

George C. A. Boehrer (1921-1967)

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GEORGE C. A. BOEHRER, Professor of History at the University of Kansas, sometime cultural affairs officer of the American embassy in Rio de Janeiro, and a well-known scholar in the field of Luso-Brazilian history, died unexpectedly on December 18, 1967. He was in his forty-sixth year.

A native of New York City, George Boehrer was educated at Boston College and at The Catholic University of America. He earned an M.A. in history at the latter institution, with a thesis on Brazilian positivism, and also a Ph.D., with a dissertation on republican propaganda during the last years of the Brazilian monarchy.

Dr. Boehrer was a remarkably effective teacher, and his first teaching assignment was at Dunbarton College, Washington, D. C. Subsequently, he taught at Mexico City College, Marquette University, Georgetown University, the University of Wisconsin in Pôrto Alegre, the University of Maryland, and, from 1965 until his untimely death, the University of Kansas. At Kansas the impact of his presence, despite the brevity of his tenure, was very great. Through his efforts, and because of his enthusiasm, Kansas acquired substantial library holdings of Luso-Brazilian materials, and at the same time committed itself to the development of Luso-Brazilian studies. It is idle to speculate what would have been achieved at Lawrence if Dr. Boehrer had lived, but Dr. Boehrer's fellow Luso-Brazilianists will remember him in this connection with gratitude.

He was in charge of the Brazilian history section of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* (volumes XIX through XXVII), and he served as section editor for *The American Historical Review* (October 1958 through October 1960). His first article in the *HAHR* appeared in January 1958, "Variant Versions of José Bonifácio's 'Plan for the Civilization of the Brazilian Indians'"; his second, "The Church and the Overthrow of the Brazilian Monarchy," appears posthumously in this issue of the *Review*.

Professor Boehrer's doctoral dissertation was translated into Portuguese and published in Rio de Janeiro by the Ministério da Edu-

cação e Cultura in 1954 under the title *Da Monarquia à República*. In 1955 he published a translation of Costa Brochado's essay on Portuguese history which appeared in English as *Fatima in the Light of History*. This was Dr. Boehrer's way of thanking the author, the secretary of the National Assembly of Portugal, for having put the parliamentary archives in the Palácio de São Bento at his disposal. There were other studies in *The Americas*, the *Inter-American Review of Bibliography*, the *Luso-Brazilian Review*, the *Revista de História* of São Paulo, and the *Journal of Inter-American Studies*. His stimulating study, "Some Brazilian Proposals to the Cortes Gerais, 1821-1823, on the Indian Problem," was published in the *Actas* of the Third International Colloquium on Luso-Brazilian Studies (1960 [i.e. 1962]). In 1963 he published a critical edition of José Bonifácio's "Apontamentos para a civilização dos índios bravos do Reino de Brazil" (Lisbon) and "The Brazilian Republican Revolution: Old and New Views," in *Uma experiência pioneira (Pôrto Alegre)*.

There were many facets to Dr. Boehrer's personality. I was always impressed with his rugged honesty, which led him to attack established views and to espouse lost causes. And there was a sentimental streak in him that made me feel that he did indeed understand the Portuguese and Brazilians, that his concerns for the cultures that he studied were not merely academic but also human. To some people, his at times exasperating blend of revolutionary ideas and conservatism was looked upon with a certain disbelief, but he found it hard to shape his life upon a single ideology.

We who happened to be in Rio when he was the cultural attaché will be grateful to Dr. Boehrer for his unfailing kindness toward graduate students from American universities who sought him out for comfort and guidance, and toward his colleagues from the United States who were in Brazil for pleasure or for business. We will remember with *saudade* his home in the "Favela Americana" of the Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas, the setting for an exciting salon that brought together American and Brazilian intellectuals and artists.

The volume of proceedings of the October 1967 conference on Brazil, to be published by the University of South Carolina, will be dedicated to the memory of Artur Hehl Neiva, Dr. Boehrer's friend of many years, who preceded him in death, and to Dr. Boehrer himself. This is another tribute to a man who left his mark on Brazilian studies in the United States and will not soon be forgotten.