socialist alternative” to U.S. hegemony, *Em Tempo* argued. Carter, then, in the paper’s telling, had been tasked with reshaping the American empire’s approach to sustaining international capitalism.⁵⁹⁶

Geisel and his supporters also had problems with the Carter administration, albeit of a different order. Members of the MDB from the city council of tiny Teresina, Piauí, to Congress

⁵⁹⁵ “O vai não vai da política de direitos humanos,” *Em Tempo*, Número Zero, November 1977, 1.

⁵⁹⁶ “A cartada de Jimmy Carter,” *Em Tempo*, Número Zero, November 1977, 2.

applauded the president for standing up to perceived meddling by the United States.⁵⁹⁷ In 1977, the Carter administration, following legislation that required the executive branch to inform Congress of the human rights situation in countries receiving military aid, issued a damning report on the Brazilian regime. Surprisingly, this provoked a bipartisan reaction from members of the MDB as well as ARENA. Thales Ramalho, the secretary general of the opposition party, extended his support to President Geisel “in this moment when the sovereignty of the country is at stake.” The MDB intended to “carry out opposition to the Government, not to the nation,” Ramalho noted.⁵⁹⁸ In response, Brazil canceled a longstanding military aid agreement with the United States; rejected future military aid from the United States, including an expected \$50 million for 1978-79; and doubled down on a nuclear deal negotiated with West Germany in 1975 in the face of U.S. opposition. Despite a warm reception for Jimmy Carter in Brazil from March 29-31 (including dutiful comments from the U.S. president regarding Brazil’s status as a genuine emerging power), Geisel later refused an invitation to the White House.

In the face of the Carter administration’s confrontational approach to the dictatorship on issues of nuclear policy and human rights, Geisel and his allies expressed loud resentment against American “moral imperialism.” A top official cited in the *New York Times* fumed that “the United States can judge whether it wants to give arms to one country or another, but it has not the right to pass public judgment on another country’s internal affairs. That we cannot accept.” The Carter administration’s rebuke was particularly offensive coming from:

a President who excepts from his moral offensive those countries—such as South Korea and the Philippines—considered of strategic importance to the United States; but not Brazil. Or of one who is willing to cozy up to the Cubans, or the Chinese, or for that matter to any Communist-run countries, which the United States seems no

⁵⁹⁷ See “Uma diplomacia de golpes e contragolpes,” *Veja*, March 16, 1977, 20-27.

⁵⁹⁸ Jonathan Kandell, “Brazil’s Opposition Joins Protest to U.S. Over Human Rights Report,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1977, 8.

longer to have the stomach to oppose. With all the moralizing about human rights, you've lost your will to defend them where counts.⁵⁹⁹

The formal opposition largely went along with Geisel's demonstrative displays of offense-taking. The reason for that, I suspect, has less to do with a genuine sense of shared outrage than with not wanting Geisel to be seen to be opposing the United States by himself. The political strategy of the MDB and various organizations on the Left relied on depicting the regime as hopelessly captive to foreign economic interests, notwithstanding its protestations to the contrary. Progressives thus sought to deny Geisel the potential political credit of taking a principled stand against Washington in defense of Brazil's national interest.

The Geisel administration was ultimately defined by its response to the oil shocks and end of the economic miracle as well as its conservative nationalism in the face of strained relations with the United States. The poet and translator Alastair Reid, writing in *The New Yorker*, relayed a revealing conversation with a Brazilian friend in 1978 which, whether apocryphal or not, clearly conveys the terms of debate surrounding nationalism under Geisel. Reid asked what Brazilians thought of Americans. His interlocutor's response is worth quoting at length:

The United States used to be resented, on the ground that it kept Brazil down. But then came our economic boom and, with it, imported goods and imported values, which have created the same ambivalence here as in other parts of Latin America. The real bourgeoisie here would like Brazil to take the United States as its model, and it was not so long ago that we were being sold the official notion that what was good for the United States was good for Brazil. It isn't like that at all now, even though the web of economic connections is as strong as ever. Our military government has done everything it can to impose nationalism on the people—Brazil first, long live the melting pot. Such nationalism is by definition exclusive, anti-United States . . . The younger generation has swallowed Brazilian nationalism whole, and the government keeps feeding it more. For instance, it made great capital out of the implied insults to Brazil in President Carter's call for human rights, and particularly out of the quarrel with Washington over Brazil's nuclear agreement with West Germany [signed in 1975], and relations have grown very cool of late. I don't think the slavish, imitative dependence will ever come back, whatever happens in Brazil. There is something infuriating about the attitude of North Americans

⁵⁹⁹ John B. Oakes, "Authoritarianism, Brazilian-Style," *New York Times*, April 26, 1977, 35.

outside their own country, as though nothing else could be either as good or as right, and Brazilian nationalism has thrived on that attitude as much as anything.⁶⁰⁰

Faced with the demoralizing reality of dwindling economic returns, the Geisel government shrewdly used the highly-publicized friction with the Carter administration as a means of shoring up the regime's legitimacy. Like his predecessors, Geisel's nationalist orientation involved no structural changes to Brazilian society, no rethinking of existing hierarchies. Rather, the regime's political calculus rested on an apolitical patriotism. Brazil's natural potential demanded a reliable energy supply—which nuclear offered at the time—and its hemispheric clout entailed the right to determine its internal political environment. The Carter administration's foreign policy approach insulted members of the regime and their most ardent supporters. For the regime's opponents, the record was mixed. Carter's focus on human rights was promising but he was ultimately accountable to the designs of American imperialism. Thus, as the Geisel government ended, the regime was pursuing a more explicitly nationalistic orientation to shore up its legitimacy while opponents, sensing opportunity in the moment of relative liberalization, stepped up their attacks on a dictatorship they described as hopelessly captive to the machinations of U.S. empire.

The Left Rethinks Nationalism

Speaking on the floor of the Senate, the MDB leader Franco Montoro committed the party to holding Geisel accountable for his pledge to return the country to democratic "normalcy." According to Montoro, his party would focus on two issues, which largely defined the thrust of the opposition's arguments in subsequent years. The first point of emphasis was criticizing what Montoro referred to as a flawed development model that produced growth rates to impress foreign observers did not materially improve their lives of most citizens. The second was the ongoing

⁶⁰⁰ Alastair Reid, "Notes from Latin America," *The New Yorker*, February 6, 1978, 76.

denationalization of the economy, a critique first leveled against the Castelo Branco administration a decade earlier. “It is true that no country today can dismiss technical, scientific or financial cooperation from other parts of the world, but every government has the right and, more than that, the duty to take actions that subordinate those foreign collaborations to the legitimate interests of the nation,” Montoro argued, signaling that the opposition would harden its nationalist critique of the regime.⁶⁰¹ The MDB’s implicit reasoning seemed to be that if they could revoke from the regime the mantle of legitimate nationalism they could define opposition to military rule as patriotic, a commitment to Brazil’s sovereign development.

As the formal opposition doubled down on its nationalist critique of the regime, the myriad organizations and factions on the Left were also engaging with the legacy of nationalism and its potential as a mobilizing discourse. This trend was especially evident in the leftwing (or alternative) press.⁶⁰² Indeed, despite ongoing censorship from government officials, outlets like *Opinião* (1972-1977), *Movimento* (1975-1981), and *Em Tempo* (1978-2008) reveals much about the internecine debates of progressive forces.⁶⁰³ The earliest of these, *Opinião*, was founded by the avowed nationalist businessman Fernando Gasparian in the hope of steering leftist discourse away from heated talk of revolution and doctrinal austerity toward sober but accessible analysis of issues like the denationalization of the economy, inflation, and the mounting national debt. Flávio Aguiar, former culture editor for *Movimento*, refers to Gasparian as a direct product of *Última Hora*, the popular publication that provided a platform for progressive nationalism, social and political reforms, and trabalhismo in the 1950s and early 1960s.⁶⁰⁴ The paper’s self-conscious moderation eventually

⁶⁰¹ “Normalização,” *Jornal do Brasil*, March 4, 1975, 3.

⁶⁰² For an overview of the newspapers I discuss here, see Flávio Aguiar, “Imprensa Alternativa: *Opinião*, *Movimento* e *Em Tempo*,” in *História da imprensa no Brasil*, eds. Ana Luiza Martins and Tania Regina de Luca (São Paulo: Contexto, 2008): 233-247.

⁶⁰³ On press censorship in this period, see Anne-Marie Smith, *A Forced Agreement: Press Acquiescence to Censorship in Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997): 81-116.

⁶⁰⁴ Aguiar, “Imprensa Alternativa: *Opinião*, *Movimento* e *Em Tempo*,” 244.

pushed some leftist collaborators away. In 1975, Raimundo Pereira quit or was fired (accounts vary) from his post as editor-in-chief for the newspaper, going on to establish *Movimento* as a more explicitly partisan outlet, with many of its editorial positions derived from the diktats of the PCdoB. From the start, the paper was riven by internal divisions, with a central faction linked to the PCdoB and several others with distinct ideological particularities. This presented a constant challenge to editorial consensus on matters ranging from the existence of a progressive nationalist bourgeoisie; the nature of land reform; and the viability of armed insurrection, a salient question given the utter disaster of the Araguaia guerrilla campaign (1967-1974) in the jungles of northern Brazil.

Eventually, *Movimento* also splintered, with some disgruntled writers leaving to form the short-lived *Amanhã* and others to create a long-lasting and influential new publication called *Em Tempo*. The latter criticized the PCB and post-Araguaia PCdoB for its policy of subsuming immediate revolution to the aspiration of crafting alliances with nationalist figures drawn from the economic and political elite—a strategy many on the Left blamed for the 1964 coup. This new newspaper, entitled *Em Tempo*, sought to give voice to the Brazilian Left in all its multiplicity before eventually becoming more focused in its political intent and leading the charge in the alternative press for the creation of the PT. Indeed, *Em Tempo*'s close association with the birth of Brazil's most successful leftist party and its stated desire to compete with major national newspapers make it an intriguing source. Like *Opinião* and *Movimento*, its pages reflected many of the tensions among progressive forces in the late 1970s, some of which harkened back to divisions within the Communist Party in the late 1950s.

The first issue of *Em Tempo* was released in November 1977 before formally launching in January 1978 with an explicit embrace of internationalism and a rejection of the national-democratic path toward revolution (the ideological approach adopted by the PCB in 1956). The newspaper's ranks were drawn from groups like MEP (*Movimento de Emancipação do Proletariado*), APML (*Ação*

Popular Marxista Leninista), MR-8 (*Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro*), Polop (*Política Operária*), and various Trotskyist organizations like Libelu (*Liberdade e Luta*) from São Paulo, Colina (*Comando de Libertação Nacional*) from Minas Gerais, and *Nova Proposta* from Rio Grande do Sul. Because of the diversity of its contributors, the paper's political line was not always entirely clear or consistent.

João Roberto Martins Filho, who worked for *Em Tempo* in Campinas during its debut, recalled weekly editorial meetings to decide which stories to pursue. "At the time, I did not understand the various factions behind the newspaper, but I was shocked by how many people smoked pipes and by the clear hierarchy within that Left." Testing the limits of Geisel's liberalizing agenda, this upstart publication that sought to speak for a rejuvenated progressive sphere was still defined, in ways explicit and implicit, by some of the staid organizational traditions of the Brazilian Left. He remembered meeting a member of Colina named Dilma Rousseff in the newsroom one day and giving her a ride home, one of the many politically engaged men and women passing through from city to city, relying on a network of personal connections in order to get by.⁶⁰⁵

While the vast majority of *Em Tempo*'s coverage dealt with domestic political matters like the various debates within the Brazilian Left, the resurgent labor movement, feminism, gay rights, and the black consciousness movement, the paper maintained a watchful eye on the efforts of the United States to control economic and political affairs and Brazil and elsewhere. Indeed, despite the variety of opinions and perspectives expressed in the pages of *Em Tempo*, the paper was remarkably consistent in its analysis of U.S. imperialism and in its support for proletarian internationalism. It is thus a valuable source for understanding the views of an important part of the rejuvenated Brazilian Left vis-à-vis the United States and nationalism more broadly.

An August 1978 interview with Euzébio Rocha revealed much about how the latter figured into the ideology of this new Left attempting to recompose and reinsert itself into the formal political

⁶⁰⁵ João Roberto Martins Filho, interview with author, November 22, 2017.

arena. Rocha, a former PTB congressman and delegate to the 1946 constituent assembly, vigorously defended the creation of a state oil monopoly and other nationalist causes in the 1950s. Speaking on such matters, the paper remarked, Rocha was visibly emotional. The *Em Tempo* interviewer pressed Rocha on why he still believed a nationalist bourgeoisie existed given the reality of the regime's economic policies that favored associations with multinational companies. Rocha conceded that that had been the case for most of the time since 1964 (he pointed out that in fact the Café Filho administration that succeeded Vargas' suicide had been the one to initiate the shift away from state-led developmentalism) but that recent surveys indicated a change of opinion among business elites. After years of pusillanimity, "there is a certain resurgence of resistance [against the regime's policies]...something different" was in the air. He was referring, at least partly, to the growing chorus of businessmen demanding greater democratic freedoms and safeguards against the incursions of foreign capital.

The interviewer then asked, again reflecting the contemporary mindset of the proto-PT Left, if the emergence of new social actors like an aggressive labor movement might usher in deep-seated transformations that transcended the reach of nationalist reforms. Rocha asserted that he saw no conflict between socialism and nationalism. A socialist world must acknowledge the nation, he continued, declaring that "when a region like the Paulista ABC [the industrial heartland surrounding the city of São Paulo], which produces up to 70% of the Gross Domestic Product, at the same time has an infant mortality rate of 150 per 1000, we have an explosive situation! Thus, we must change who is in control of the state." A government responsive to popular pressure, along with a nationalist business elite, could very well deepen and ensure the process of social change, Rocha argued.⁶⁰⁶ A great many trabalhadores in 1964 would have nodded their assent.

⁶⁰⁶ "A tese do nacionalismo – a política do resguardo," *Em Tempo*, August 20-27, 1978, 8.

This interview is illustrative of the debates within the Brazilian progressive camp during the late 1970s as the opposition to the dictatorship sought to determine the best path forward in resisting the regime's authoritarianism and imagining what would come next. Abertura offered the space for the Brazilian Left to resume long-running debates that could be traced back to at least the late 1950s and early 1960s as those committed to fundamentally changing the political balance of Brazilian society—students, workers, peasants, intellectuals—clashed over the best way to push through structural change. Essential concepts like nationalism that had been subsumed to the imperative of resistance during the years of military rule were once again on the agenda of items to mull over.

Editorials like João Antonio de Paula's "O poder do discurso," published in May 1978, would not have seemed out of place in the main outlet of the nationalist movement in the 1950s, *O Semanário*, or the communist *Novos Rumos*. The author observes that, "International capital's domination of broad sectors of the country's economy makes the overexploitation of labor one of the decisive factors of capitalist domination," further suggesting that "to deny the contradictions between social classes, to insist on the existence of harmony and social peace, is another expedient of bourgeois ideological domination."⁶⁰⁷ João Antonio de Paula's essay exemplifies the persistence of certain themes in leftist discourse during the twentieth century, namely the notion that foreign exploitation of Brazil, facilitated by a pliant local elite, has prevented the country from achieving its economic potential and from providing a measure of social justice to all its citizens. This underscores the ideological link between the Left's anti-imperialism and its struggle for reforms over the course of the twentieth century: the economic, political, and social agenda defined by imperialism has historically constricted the realm of policy options available to Brazilian politicians. Thus, according to this argument, even those leaders amenable to a reformist agenda have been boxed in by overwhelming external pressure.

⁶⁰⁷ João Antonio de Paula, "O poder do discurso," *Em Tempo*, May 1-7, 1978, 8.

Writers at *Em Tempo* were particularly concerned about the effects of such pressure on the new unionism taking hold in Brazil. Several articles denounced the prospect of American infiltration in the Brazilian labor movement, a move purportedly designed to undermine its main leader, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. For example, *Em Tempo* reported in late September 1978 that the AFL-CIO, the largest federation of unions in the United States, worked closely with the CIA to export a type of unionism that would create workforces abroad pliant to the imperatives of American capitalism. The paper defended Lula against accusations from Ari Campista that he was a CIA agent. The paper criticized Campista, the head of the National Confederation of Workers in Industry (Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Indústria) and a notorious *pelego*, or government lackey, for proposing in 1979 that Brazilian labor unions sever ties with international partners. Purportedly in the service of nationalism, such a move would isolate Brazilian labor unions and contradict the notion of proletarian internationalism, a concept dear to those in charge of *Em Tempo*'s editorial line. For the acolytes of the new unionism, Campista represented the self-interested impulse of old-fashioned and corrupt labor leaders who rejected international solidarity in the name of a feckless nationalism.⁶⁰⁸ It was partly this sentiment that led a new generation of progressive labor activists to favor the nascent PT and Lula over the PDT of Leonel Brizola, the nationalist firebrand of yesteryear (which is not to say that Brizola was lacking in popular support, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, far from the PT's main stronghold in the industrial cities around São Paulo). As it reported on the growing strength of the urban labor movement, *Em Tempo* also frequently contained stories on developments in the countryside, arguing that the advent of multinational agribusiness was part of "imperialism's new plans" for Brazil.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ Antonio F. Nunes, "Afinal, quem é da CIA: Ari Campista ou Lula?" *Em Tempo*, September 25-October 1, 1978, 7.

⁶⁰⁹ "Multinacionais de alimentos exploram o mercado interno," *Em Tempo*, October 9-15, 1978, 10.

At the same time that the paper suggested Jimmy Carter was incompetent, it frequently asserted that the forces of imperialism were masterfully adapting their approach to exploiting and manipulating the so-called Third World. Apolo Heringer Lisboa, for example, argued that the military's supposedly imminent return to the barracks represented a CIA trap. He wondered: "Is it fair that after committing Brazil to a socially disastrous, politically suicidal, and economically deficient path, and patriotically antinational, is it fair that the Brazilian military leave politics and the government to leave the bomb in someone else's hands?"⁶¹⁰ In outlining this purported strategy for Washington's continued domination of Brazil, Heringer seemed to harken back to the view that nationalist elements within the military could plausibly serve as a bulwark against foreign exploitation, an opinion held by parts of the Left since the tenente revolts of the 1920s. This was not a position articulated often in the pages of *Em Tempo* but its presence indicates the endurance of certain ideas about the progressive role the Brazilian armed forces could yet play despite the traumatic experience of military rule.⁶¹¹ Few others in the newspaper's pages ventured so far as to say the military could serve a democratizing or emancipatory role for society but this was the implication of Lisboa's reasoning.

The paper's critical view of Carter produced indifference upon his defeat to Ronald Reagan in November 1980. In an article entitled "For the workers, it didn't matter..." ("Para os trabalhadores, tanto fez..."), *Em Tempo* pointed out that Carter had run as the peace candidate after criticizing Regan's bellicosity. After listing the stains on Carter's foreign policy—provoking Cuba, threatening war in the Persian Gulf, extending military support for the junta in El Salvador, among others—the paper exclaimed, "some peace candidate!" But the new president,

⁶¹⁰ Apolo Heringer Lisboa, "Volta dos militares aos quartéis é armadilha da CIA," *Em Tempo*, February 15-21, 1979, 8.

⁶¹¹ For a recent articulation of this argument, see Paulo Ribeiro Da Cunha, *Militares e militância: Uma relação dialeticamente conflituosa* (São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2014).

the paper acknowledged, promised to be even worse: “the Reagan campaign, by openly and directly proclaiming a genuine imperialist outlook, represents the intention of segments of the ruling class to push the whole bourgeois politics of the United States to the right.” Neither Carter nor Reagan represented the genuine interests of the American working class, the article posited. Rather, both sought to “feed pro-war sentiments that do not actually exist.”⁶¹²

In analyzing Carter’s defeat and Reagan’s rise, *Em Tempo* suggested the American worker was tired of choosing between the lesser of two evils, perhaps a projection of how segments of the Brazilian Left felt in having to support the MDB as the only alternative to the incumbent ARENA. The article argued that American imperialism had ceased to offer an attractive way of life to the average American worker, offering instead only racism, oppression, and foreign war. Furthermore, it argued that “neither Democrats or Republicans defend the interests of workers, small farmers and the oppressed black and latino populations.”⁶¹³ Such a reading of the political situation in the United States was undoubtedly colored by events in Brazil, where a new working-class party that embraced sexual and racial diversity was arising from a sclerotic political system no longer able to guarantee economic growth at the expense of political expression. Reagan’s election seemed to signal a return to a more aggressive, if less intellectual, anti-communism in the White House. This was a point of special concern following the assassination attempt against the U.S. president on March 30, 1981 when, as pointed out in *Em Tempo*, “the animal [the American government] is headless, but since its arms are plenty strong, and equipped with bombs that could destroy the world in a few hours . . . the whole thing is terrifying.”⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² Andreas Maia, “Reagan derrota Carter: Para os trabalhadores, tanto fez...” *Em Tempo*, November 20-December 10, 1980, 20.

⁶¹³ Andreas Maia, “Reagan derrota Carter: Para os trabalhadores, tanto fez...” *Em Tempo*, November 20-December 10, 1980, 20.

⁶¹⁴ “Estados Unidos: os estilhaços do atentado,” *Em Tempo*, April 9-29, 1981, 19.

In surveying the far-reaching economic crisis of the 1970s and early 1980s, the influential newspaper concluded that imperialist powers and their domestic allies were intent on making workers accept smaller wages and scant government benefits. The other part of the imperialist plan to deal with global crisis, *Em Tempo* reported, was a counteroffensive planned long before Reagan took office that would call upon dependent nations like Brazil and Argentina to help shore up American control over strategic sites like the Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, Central America, and the Caribbean. As Marcelo Zugadi argued, the persistence of the economic crisis—which began in earnest with the first oil shock of late 1973—“negates those who have argued for the possibility of a gradual and peaceful transition to socialism or the humanization of capitalism, and threatens the treacherous leaders who rely on such falsehoods to maintain their privileges.” Zugadi noted that the crisis might not represent the end of capitalism but it offered an opportunity for the masses to create new organizations that might challenge the prevailing order. The forces of imperialism, however, would not stand idly by, as the pages of *Em Tempo* consistently argued.⁶¹⁵ Indeed, the paper argued that as the hardline represented by the Pentagon prevailed over the moderates in the State Department towards the end of the Carter administration, the policy of détente—peaceful coexistence with the nations of the socialist bloc—was deliberately sabotaged. This paved the way for “hard, iniquitous, and troglodytic men like Reagan” to reinstate the “gunboat diplomacy applied in the Caribbean, Central America, and Mexico in the first decades of the [twentieth] century.”⁶¹⁶

Taken as a whole, the arguments contained in the pages of *Em Tempo* regarding the nature of American imperialism was that the individual heads of state, whose time on the world stage was only temporary, generally mattered less than the interests of enduring economic and political forces. Thus, while Carter’s measured if seemingly sincere commitment to international human rights

⁶¹⁵ Marcelo Zugadi, “Em cheque o controle imperialista,” *Em Tempo*, May 14-27, 1981, 18-19.

⁶¹⁶ Paulo Schilling, “A histeria belicista de Reagan,” *Em Tempo*, September 17-30, 1981, 18.

infuriated the dictatorship and its apologists, it did not amount to much in the eyes of militant new opposition forces who focused on his unwillingness to deviate too far from longstanding pillars of American foreign policy (by the time he took office, for example, the Cuban embargo was already almost two decades old). Carter was frequently deemed incompetent, unable or unwilling to change the character of American global hegemony.

Reagan, for his part, was openly committed to a policy of anti-communism at all costs. He was thus, in the pages of *Em Tempo*, a more potent avatar for the resurgent threat of American imperialism for Brazil, Latin America, and the world at an unpredictable time of economic strife and political opening. The vast majority of *Em Tempo*'s multifarious coverage dealt with domestic political matters, like the various debates within the Brazilian Left as the PT came into being, the resurgent labor movement, feminism, gay rights, and the Afro-Brazilian identity. But the paper maintained a watchful eye on the efforts of the United States to control economic and political affairs in Brazil and elsewhere.

As is common with the Brazilian Left throughout the twentieth century, *Em Tempo* sometimes overstated or overestimated Washington's ability to manage events around the world. Nevertheless, the paper's coverage demonstrates the specific ways in which Brazilian progressives of various stripes debated the nation's relationship with the United States at a moment of perceived opportunity. Would the United States remain friend or foe as Brazilian society transitioned away from military rule? Would the economic prerogatives of American empire allow Brazilian leaders to pursue policies that prioritized the national interest? Were strictly nationalist policies even desirable or was internationalism the more fruitful way forward? A close reading of *Em Tempo* offers insight into how the Brazilian Left was grappling with these questions as it contended with the tangible possibility of gaining real political power in the near future. Decisions by leftist actors had likely not seemed so weighty or promising since the early 1960s when broad swaths of the population believed

society had reached a turning point and that meaningful change was possible. *Em Tempo* is at once deeply hopeful about the prospects of organizing and party-building while remaining unsparingly critical of much leftist political action in previous decades. This what a close reading of *Em Tempo* makes clear: that combination of optimism and scathing self-criticism, with a skepticism of anything resembling American interference, that defined the resurgent organized Left at the moment of Abertura.

Preserving Abertura from Geisel to Figueiredo

As Geisel's government drew to a close, he could credibly claim to have set the nation on the path toward democratic normalization, even if the length of the journey still to be taken must temper excessive praise for his commitment to democracy. For example, the press and civil society were undeniably freer than before he took office. With the president's approval, the despotic Institutional Act 5 was undone by constitutional amendment on December 31, 1978 and habeas corpus protections were restored. Many progressives sensed renewed opportunities to push the regime in various ways, whether on the question of human rights or on wage policy.

The transition to João Figueiredo, Geisel's hand-chosen successor who frequently joked that he would do anything to avoid having to succeed the departing president, indicated that Abertura would continue, much to the chagrin of sectors of the military who favored doubling down on the dictatorship's most authoritarian inclinations. These belligerent elements, prone to lashing out with rogue acts of violence, did not look favorably upon the uninspiring new president. Indeed, he was hardly the first choice of the most reactionary elements of the armed forces, a fact which gave some comfort to those opponents of the regime who remained skeptical that the military would actually step aside anytime soon. A closer look at Figueiredo's rhetoric and background, however, might have given them pause.

Although many saw him as bumbling and hopelessly out of touch with average Brazilians, Figueiredo had been head of the powerful and fearsome National Intelligence Service under Geisel. Furthermore, while “campaigning” for president in August 1978 (the outcome was never in doubt), Figueiredo spoke at the headquarters of the II Army in São Paulo. “Whatever circumstances the future may hold for our Homeland, I will not remove my uniform,” he stated, adding that this was “because I am certain that my brothers-in-arms are always on the side of law and order. They will safeguard what is best and most conducive to the good of our Nation.” While perhaps merely a sop to the most confrontational parts of the military, most of whom distrusted him, the sentiment expressed in Figueiredo’s comment is revealing of the attitude widely held among the armed forces regarding the democratic transition. The implication was that even while the military sought to extricate itself from direct involvement in the political sphere, it would do so on its own terms, according to a political timetable of its own choosing to be imposed unilaterally on Brazilian society. Figueiredo’s words served as a tacit reminder that men in uniform might leave the seat of power, but they were not really going anywhere.

Figueiredo: Economic Strains and Democratic Resurgence, 1979-1985

During the administration of João Figueiredo, the last general-president of the military regime, the bottom fell out from the economy. Geisel and his advisors had been able to prevent the worst following the oil shocks of 1973-1974, in part by pushing for new energy solutions at home. By the early 1980s, however, the price of oil doubled and international interest rates rose. These factors combined to extinguish the possibility of easy fixes to the dire fiscal situation, as Minister of Planning Delfim Netto acknowledged in an amenable speech to bankers in New York in 1982. He pleaded

for patience with Brazil from international financiers.⁶¹⁷ This because despite the triumphant narrative it had been able to spin out of the economic miracle, the dictatorship was now presiding over mounting fiscal disaster. This reality, at least as much as concerns over human rights and democracy, if not more, finally led to the collapse of popular support for the regime in the business community and among other sectors that had long supported the government. Without fiscal stability and economic growth, what was the regime good for?

The widely-read *Jornal do Brasil* worried early on about Figueiredo's handle on the political situation and the regime's statist economic legacy, which it argued had ceased to be the policy of one president to become the implicit orientation of the regime itself. "The Government ended up falling into the clutches of nationalism," a scathing editorial lamented, arguing that "the bad results of the State as entrepreneur always find refuge in xenophobia." The newspaper was articulating the criticism common among segments of the business community most aligned with international capital regarding the government's forceful presence in the economy, asserting that economic shortcomings under this strategy would inexorably produce the negative nationalism of the pre-1964 period. Linking nationalism and xenophobia had, of course, been the strategy employed in the late 1950s to dismiss policy proposals put forth by avowed nationalists.

Intriguingly, the newspaper also blamed the regime's approach for playing into the hands of a resurgent progressive wave: "The emerging tendencies on the Left appear with the banners of statist nationalism. And since they have nothing concrete to offer a society exploited by economic statism, they concentrate their emotional ire on foreign capital, technology, and companies . . . Many shadows blanket Abertura. Almost all of them cast by nationalism," the editorial bemoaned.⁶¹⁸ The regime, according to this argument, had surrendered its ability to credibly denounce the insidious

⁶¹⁷ "Discurso pronunciado em Nova York, em dezembro de 1982, por ocasião da renegociação da dívida," 1, 4. Registro No. 002617252, Acervo Delfim Netto, Faculdade de Economia, Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade de São Paulo.

⁶¹⁸ "Rumos perigosos," *Jornal do Brasil*, April 27, 1980, 10.

nationalist discourse of the Left because it had itself wholeheartedly embraced a strategy for development centered around the state. The obvious truth underlying this argument points to an essential conclusion: the progressive nationalist movement of the 1950s succeeded in establishing an enduring framework of policy and discourse that would shape Brazilian development for decades thereafter. The policy course initiated under Vargas was not so easily reversed. Nationalists in the 1950s were also evidently able to foster an association, for better or for worse, between such an approach with a general leftist or left-leaning mode of governance. To the disappointment of pious free-marketeers, the state would not remove itself from the development equation during military rule.

Rising discontent with the government, manifested most clearly in the 1974 legislative elections and the 1976 municipal elections dominated by the MDB, led to another key development early in Figueiredo's term: the return of multiparty politics. Fearing the rising tide of support for the opposition would overwhelm the regime in the 1982 elections for mayoralties across the country, Congress, and the Senate, Figueiredo's cunning chief of staff General Golbery do Couto e Silva proposed doing away with Institutional Act 2, which had established the two-party system in 1965. Allowing for the creation of new political parties was presented as a democratizing gesture. It was also a clear attempt by the government to divide the opposition and lessen the chances of voters empowering a single opposition party as a referendum against the regime.

Thus, the government's official party, ARENA, became the Democratic Social Party (Partido Democrático Social, or PDS) while the MDB became the PMDB.⁶¹⁹ Competing for the pre-1964 trabalhista mantle, Leonel Brizola and Ivete Vargas, the daughter of the former dictator, each fought for the right to reestablish the PTB. When Vargas won control of the party name in court, Brizola,

⁶¹⁹ Legislation governing the creation of political parties required that they include the word 'party' in their name. Thus, the MDB—the Brazilian Democratic Movement—became the PMDB, the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement.

former governor of Rio Grande do Sul and a nationalist icon, founded the Democratic Labor Party (Partido Democrático Trabalhista, or PDT), which he envisioned as a vessel to reanimate the nationalist trabalhismo of Vargas and Goulart. The new PTB, for its part, was also self-consciously “inspired by economic nationalism.”⁶²⁰ The Workers’ Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, or PT), on the other hand, rejected any attempt to resuscitate the discourse and strategy of the progressive coalition defeated in 1964.

Elsewhere on the landscape of new political parties, retired army colonel Nemo Canabarro traveled the country as the head of the Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista, or PN), which he presented as the vanguard for a movement that would move beyond what he saw as the strictly economic or political nationalism of the past toward a basic rethinking of society. “The PN wants the Nation to be organized on truly national bases, instead of the classist bases that prevail in every country,” he explained, with distant echoes of the corporatist ethos espoused by *integralistas* half a century before.⁶²¹ The PN would never amount to much politically but its appearance at the moment of multiparty resurgence indicates some belief in the electoral appeal of the nationalist label. In their own ways, new political parties cast about for signifiers of legitimacy. Some sought to claim nationalism as the key to broad appeal while some presented their working-class base as the only source of true credibility with the masses. Others presented proximity to power (the regime) as their key distinguishing asset.

On November 29, 1980, Delfim Netto addressed the first national convention of the PDS to describe and defend Figueiredo’s economic strategy. Delfim Netto, of course, had been finance minister from 1967 to 1974, engineering astronomic economic growth at the expense of wage adjustments for most workers whose salaries did not keep pace with inflation. As the architect of the

⁶²⁰ “Petebistas da Bahia lançam nota,” *Jornal do Brasil*, February 4, 1980, 2.

⁶²¹ “Perspectivas do surgimento de nova força política,” *Jornal do Commercio*, July 19, 1980, 13.

economic miracle, he was perhaps the most visible and popular of any technocrat associated with the regime (Roberto Campos was probably the only other figure with such widespread recognition).

Reducing Brazil's dependency on the United States was the order of the day, as it had been for decades. Indeed, like Kubitschek in the late 1950s, Delfim Netto called for a realistic approach to achieving economic emancipation. Sound economic policies often took time to bear fruit, he argued, an implicit, preemptive argument against any jarring political shifts that technocrats might deem radical but that could be appealing to the masses. Addressing the regime's critics, he stated that "it is always a privilege of the opposition to demand the impossible and the duty of those in power to rigorously carry out what is possible."⁶²² Delfim Netto explained that the government would prioritize job creation while accepting the reality that economic growth would inevitably slow. This course of action involved, but was not limited to, continued state assistance for domestic industry against multinational competitors.⁶²³ Delfim Netto's concern with distancing the government from the charge of denationalization that bedeviled prior military presidencies demonstrates the perceived potential of such criticisms to undermine public confidence in the regime. Accusing the government of insufficient support for Brazilian industry had proven to be a potent line of attack.

While the government did its best to avoid the impression that it was ignoring the needs of domestic industry in any way, it remained susceptible to the charge that by growing the national debt—a necessary and entirely rational short-term measure, according to Delfim Netto—it was sacrificing its sovereignty to foreign creditors. In *Jornal do Commercio*, Jaime Rotstein proclaimed that Brazil urgently needed to free itself from the "slavery of imported petroleum."⁶²⁴ Rogério Cerqueira C. Leite, in an acid column in *Jornal do Brasil*, criticized the hollow patriotism of those in government

⁶²² "O Programa do PDS e a Política Econômica do Governo Presidente João Figueiredo," Presidência da República, Secretaria de Planejamento, Coordenadora de Comunicação Social, Publicação 04/81 (Brasília: March, 1981): 5. Registro No. 002557763, Acervo Delfim Netto, Faculdade de Economia, Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade de São Paulo.

⁶²³ Ibid., 8-9.

⁶²⁴ Jaime Rotstein, "É preciso um Plano de Crise," *Jornal do Commercio*, January 10, 1980, 13.

whose “victory was only made possible through authoritarianism” and who were at that very moment “humbly soliciting colonization” by courting foreign loans and inviting multinational oil companies to explore their options in Brazil to the potential detriment of Petrobras.⁶²⁵

There was also simmering concern over the possibility of Brazil turning to the unforgiving International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help servicing its mounting fiscal obligations. By the early 1980s there were signs that foreign investment was beginning to dry up in the absence of harsh austerity measures the regime was politically unwilling to carry out. Unlike surreptitious wage policies carried out at the height of the economic miracle, these measures would have to be bold, visible, and painful to the majority of the population. The regime had managed to avoid an exodus of international capital during the oil shocks of the previous decade but now foreign creditors were getting skittish about the Brazilian economic forecast. From 1980 to 1984, macroeconomic policy would be dictated by the pursuit of foreign assistance.⁶²⁶ As the regime’s increasingly vocal critics in the press, in new political parties, and in the formal opposition pointed out, such aid would inevitably come with strings attached, imposing more potential limits on Brazil’s autonomy.

The increasing skepticism of the government’s plan to get the economy back on track annoyed Roberto Campos, the former minister of planning and inveterate foe of what he called temperamental nationalism. Addressing businessmen and politicians at Rio’s exclusive jockey club, Campos bemoaned the fact that:

every time . . . foreign dependence rises it inflames, as psychological compensation, talk about the idea of independence. The Goulart period, [characterized by] serious fiscal crisis, was a period of nationalist hyperexcitement. The demon then was profit remittances. Our current fiscal challenges, creating mortifying scenarios of dependency, reanimate vestiges of xenophobia. The demons now are multinational corporations. It is always pleasing to unload our frustrations on foreign actors.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁵ Rogério Cerqueira C. Leite, “País, pátria, nação,” *Jornal do Brasil*, January 8, 1980, 11.

⁶²⁶ Dionísio Dias Carneiro and Eduardo Marcos Modiano, “Ajuste externo e desequilíbrio interno, 1980-1984,” in *A ordem do progresso: dois séculos de política econômica no Brasil*, ed. Marcelo de Paiva Abreu – 2 ed. (Rio de Janeiro: 2014): 263.

⁶²⁷ Roberto Campos defende as multinacionais,” *Jornal do Commercio*, June 25, 1980, 5.

Despite the former minister's exasperation, the government was sensitive to the view that it was willingly subjecting to having its hands tied by foreign creditors.

There were other signs that the discourse of foreign assistance as a precondition for further development employed by Kubitschek in the late 1950s was making a genuine comeback. Abílio Diniz, the prominent businessman and member of the government's National Monetary Council, addressed the issue in June 1980, noting that if Brazil needed to turn to the IMF for aid, "we should face this topic objectively and without emotion. And we cannot face that prospect with an excess of nationalism." Diniz recognized nationalist sentiment as a potential political obstacle and sought to disqualify such sentiments as ill-considered and impulsive.⁶²⁸ This had been the rhetorical strategy used to confront the economic nationalism of the Left since the 1950s: supposedly sober-minded technocrats claimed for themselves the ability to conduct reasoned economic analysis immune to the petty nationalist demagoguery of skeptics. Attempts to dismiss nationalism along these lines reemerged whenever the mantle of legitimate nationalism (and political power itself) seemed to be slipping from the grasp of conservatives. With inflation and political activity on the rise, the regime was clearly on the defensive in the early 1980s, just as Kubitschek's had been in many ways with the consolidation of the nationalist movement during his term.

The Figueiredo government's success at striking a deal with the IMF in 1982 came with considerable political cost. In exchange for financial assistance, the government was ordered to impose regressive austerity measures like cuts to public services; increased interest rates; and reconfigured domestic prices for key commodities to encourage exportation, a move that effectively raised the cost of living for most consumers already squeezed by inflation.⁶²⁹ This was in line with what had been Delfim Netto's private message to businessmen during meetings in Brasília in

⁶²⁸ "Empresário não crê que Brasil recorra ao FMI," *Jornal do Brasil*, June 13, 1980, 9.

⁶²⁹ Carneiro and Modiano, "Ajuste externo e desequilíbrio interno, 1980-1984," 280.

September 1980: the regime had overextended itself by spending money on programs it could not afford. Rapidly cutting costs was now an urgent task.⁶³⁰ A regime that had engineered economic growth in large part by tightening wages was forced to double down on what by then was widely dubbed an anti-popular model for growth, one more concerned with servicing obligations to foreign creditors than meeting the material needs of most Brazilians. A forceful nationalist critique of the government's strategy practically wrote itself.

But even some of the regime's technocrats and civilian supporters came to argue that progress under the "Revolution" of 1964 had stalled. Castelo Branco's finance minister Octávio Gouvea de Bulhões gave voice to the disillusionment, finding it sad that, "after such a stellar trajectory, we seem to be back where we started. Our foreign debt is enormous, there are alarming nationalist demonstrations, and, to complete the array of recurrent issues, we are being strangled by a 100% inflation rate with signs of social unrest."⁶³¹ The sense that the regime could no longer handle thorny issues of public policy worsened over the course of the decade, draining the dictatorship of its legitimacy, which had come to rest primarily on the ability to deliver economic growth. The regime had lost the soft power of economic growth—which had gone a long way toward stifling dissent—just as the repressive apparatus was winding down its political interventions. Abertura was thus being propelled by the twin engines of economic crisis and receding state terror.

Like Bulhões, Senator Jarbas Passarinho, former minister of education under Médici, bemoaned the increasing appeal of progressive nationalism, noting in a speech commemorating the anniversary of the coup, that, "[today] we see our young people poisoned, just like sixteen years ago, by a superficial nationalism and grassroots organizations of emancipatory ideology." Passarinho's remarks made clear the potential link conservatives saw between social ferment and nationalism as

⁶³⁰ "Reuniões com empresários," 3-4, Presidência da República, Secretaria de Planejamento, Coordenadoria de Comunicação Social, publicação 03/80, September 1980. Registro No. 002557763, Acervo Delfim Netto, Faculdade de Economia, Administração e Contabilidade da Universidade de São Paulo.

⁶³¹ "Tudo como dantes: Bulhões diz que o atual quadro brasileiro lembra 1964," *Jornal do Commercio*, June 25, 1980, 5.

well as the despair that this engendered. The antipathy of Bulhões and Passarinho to the growing nationalist wave stood in contrast to the business community's continued insistence that the government take steps to protect domestic industry from the incursions of foreign capital. As one reporter astutely observed in response to Bulhões' comments, this divergence likely represented a break in the coalition responsible for the 1964 coup and the regime that followed.⁶³² Tarred as inept and subservient to foreign dictates, the government lost the credibility to present itself as the invigorating force for modernization it had claimed to be from the start.

As the Figueiredo government drew to a close, and with it the twenty-one-year period of military rule, the country was closer to the economic conditions of 1964 than would have been imaginable in the heady early days of Castelo Branco and his eager band of technocrats. The conservative *O Estado de São Paulo* bemoaned the nationalist elements in Figueiredo's government who embraced "the extreme nationalist line" in regards to Petrobras, tying the hands of his civilian successor when it came to determining the role of multinational companies in extracting Brazilian oil. Even the old nationalists now had a more sensible position than that, the editorial observed, illustrating how low the regime had fallen in the eyes of its erstwhile cheerleaders in the press.⁶³³ The same paper also decried the "triumphant" return of 1950s-style nationalism with the certain victory of Tancredo Neves as Figueiredo's successor, predicting a new animal revolt, an allusion to utopian promise unmade by tyranny as depicted in Orwell's *Animal Farm*.⁶³⁴ The resurgence of nationalism portended a deeper hole for the economy to climb out of, according to the paper's frantic editorials in the regime's last days.⁶³⁵

The renewed political appeal of what can be called progressive nationalism underscored the regime's shattered credibility and the extent to which it had lost its hold over the mantle of legitimate

⁶³² Ubirajara Loureiro, "Bulhões e o nacionalismo," *Jornal do Commercio*, July 7, 1980, 5.

⁶³³ "Agora, também o gas é nosso," *O Estado de São Paulo*, February 9, 1985, 3.

⁶³⁴ "A nova revolução dos bichos," *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 6, 1984, 3.

⁶³⁵ See, for example, "A volta do nacionalismo," *O Estado de São Paulo*, October 28, 1984, 3.

nationalism. As the nation's economic fortunes declined beginning in the mid-1970s so too did the dictatorship's ability to present itself as the only plausible steward of national development. The regime had come into being by presenting itself as the genuine avatar of nationalism in contrast to Goulart's supposed demagoguery. Economic success made that case all the more convincing to many Brazilians content with material improvements in their day-to-day lives, men and women for whom political engagement was not a matter of urgent importance or interest. The end of the economic miracle shook the foundations of the regime's legitimacy. If it could no longer deliver astronomical economic growth, what good was the regime? Was living without democracy worth it if development stalled? These questions produced an awakening in civil society that ultimately turned public sentiment against the regime. In this way, debates over nationalism—more specifically, what is the national good and who gets to define it and pursue it—produced a shift in political, social, and economic expectations in the mid-1980s.

In 1984, a massive civic push calling for direct elections for president failed, but the following year's electoral race (such as it was, given the outcome was decided by congress) came down to two civilian candidates. Paulo Maluf, congressman and former mayor of São Paulo, represented the incumbent coalition of former ARENA members and supporters of the regime while Tancredo Neves of the PMDB, a former cabinet minister of Getúlio Vargas and institutional opponent of the dictatorship, stood for the opposition. Following his victory by 380 votes to 180 for Maluf, Neves praised the emergence of a new nationalist spirit, one dedicated to making Brazil a “great nation.”⁶³⁶ Maluf, for his part, declared in his concession speech that “those with a legitimate nationalist spirit do not allow themselves to be restrained or bound by the chains of narrow and dogmatic ideology. Healthy and true nationalism demands progress. It demands development. It does not tolerate

⁶³⁶ “Vamos fazer uma grande nação,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 16, 1985, 4.

paralysis. It rejects institutionalized injustice.”⁶³⁷ Maluf’s comments were of a piece with calls for “healthy” nationalism in the late 1950s and a practical approach to development (for instance, accepting foreign capital in the short term in order to lay the groundwork for greater national autonomy later) defended in the early years of military rule. A debate suffocated by military rule seemed on the cusp of reigniting.

With the return of civilian rule in 1985, Brazilians looked ahead unsure of their immediate future but likely still convinced, deep in their collective national psyche, that their country would one day live up to its natural potential. *Não tem como o Brasil não dar certo*, they might have told themselves—Brazil can’t not work out. The road ahead would be more tortuous than they might have guessed, and certainly more so than they deserved.

⁶³⁷ “Maluf: ‘é preciso conter o estado,’” *O Estado de São Paulo*, January 16, 1985, 4.

Conclusion

Brazil is lost because some of Your Majesty's ministers come here not for our good, but for our goods.
— **Father Antonio Vieira, 1655**⁶³⁸

Brazilian conservatives have long pointed to systemic public corruption as the main hindrance to consistent Brazilian development. This is what the the Jesuit philosopher, priest, and writer Antonio Vieira (1608-1697) referred to in his “Good Thief” sermon, delivered in 1655. If we analyze his words in a slightly different light, however, removing mentions of the king and his agents, we identify the culprit long decried by the Left: those who come to Brazil to serve their personal interest at the expense of the nation's. I invoke Vieira's famous sermon in order to establish a sense of the extended historical frameworks for some of the ideas at the heart of this dissertation. As long ago as the mid-seventeenth century, intellectuals like Vieira were already plaintively decrying the exploitation of Brazil by corrupt public agents. Implicit in this line of thinking was the notion that Brazilians themselves would ultimately pay the price for the avarice and insularity of their elites. These interlinked ideas—the individual avarice of powerful Brazilians coupled with the rapaciousness of foreign economic interests—have lingered in the stormy brew of national politics ever since. They are amorphous and generalized at times, devoid of specific political content, while in other instances they have been evoked in service of clear-cut aims. Anti-imperialism, nationalism, and anti-corruption stem from the same root: dissatisfaction with Brazil's enduring material shortcomings.

In this dissertation, I have argued that nationalism has primarily redounded to the political benefit of progressive forces during periods of democratic freedom (as relative a concept as that is in twentieth-century Brazil). During such times, anti-corruption is usually the most potent rhetorical

⁶³⁸ “Sermão do bom ladrão” in *Padre Antonio Vieira: Obras Escolhidas*, vol. X, eds. Antonio Sergio and Hernâni Cidade (Lisbon: Livraria Sá de Costa, 1954): 104.

weapon of the Right, as recent developments in Brazil make abundantly clear. During the military regime, however, the government quashed any coverage of corruption through press censorship while proclaiming a self-serving narrative that the regime had moralized Brazilian government. Uncontested by a viable opposition, the regime recast nationalism, which had become an intensely political ideology in the second half of the 1950s, as a passive, apolitical concept and claimed for itself the political legitimacy such sentiment conferred.

Beginning with the presumption that nationalism holds an abiding appeal for a broad swath of the Brazilian population, this dissertation surveyed the use of nationalist rhetoric as a political weapon employed by Left and Right over the course of three critical decades. Understanding the nature and uses of such rhetoric is crucial because nationalism, by definition, communicates an ideal vision of society and the proper civic role for the individual not necessarily shared by everyone who would call himself a nationalist. The particularity of nationalist visions is an urgent topic of historical inquiry, not least because of the present challenges facing Brazil and the world. I argue that the conservative nationalism employed by the military regime reflects an enduring tendency of the Brazilian Right to undermine and underappreciate democracy in order to carry out an agenda for economic development that would almost certainly repel most voters in a free and fair election. Their vision of popular nationalism was presented as a passive force, translated most often into abstract, apolitical, and generalized love of country.

For leftists, generally, nationalism reflected a sense of injustice at exploitation by foreign economic interests and a servile national elite. This ideological current has unabashedly embraced a central role for the state in steering economic development (in contrast to the dictatorship, for example, which paid lip service to shrinking the government's place in the market but almost apologetically refused to take active steps in that direction) even at the expense of high short-term growth. The idea is that it is preferable to foster development autonomously even if it takes longer than to depend indefinitely on foreign capital to spark immediate growth. Both approaches have

tradeoffs and overlap in significant ways but they represent distinctive solutions to fostering development with the ultimate goal of allowing Brazil to live up to its natural potential as a hemispheric and global power that can influence global events and provide for the basic needs of its people.

These two strains of nationalism—to the extent that they can be boiled down to a clear binary, as I propose—reflect deep-seated characteristics of Brazil’s traditional elite and those pushing for structural changes over the course of the twentieth century. Their clashing visions of the national good illustrate their mutual contempt. In his book *Argentina's Partisan Past: Nationalism and the Politics of History*, Michael Goebel posits a different sort of binary for Argentinian nationalism than I do for Brazil, but his contention that “the enduring importance of nationalist discourses lay in the fact that there was more than one nationalism” is applicable here. It “makes better sense to interpret nationalism as an ongoing interplay between civic and ethnic/cultural ways of defining the community,” Goebel writes, noting that “it is this enmeshing of various conflicting as well as complementary understandings of nationhood that explains the lasting appeal of nationalist discourses.”⁶³⁹ This dissertation has stressed the notion of community Goebel mentions only indirectly, focusing instead on nationalist conceptions of civic roles vis-à-vis fostering development. The conservative nationalism I have described here, enamored of Brazil’s distinctive qualities in the abstract but wary of popular mobilization, grassroots political action, and anti-imperialist rhetoric, is part and parcel of an essential distrust in democracy that has prevailed among the Brazilian rightwing and powerful interests for decades, if not centuries. Roberto Campos’ nakedly classist invectives against temperamental nationalism exemplify the notion, so common among conservative technocrats, politicians, business leaders, members of the elite and upper-middle class, that the vast

⁶³⁹ Michael Goebel, *Argentina's Partisan Past: Nationalism and the Politics of History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011): 230.

majority of Brazilians are simply too ignorant, uncouth, or uncivilized to exercise meaningful power. The national good is ill-served by entrusting the people with too much influence over their political destiny, according to this logic. Thus, for the conservative nationalist, promises from reformers on the Left to challenge imperialist diktats and the servile national elite enforcing them are fool's gold for the impressionable masses. Captured by a fantastical vision of national assertion and wealth, the average peasant, worker, and callow youth embrace the heated rhetoric of the most shameless populist.

On the Left, by contrast, the charge of *entreguismo* has perhaps been the most common line of attack employed against the conservative enforcers of the status quo throughout the twentieth century. This indictment reflects the enduring thesis among progressives that Brazil's endemic poverty and underdevelopment result from a collaborationist national elite selling out the nation's natural wealth to foreign powers for their own narrow interests. This political argument, pulsing through the body politic since at least the founding of the PCB in the 1920s, began to gain widespread currency in the early 1950s during the elected presidency of Getúlio Vargas. It was not a coincidence that the term "nationalism" became synonymous with an agenda of social, political, economic reforms associated with the Left. On this, I disagree with Michael Goebel, who bemoans the "rather peculiar Argentine problem" of "a movement or a current of ideas called *nacionalismo*, which has been rendered as 'the Nationalist movement' (with an upper-case 'N') in English." According to Goebel, this perpetuates the wrongheaded assumption that the *nacionalistas* expressed a kind of essential, all-encompassing view of Argentine nationalism.⁶⁴⁰ In Brazil, the nationalist movement of the 1950s and early 1960s did indeed become the default avatar of nationalism in Brazil, its policy positions discussed in the press and political debate as, quite simply, nationalist positions. Opponents referred to the "nationalist agenda" as a discernible platform even as they

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 231.

sought to define themselves against it. The notion that Brazilian elites in finance, business, politics, and other seats of institutional power frequently (if not always) place the strategic interests of the United States over Brazil's has been a recurring theme among the broad Brazilian Left for decades. It remains so.

Thus, Right and Left have historically seen their opponents as hindering the nation's economic, social, and political progress for distinctive reasons; for progressives, the purported motivation has been to amass personal power by playing to the masses—the rightwing cases against Getúlio Vargas, João Goulart, and even Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva exemplify this trend—while the conservative agenda has been characterized as in support of capitalist enrichment and American imperialist designs for Latin America. Both accusations are unfair in their own ways, but it is necessary to grapple with their bases in order to understand their political salience and impact.

As the architects of the *Brasil: Nunca Mais* project, a painstaking attempt to document torture and other human rights abuses under the dictatorship, explained to an American reporter in 1987, the 1964 coup led to:

the shelving of nationalist proposals of development . . . Despite periodic minor adjustments, the economic policy imposed by the military depended on two major strategies: the concentration of income and the denationalization of the economy . . . [which] meant opening up all doors to foreign capital through measures such as easy credit and fiscal incentives for the establishment of multinational corporations in Brazil and the removal of obstacles to the repatriation of profits.

For these activists, the regime needed to employ harsh methods against dissidents in order to implement economic reforms that would transform Brazil into an inviting destination for international capital, which included reduced wages, crackdowns on organized labor, subduing peasants, lowering taxes, and cutting social services. Opponents of the new economic model were lumped together in the category of subversives and could be targeted by the regime as a threat to

national order.⁶⁴¹ The self-serving logic of the regime's nationalist claims precluded any criticism of the government from the popular sectors of society affected by new economic policies. The regime's agenda was forcibly presented as synonymous with the national good. To attack the former meant undermining the latter.

Nevertheless, that description of the regime's economic policies misses something important about the dictatorship's relationship to nationalism. The government was incredibly sensitive to the charge of denationalization, such that the regime preserved an important role for the government in propping up domestic industry even as it assiduously courted foreign investment. There was a delicate balance the dictatorship sought between appealing to foreign capital and keeping the Brazilian business community, which had almost universally supported the 1964 coup, happy. In that sense, the dictatorship's relationship to nationalist discourse was slightly more complex than the simple *entreguismo* alleged by its critics. In the same way that the regime sought to convey the image of democratic normalcy through elections and a diverse (if censored) press, it also tried to redefine and reclaim the mantle of nationalism for itself rather than disqualifying it completely. This is a testament to the currency of the nationalist label in twentieth-century Brazilian politics, a valuation that holds true even today.

⁶⁴¹ Lawrence Weschler, "A Miracle, A Universe—II," *The New Yorker*, June 1, 1987, 85.

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1964-66	1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946
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