

INTRODUCTION

TROPICAL DELIGHTS AND TORTURE CHAMBERS, OR IMAGINING BRAZIL IN THE UNITED STATES

The rains grow heavier. Soon everything soaks through. The rivulets in the primeval forest fill up. The patter of rain is everywhere. We must be getting home.

Are these people cannibals? To us they are gentle friends. — **Harald Schultz**, “Indians of the Amazon Darkness,” **National Geographic**, May 1964

For those Americans coming of age during World War II, Carmen Miranda personified Brazil. Her effervescent personality, ostentatious costumes, six-inch platform shoes, jangling jewelry, and ubiquitous headgear of turbans and fruit baskets projected a zany, carefree performer from an exotic tropical paradise. “Brazil’s ambassador” to the United States represented the continent-sized country as a place filled with happy-go-lucky people who engaged in unending, ebullient Carnival celebrations set in a South American Eden. In the late 1950s, the Franco-Brazilian film production of *Black Orpheus* shifted international representations of Brazilian Carnival to the Rio de Janeiro’s hillside slums. Carmen Miranda was white, originally hailing from Portugal, even though her American audiences may have read her as an exotic Latina who was somewhat racially and ethnically different. The cast of *Black Orpheus*, however, was unmistakably of African heritage and represented a different image of Brazil. Based on a romantic rendering of the Orpheus-Eurydice legend with the pulsating rhythms of Carnival festivities woven into the plot, *Black Orpheus* is arguably the film that most shaped international visions of Brazil in the twentieth century.¹ The breathtaking shots of Rio’s Guanabara Bay captured from atop the surrounding hills and a magical soundtrack also introduced European and American audiences to bossa nova, a new musical style, and portrayed a country where racial tensions did not seem to underlie day-to-day interactions. In *Black Orpheus*, Rio de Janeiro (and by extension Brazil) is a lyrical land of amazing landscapes, majestic sunrises, and, yet again, fun-loving people.

In the early 1960s a middle-class beach beauty captured in the song “The Girl from Ipanema” joined Carmen Miranda and Rio’s dark-skinned slum dwellers as an alluring presentation of an imagined tropical sexuality. For the U.S. audience for travelogues, *National Geographic* spreads and popular articles on Brazil, the ever-present backdrop of expansive Amazonian jungles, remote uncivilized Indians, and wild and lascivious Carnival celebrations framed notions of Brazil.² With a “tall, tanned, young and lovely” girl from Ipanema in the foreground slowly sambaing on Rio’s sizzling sands, bossa nova offered a soundtrack to this fantasy that was smooth, syncopated, enticing, and inviting.

Seductive women and expansive Amazonian jungles were not the only images of Brazil cast onto the international landscape. Brazil was, indeed, a colorful country, but in the early 1960s U.S. Cold Warriors feared that it was ominously close to becoming “too red.” The victory of the Cuban guerrilla movement in 1959 injected new energy and direction into Latin American nation-

alist and anti-imperialist movements. In Brazil, leaders of peasant leagues in the Northeast, sectors of the student movement, some junior officers and rank-and-file military, militant labor activists, and leftist intellectuals all found inspiration in the intransigence of the new Cuban regime that stood up to Washington's imperial arrogance in Latin America.³

To those in Brazil and abroad who favored the political, economic, and social status quo, a twist of political events in August 1961 caused particular alarm. President Jânio Quadros, the mercurial right-leaning politician, suddenly resigned after having served only seven months of his term. Next in line to succeed him was Vice President João Goulart, the leader of the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (Brazilian Labor Party, PTB), who had been elected to the second highest office in the land that year on a split ticket. Quadros's resignation stunned the nation and panicked right-wing civilians and generals alike, who attempted to block his left-leaning populist successor from assuming the presidency. Military maneuvers met resistance and collapsed. Goulart took office under a compromise agreement that limited his power as president.

The next two and a half years were a political and economic rollercoaster for Brazil. Goulart promoted a series of nationalist reforms, including a limit on foreign companies' profit remittances, and a modest land reform. Labor, peasants, students, and the left mobilized to demand radical social change. Goulart, himself a large landowner, was far from interested in leading a socialist revolution in Brazil, yet the Kennedy and Johnson administrations withdrew support from the leftward-moving federal government. At the same time, Washington funded the election of regional politicians opposed to the Goulart government and channeled foreign aid to governors sympathetic to U.S. interests.⁴ Inflation soared, and conservative sectors of the middle class, backed by an equally conservative wing of the Catholic Church, mobilized against Goulart's rule. The increasingly polarized political situation provided the necessary conditions for the armed forces to stage a military coup on March 31, 1964. President Johnson was prepared to intervene directly to back the insurgent military leaders, but this proved unnecessary. Clandestine CIA and FBI operations, diplomatic overtures by U.S. ambassador Lincoln Gordon, and logistical backup by the Pentagon offered the required assurances that Washington would support the military's seizure of power. On April 2, 1964, at Gordon's insistence, Johnson recognized the interim government. Twenty-one years of military rule had begun.

The United States press gave near-unanimous support to the Johnson administration's lightning-speed recognition of the new military government

and the coup leaders' anticommunist agenda. Reporters largely ignored the massive arrests of regime opponents, dubbing the change of power a "bloodless coup" that had avoided a civil war.⁵ News from Brazil gave an uninformed U.S. public the impression that the new government had defended democracy from a communist assault. This notion merely reinforced the pervasive public sentiment in which 80 percent of U.S. citizens in 1964, an all-time high, feared communist threats when polled about foreign policy issues.⁶ Very few in the United States protested the 1964 military coup. Even such outspoken senators as Wayne Morse of Oregon, who already questioned Johnson's Vietnam War policies, congratulated the president for his quick recognition of the new government, heralded the change in regime, dismissed any accusations of U.S. intervention, and denied that the military had installed a dictatorship.⁷ News coverage of the political events in Brazil soon disappeared from the front pages of U.S. newspapers and magazines.

In the spring of 1974, ten years after the military seized power in Brazil, thousands crowded into New York City's Madison Square Garden for "An Evening with Dr. Salvador Allende" to protest the September 11, 1973, military coup d'état in Chile. The homage to the recently deposed socialist president featured the folk singer Phil Ochs and a cameo performance by Bob Dylan. The eclectic public of political activists and an array of music fans grew silent as fifteen members of the Living Theater Collective quietly walked on stage. Dressed in black, the actors formed a half circle, sat with their legs crossed in the semi-lotus position, and began to chant softly. As seconds slowly slid by, the sound of their individual tones merged into a collective drone that calmed the audience and focused their attention on the performance unfolding in a slow-motioned pantomime. Almost imperceptibly, one of the actors, of obvious African heritage, gradually rose and began to look fearfully to the left and right, his dreadlocks whipping in the air as his head moved slowly back and forth in apparent panic. At a snail's pace, two other actors menacingly approached. As if caught in a silent black-and-white movie running at half its normal speed, the two men gradually lunged at him, grabbed him by the arms, and dragged him across the stage. With Tai-chi precision, they struck him with make-believe blows until he offered no resistance. The assailants stripped off his clothes and bound his hands to his feet. Sliding a wooden pole between the cruxes of his tightly bound extremities, they lifted him off the floor and perched the pole on two wooden sawhorses, leaving him hanging upside down, naked and exposed. For the next several minutes, the audience witnessed the pantomimed infliction of electric shock to the

youth's anus and genital area. Each surge of imaginary voltage produced by a simulated army field generator sent convulsions through the actor's body. Howls of pain punctuated each administration of electric current. After the tenth jolt, the youth's body hung limp and defeated.

Prominent anti-Vietnam War peace activists had organized that night's political and cultural event. The sweeping arrests of left-wing supporters of Allende, the mass detentions in Chile's national soccer stadium, and the reports of large numbers of executions of leftists had shocked international public opinion and generated hundreds of solidarity activities throughout the United States. Although that evening's dramatic symbolic reenactment of the torture of a political prisoner underlined a method employed by the new Chilean regime, the Living Theater had actually developed the dramatic scene to denounce the ongoing gross violation of human rights taking place in Brazil.

The Living Theater had arrived somewhat naively in Brazil in 1970 to perform their experimental productions. The following year, police arrested them on trumped-up marijuana possession charges and expelled the group from the country. When the troupe returned to the United States, they joined a nascent national movement to isolate the Brazilian military regime. While few criticized the Brazilian military when it came to power in 1964, by 1969 a cluster of academics, clergy, Brazilian exiles, and political activists had resolved to employ diverse means to educate the American public about the political situation in that distant land and to mobilize opposition to the dictatorship. As we will see, five years later they had been relatively successful. Furthermore, the strategies, tactics, and approaches they employed to raise the issue of human rights violations in Brazil served as the basis for all similar future work related to Latin America carried out in the United States. Many at Madison Square Garden may not have had a clear notion of Latin American geography or even details about political events unfolding to the far south as a wave of repressive regimes took power in the 1970s. Nonetheless, by 1974 most informed U.S. political activists, especially those involved in anti-Vietnam War protests, had developed at least a vague association between the Brazilian government and its torture chambers.

The events in Chile further expanded the sensibility about human rights violations in Latin America. Almost immediately after the 1973 coup, dozens of solidarity groups sprang up in most major U.S. cities. In subsequent years, tens of thousands of activists protested Pinochet's authoritarian measures. Revelations about the involvement of the White House, the CIA, and U.S. multinational corporations in the destabilization of the Allende govern-

ment merely reinforced a growing cynicism that had mushroomed during the Vietnam War about the abusive powers of U.S. foreign policymakers. Other military takeovers in Uruguay and Argentina mobilized similar concerns about the decline of basic human rights in South America. Soon after Jimmy Carter entered the White House in 1977, 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. By the late 1970s, human rights activists had imposed a new yardstick for measuring Washington’s Latin American foreign policy. Over the next decade, national solidarity committees with hundreds of local affiliates supported the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and the Salvadoran and Guatemalan insurgencies. They organized massive demonstrations, direct-action sit-ins, and other protests against the Reagan administration’s complicity with the counterrevolutionary forces in Central America. According to one analyst, “more than one hundred thousand U.S. citizens mobilized to contest the chief foreign policy initiative of the most popular U.S. president in decades.”⁸

We Cannot Remain Silent developed out of a conversation at the Latin American Studies Association Conference in 1998. Between sessions, a young left-wing Brazilian historian shared his frustrations about how Brazilianists (as U.S. scholars who study Brazil are either affectionately or ironically labeled) had a rather superficial understanding of his country’s history and culture. What’s more, he added, they had done little to oppose the military dictatorship. This, I knew, was not the case, and so for the next hour we talked about some of the many activities that this book documents. This lack of knowledge about the international political campaigns conducted in the early 1970s concerning Brazil convinced me to write an article on the topic. After completing two research forays into the Brazilian Foreign Ministry (Itamaraty) archives in Brasília, I realized I had enough material for a book. As I presented portions of my research at Brazilian universities and at the Brazilian Historical Association, I also perceived a pervasive impression held by most Brazilian intellectuals about a supposed inaction of their U.S. counterparts in response to the military regime’s repressive rule. There are several reasons why this notion is so widespread.

First, as international campaigns developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the dictatorship censored the Brazilian media. Scattered news did appear in the press, many times in the forms of chauvinistic editorials or nation-

alist diatribes that denounced “international communist conspiracies” to defame the country. Yet unless one was directly linked to an underground organization involved in disseminating abroad news about torture and repression, even the most informed person could only glean from the media a vague sense of the dimension of international campaigns against the regime. A second reason that Brazilians knew little about efforts in the United States against the military dictatorship rests on a long-standing and complex relationship with the giant to the north. Although traditionally the Brazilian elites looked to Europe and later to the United States for cultural affirmation, a strong anti-American (that is, anti-United States) current ran through the Brazilian academic world in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, as nationalist, anti-imperialist, and Marxist perspectives framed geopolitical and macroeconomic analyses. Many, if not most, students who passed through Brazilian universities during this period considered the United States responsible for unequal and unjust international economic relations and Latin America’s ongoing underdevelopment. Brazilian opponents of military rule argued that the U.S. government had been intimately involved in Goulart’s overthrow years before scholars got access to classified U.S. documents to confirm this allegation.⁹

To left-wing opponents of the military regime, U.S. imperialism was the international enemy and loyal backer of the generals in power. In an atmosphere that disdained U.S. policies worldwide, most people assumed that citizens of that country agreed with the Washington establishment’s overseas initiatives. Even though many Brazilian youth admired U.S. music and culture and the media covered stories of the social and political rebellions that rocked the country, politicized students and left-wing militants largely lumped together the U.S. government and its citizens as one unified entity that supported the Brazilian and Latin American status quo. Reflective of this thin appreciation for the subtleties of U.S. culture and society was the fact that the University of São Paulo, at the time the nation’s leading institute of higher education, did not offer any courses on U.S. history. Although most left-leaning academics considered U.S. imperialism as the mainstay of the regime, few bothered to study seriously an international adversary that so loyally supported the dictatorship.

Clandestine operations by the CIA in Latin America did not help matters. A common assumption in the 1960s was that the U.S. foreign aid programs, such as the Alliance for Progress, were saturated with intelligence gatherers. Brazilianists, like other Americans in Brazil, were on the CIA’s payroll, so it

was commonly thought. That assumption made it difficult to imagine that U.S. scholars studying the country could share many of the political values or perspectives of their Brazilian colleagues.

Most U.S. scholars who have written about the importance of the Carter administration's human rights discourse in the late 1970s mention briefly the groundbreaking work by activists against torture in Brazil in the early 1970s but emphasize the flurry of organizing related to reports of torture and repression in Chile after the 1973 military takeover.¹⁰ Thus, the political scientist Lars Schoultz rightly argues, "Human rights conditions in these nations [of Latin America], particularly Brazil and later Chile, were the first to attract the attention of U.S. human rights activists."¹¹ The human rights specialist David P. Forsythe concurs, emphasizing that "individuals associated with the National Council of Churches argued that it was their concern with torture in Brazil and American funding for foreign police training which, with the support of Senators Church, Abourezk, and others, had really started the renewed U.S. concern for human rights between 1969 and 1971."¹²

Following the lead of these scholars, *We Cannot Remain Silent* documents and analyzes in detail the activities of dedicated church and left-wing activists, exiled Brazilians, and Latin Americanist scholars who played a major role in introducing the issue of human rights in Latin America into the national political debate. In Europe, a parallel campaign against torture and human rights violations in Brazil (and, later, other countries of Latin America) developed during this same period, but that movement is beyond this work's scope. In both the United States and Europe, Brazilian political exiles, allied at times with left-wing sectors of the Catholic Church and other forces, waged a relentless campaign to isolate the Brazilian government.¹³ The diverse clusters of activists that organized against the dictatorship in multiple ways formed in effect what the political scientists Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have termed "transnational advocacy networks." Given the clandestine nature of much of the domestic resistance to the Brazilian generals, especially after 1968, these linkages did not follow exactly along the lines of the "voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange" outlined by Keck and Sikkink.¹⁴ International contacts were at times precarious and information transmission often problematic, but the ability of activists to use the symbolism of the tortured body to elicit support and activate international political leverage proved at times to be a successful strategy.

The call for moral accountability of U.S. government policy also remained at the core of the campaigns that questioned Washington's complicity with the authoritarian regime. The tactics and strategies that activists working on Brazil employed to denounce torture and repression in Brazil developed and expanded, helping to shape people's responses to the political situation in Chile. These efforts initiated a gradual shift in U.S. official and public opinion and provided a basis for much broader campaigns against repression, torture, and disappearance in Latin America after the Chilean coup. Facing a hostile White House that overtly backed military regimes throughout Latin America during the Nixon-Ford years (1969–76), activists targeted Congress to enact measures limiting U.S. government support for repressive regimes abroad.¹⁵ Early legislative victories included language in the Foreign Assistance Acts of 1973 and 1974 mandating the president to “deny any economic or military assistance to the government of any foreign country which practices the internment or imprisonment of that country's citizens for political purposes.”¹⁶ In 1975, the Harkin Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act gave Congress the power to limit U.S. economic assistance to “any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”¹⁷ The following year, Congress expanded this restriction to include military aid. After Jimmy Carter adopted and popularized human rights as a guiding criterion for U.S. foreign policy during the 1976 electoral campaign, what had once been a somewhat isolated political critique of U.S. foreign policy by leftists and certain liberals suddenly became part of national discussions about the direction of government policies abroad.

We Cannot Remain Silent also examines the genesis of what the historian Kenneth Cmiel has observed as the mainstreaming of human rights discourse regarding Latin America in the United States in the late 1970s.¹⁸ As Lars Schoultz has pointed out, “The ‘Brazilianists’ taught the rest of the human rights cadre everything they needed to know to get started.”¹⁹ The building of a national network of activists with international connections, the documentation of systematic torture and repression, the public positioning of prominent figures against human rights abuses, and the patient building of contacts with congressional allies and the press all contributed to the forging of an image of Brazil under military rule as a land of torture and terror. They also underlined the sentiment that the U.S. government should not have supported the regime. Graphic tales of the treatment of political prisoners created powerful symbols for a discussion about political repres-

sion in Latin America under authoritarian military regimes backed by the U.S. government.

For readers unfamiliar with late-twentieth-century Brazilian history, understanding the nature and practice of the military dictatorship can be challenging. Throughout the book, I have offered brief synopses of political, economic, and social developments in Brazil that clarify the context in which activists in Brazil and the United States carried out their work. Several chapters also present somewhat detailed considerations of the debates and discussions within the U.S. and Brazilian governments about the internal Brazilian political situation, U.S.–Brazilian relations, and the international human rights campaign. Understanding how policymakers understood and responded to changes during the period enables the reader to comprehend the shifts in the approaches activists adopted. Because the U.S. media played a crucial role in shaping U.S. public opinion and in offering the uninformed reader news and information about Brazil, the book also considers how coverage changed over time and how activists attempted to influence the content of that coverage.

Finally, I have tried to humanize what could have been a somewhat sterile analysis of political campaigns and foreign policy shifts by revealing something of the lives of the nearly hundred people whom I interviewed for this book. Everyone I contacted immediately agreed to my request to be interviewed. Some seemed surprised, but were delighted, that someone was interested in telling their stories. Because many of the U.S. actors in this narrative had lived, studied, worked, or done research in Brazil, brief accounts of their interests or involvement in the country help to clarify why they became involved in political activism. Likewise, catching a glimpse of the life histories of those Brazilians who ended up as activists in the United States not only explains their commitment to the cause but also reveals how opposition to the military regime developed in Brazil. In deference to a long-standing Brazilian tradition, I have generally referred to Brazilians by their full or first names, while usually doing the opposite for the U.S. protagonists of this story.

No doubt many Brazilian readers will be pleasantly surprised to learn the extent to which some people in the United States attempted to raise awareness about the political situation in Brazil during the military regime. However, scholars of U.S. public opinion and foreign policy present a rather pessimistic portrait of the public's knowledge of or interest in Latin America.²⁰ Ignorance, indifference, arrogance about the innate superiority of the United

States, and even an abysmally low level of understanding about Latin America in Congress and at the State Department have all been obstacles for developing successful human rights campaigns in the United States. As one North American historian who has worked on Brazil for the last four decades commented after a presentation of my research, “I was in Brazil in the 1970s, and no one knew or even cared about Brazil.”²¹ There is a kernel of truth in that observation. For all of the efforts mobilized by academics, activists, and others concerning Brazil in the early 1970s, Chile after 1973, and Central America in the 1980s, those involved seemed to be battling against certain apathy about international affairs among the U.S. public, especially when a foreign country seemed remote and apparently had little impact on individuals’ lives. To a great extent, the groundswell of opposition to the Vietnam War was directly related to the realization by millions that they or their loved ones might have to serve (and perhaps die) in Southeast Asia in an increasingly senseless war. In this respect, Brazil was and remains distant and indistinct to most Americans. Activists described in this volume had to develop campaigns in the context of a prevalent self-satisfied and chauvinist attitude that considered the United States the beacon of democracy worldwide. They chose to point to the contradictions. If the United States was the paradigm of freedom and justice, how could its government support a regime that tortured its citizens? Why, in the name of democracy, did the White House back a brutal military government? As the impact of virulent anticommunist discourse faded in the midst of the Vietnam War movement, it became easier to challenge aspects of U.S. policy, namely, support for a repressive regime that seemed out of sync with an idealized notion of the nation.

Those who teach Brazilian history and culture constantly face the fact that most people with whom we come into contact still think that Rio de Janeiro is the capital of Buenos Aires, that Brazilians speak Spanish as their first language, or that the country is largely populated by primitive aborigines and man-eating tropical fish, to mention only a few of the misconceptions we have encountered over the years. Carmen Miranda and the Girl from Ipanema have largely faded from the stable of stereotypes only to be replaced by other equally insipid images.

Likewise, some of my Brazilian friends and colleagues, especially those with a historic antipathy toward U.S. foreign policy, have often surprised me with naive and unilateral conceptions of the United States, even though on the whole Brazilian intellectuals are currently far more informed about the United States than their American counterparts are about Brazil. Such is the unequal and unbalanced international relationship of culture, power,

and information. Yet if the United States remains culturally, politically, and economically hegemonic in the early twenty-first century, then all the more reason to understand historically how individuals living in the United States, yet motivated by the political situation in Brazil and the rest of Latin America, attempted to chip away at some of that endemic isolation.



PRÓLOGO

“Era um país subdesenvolvido”

It was an underdeveloped country

**Carlos Lyra and Francisco de Assis,
“Canção do subdesenvolvido,” 1962**

Brazilian peasant mobilization, early 1960s. ACERVO ÚLTIMA HORA, ARQUIVO PÚBLICO DO ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO.

Martinha Arruda could not pinpoint the first time she heard a bossa nova tune, but it was sometime in junior high school in 1958 or 1959. Later, in high school, her best friend was a talented singer from a well-to-do family, whose circle of friends included many of the artists who would shape Brazilian music for the next decades. “My friend’s house was a gathering place. She would invite everyone over, young people who were just beginning to sing and compose.”¹ In that informal, bohemian atmosphere of Rio de Janeiro and in the mountainside vacation town of Petropolis, where her friend’s family had a summer home, Martinha spent many leisurely hours learning new songs and joining in with others to render old favorites. There she met singers and musicians who were transforming Brazilian sound.

Martinha was descended on her mother’s side from a distinguished family, but by the 1950s her family possessed only modest means. Moreover, her mother, Lina Penna Sattimini, a vivacious and independent woman, had separated from her husband and gotten a job working in the United States, entrusting her five children to the care of their father and the oversight of a rather strict, though loving, grandmother. Lacking a traditional middle-class home life and possessing a passion for performance, the retreat to her friend’s house provided Martinha with an idyllic adolescence. As she conjured up those years, Martinha remembered her teens spent in endless hours of music and laughter as friends and acquaintances gathered to play the guitar, sing songs, read poetry, and discuss art, theater, dance, movies, and culture.

As scholars have pointed out, bossa nova’s soft, soothing melodies and romantic lyrics in part captured the optimism of the late 1950s, when Juscelino Kubitschek, a confident and modernizing political leader, offered the nation a new capital city, Brasília, for a country that could be transformed by leaping fifty years forward in five.² Brazil had the potential to overcome backwardness and underdevelopment and fulfill its destiny. The uniqueness of the bossa nova sound and its immediate international success merely confirmed other possible conquests, as Kubitschek renovated the nationalism that former president Getúlio Vargas had so successfully channeled for his own political ends during the previous three decades. The “petróleo é nosso” (the oil is ours) campaign to nationalize foreign oil companies in the early 1950s, championed by students, the left, and an array of patriotic forces, led to other calls for state control over the country’s resources in the late 1950s. If Brazil could only master its own wealth, it could actually become the country of the future that Stefan Zweig, the European Jewish writer who had moved

in exile to Brazil in 1941, had envisioned for the nation a decade and a half before.³

Now a retired Presbyterian minister living in Cranston, Rhode Island, Jovelino Ramos also remembered the late 1950s as an exciting time. “1958 was a very political year,” he recalled. “It was the year that Francisco Julião started the Ligas Camponeses [Peasant Leagues] in the Northeast. At the end of the year, Fidel Castro took power in Cuba. Pius XII died, and John XXIII was elected pope. Juscelino was president, and Brasília was being built . . . And it was the first time that Brazil was the World Cup champion.”⁴ In 1958, Jovelino, who hailed from the state of Minas Gerais, was studying at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Campinas, an hour or so from the growing industrial metropolis of São Paulo. “Before I finished the last year of the theological course, I went to work in a factory. It was the period of the worker-priests in France. As seminarians and Protestant pastors, we wanted to have that experience.” After finishing his degree, Jovelino moved to Rio and became involved in the União Cristã de Estudantes do Brasil (Brazilian Student Christian Union), an ecumenical movement of Protestant students. “Many things were happening. The students were in the streets. . . . and Cuba began to dominate the political scene.”

After completing his degree in theology, Jovelino was offered a scholarship to study at the Yale Divinity School. He spent the next two years there, where he met and married his first wife, Myra. “When I returned to Brazil in the middle of 1962, Brazil had changed entirely. Jânio Quadros had resigned the presidency, and the right did not want [vice president] João Goulart to take office. This was the period of the rise of [Leonel] Brizola,⁵ who inspired part of the army that forced the opposition to respect the Constitution.” Many other changes had taken place as well. Protest music had joined bossa nova as a popular musical genre among many students and middle-class youth. The Alliance for Progress, Kennedy’s initiative to offer a U.S. government-sponsored Latin American development plan that also challenged the spread of communism, was entering Brazil in full force. In response, young engagé artists satirized the Alliance with the song “Canção do subdesenvolvido” (Song of the Underdeveloped). It became the unofficial anthem of Centro Popular de Cultura (People’s Cultural Center), one of the left-leaning student movement’s initiatives to link the university to the poor and dispossessed.⁶ The tune parodied Washington’s economic model for Brazil, criticized U.S. cultural influences, and ridiculed the paternalistic inferiority embedded in the notion of the Alliance for Progress’s plan for Brazil.

Jovelino also noted that many Protestant students with whom he had worked before departing to the United States had become leftists. Some were in Ação Popular (Popular Action), others were in the pro-Soviet Communist Party, others in the pro-Chinese Communist Party of Brazil, but the majority was not linked to any political party. They participated in elections, supported left-wing governors, and passionately argued for a comprehensive agrarian reform. “There were lots of marches and rallies supporting agrarian reform,” Jovelino remembered.

With a masters’ degree from Yale in theology and social ethics, Jovelino accepted his local presbytery’s invitation to lead the effort to organize a new church in Ipanema. “Many of the students who had been liberal when I went to the United States, and were now leftists, came to my church. On Saturday evenings they crowded into my house in Santa Teresa to socialize and sometimes to have planning meetings. Without choosing to, I became a kind of pastor for left-wing students.” Pope John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963) quickly became a manifesto for those Catholics pushing for greater commitment to social change. “As engaged Protestants we welcomed it. It deepened our theological perspective to deal with social concerns and relate to the popular reform movement of time,” Jovelino explained.

The pope’s pronouncements for peace and social justice also inspired Marcos Arruda, Martinha’s older brother. As the oldest of five children, he suffered the most with his parents’ incessant fights and their emotion-laden separation. At the time, Marcos thought that the only way to reunite his parents would be to become a priest. Against his mother’s wishes, he insisted on studying in a seminary. “My initial motivation was the separation of my parents,” Marcos confessed many years later.⁷ “It was a gesture to renounce everything that I loved in life, a kind of test. I spent two and a half years there, but I couldn’t stand it. It was a militaristic life, yet I learned a lot. I studied, and I built a universe of friendships that has lasted to this day, but I suffered a lot.” Marcos finally left the seminary and passed the university entrance exam in geology. “I started to work with the JUC, the Juventude Universitária Católica (Catholic University Youth). It was the turning point in my life. Through the JUC, I acquired a social conscience. I started to question my own position within [the field of] geology, so I studied the political and social aspects of geology. I tried to think of ways to enrich the country and change its social structure.”

Jovelino and Marcos were not unique in the search to link their religious upbringing with a commitment to social justice. An ecumenical spirit, reinforced by Vatican II reforms and the convergence of sectors of the Catholic

and Protestant churches with the nationalist, development-oriented movement, supported structural economic reforms to close the gap between the rich and the poor. The optimism of the time also produced a new political organization, *Ação Popular* (Popular Action), that grew out of various Catholic youth and student organizations and moved toward Marxism, coalescing left-leaning Protestants along the way.⁸ In the early 1960s, *Ação Popular* offered a progressive alternative to the pro-Soviet Communist Party, the Maoist Communist Party of Brazil, and various Trotskyist groupings. Many radical religious youth, as Jovelino noted, declined left-wing political party affiliation, identifying themselves as unattached leftists. Others, like Marcos, who rejected the moderation of the Communist Party, eventually joined *Ação Popular*.

As Marcos mapped out a political program demanding that, just like Brazil's oil, the country's mineral deposits should remain in national hands through state control, and Jovelino offered his apartment in the hillside neighborhood of Santa Teresa for Saturday meetings of radicalized youth, Brady Tyson, a young Methodist missionary from Texas, was setting up house with his wife and five children in São Paulo. Like Jovelino Ramos, he was a part of the progressive ecumenical movement that understood that the message of the Gospel to require active involvement in eliminating poverty and injustice. His mission in Brazil also grew out of a long commitment to fight for social and racial equality in the United States. Among the politicized Brazilian youth with whom Brady worked in the Methodist Church was Anivaldo Padilha, affectionately known as Niva. His family had migrated from Minas Gerais in the 1950s and found a new spiritual and social network in the Methodist Church.⁹ Niva became active in the youth movement and eventually headed the national organization. When he was a student at the University of São Paulo, he, like Marcos Arruda, joined *Ação Popular*.¹⁰

In 1963, if one were to have plotted a chart of the interlocking networks that linked Martinha, Marcos, Jovelino, Brady, and Niva, one would have probably found one or two, rather than six, degrees of separation among them. (As Niva once commented to me, "It's not that this is a small world; it's just that the left travels in small circles.") A year before the military came to power, they all shared in the cultural, social, and political optimism about their country's future. Brazil, an "underdeveloped" giant, held great possibilities for social and economic transformation. Development, however, needed to come with social justice. Certainly, at the time, none of them could have imagined that ten years later they would all find themselves in the United States participating in diverse ways in a decentralized and dis-

persed movement against the military dictatorship. In part, this book is the story of their paths toward activism in the United States. They and many other Brazilians and their allies in the United States will slip in and out of this narrative. In New York, Washington, Berkeley, and other cities across the United States, they joined a handful of clergy, academics, students, and activists to denounce the use of torture and the violation of human rights in Brazil (and later in other parts of Latin America). They employed creative tactics and invented new ways to educate the U.S. public and influence Washington politicians about the situation in Brazil. As a group, they remain to this day extremely unassuming about their successes as they took on a military regime supported by an ostensibly omnipotent world power. Yet their seemingly modest efforts eventually helped influence a shift (at least for a time) in U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America.