

Growing Up in the Land of the Future:
Youth Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1920-1985

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A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History

University of Virginia
May 2014

Acknowledgements

I'd first like to thank the dream team: Thomas Klubock, Roquinaldo Ferreira, Eli Carter, and especially my advisor and mentor, Brian Owensby. They dedicated more time, effort, expertise, and sage advice to this project than anyone else. Every fault in this project is mine alone. Every strength and good idea was made better by their input.

Many other people have commented on this dissertation, its component parts, and its immediate antecedents, each providing new and helpful suggestions. Thank you to Case Watkins, Nir Avissar, Oscar Ax, Darien Davis, Jossianna Arroyo, Seth Garfield, Courtney Campbell, Aiala Levy, Christian Tobler, Daniel Gough, Jason Kaufman, and all the South Atlantic public humanists at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, especially Hector Amaya.

In Brazil, help came in many different forms, and there I have many debts of gratitude. Ivana Stolz deserves the first mention, for helping with logistics, for taking me to Vassouras, and perhaps most of all for being mother to my favorite Brazilian child, Laura. Laura makes me confident in the future of Brazil. I'm also grateful for those who simply made life happier: Leticia Assunção, Davi Araújo, Katherine Brodbeck, Michelle Peria, and all the *chácara* crew, but especially Sam Murphy, Guilherme Santos Mello, Gilberto Castilho Poloto and, by extension, Celene Dos Santos. Many archivists gave me hours and hours of their time, but Marina Rebelo at Arquivo Edgard Leuenroth deserves special mention for also giving me a lot of good ideas!

At the University of Virginia, many friends and colleagues have provided the zest of life to get me through this long journey. Lenard Berlanstein and Sophie Rosenfeld provided both warmth and advice at crucial junctures. The friendship of Molly Scudder, Derek King, Emily Senefeld, Alec Hickmott, John T.R. Terry, and Ryan Bibler has seen me through thick and thin. I'd particularly like to thank those dear friends who have also given me lots of scholarly support and have always been willing to babble about Brazil with me, and I mean for *hours* upon *hours* at a time: Mary Hicks, Chris Cornelius, and Elizabeth Kaknes, you're my favs.

Elliott Young, Mathieu Raillard, Amy Caldwell da Farias, and Rich Peck at Lewis & Clark College, and John W.F. Dulles at the University of Texas, instilled in me a passion for inquiry. This dissertation would not exist without them.

Some of my most essential aid in this project came via telephone, in long talks with Laura Battle, Olivia Wycoff, my mother Elissa Daniels, and my numerous siblings, whom I lovingly thank.

Evan Robert Farr, thank you for growing up in the land of the future with me.

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Clifton Daniels, Jr. For Mexican trains, for trivia games, for everything.

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Introduction

In 1940, the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig declared Brazil “The Land of the Future”, echoing a common trope among observers of Brazilian society. The expression could well be the country’s motto for the twentieth century, though not in any straightforward way. “The future” was rhetorically diffuse, constantly referenced by Brazilian intellectuals of all creeds. It was in the future that Brazil’s glory awaited, when the country would overcome the limitations imposed by its colonial past and achieve its rightful place as a leader among nations. The quest for futurity permeated myriad dimensions of Brazilian culture and politics in the twentieth century. The century began with a wave of messianic movements and the embrace of scientistic ideologies like Comtean positivism and eugenics. By the mid-century, exploration of the Amazonian interior and the construction of the new high-modernist capital Brasília attempted to tame and direct the latent power of the country’s vastness. And throughout the century, this future-looking was marked by a perpetual fascination with modernity and drive for progress, development, and anything new. As historian Jerry Dávila has written, “It’s hard to imagine a country with a deeper sense of making itself.”¹ And yet, as the years passed, the future seemed to forever remain just out of reach, spawning the new aphorism, “Brazil, the land of the future. And it always will be.”² The yearning for the future that never arrived allowed successive generations of Brazilians the freedom to reimagine and redefine what the long-awaited future would look like.

¹ Jerry Dávila, *Dictatorship in South America* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 20.

² Millôr Fernandes, *Millôr Definitivo: A Bíblia do Caos* (Porto Alegre, Brazil: L&PM Editores, 1994), 52.

Lee Edelman has written that the future lies at the heart of all politics. Whether conservative or revolutionary, all political beliefs entail a plan for how life and society *ought* to be at some point in the future. Indeed, every political scheme involves a vision of what *human beings* should value, believe, and behave like in the future. For this reason, the concept of the child (what Edelman calls the fantasmatic child) has a uniquely privileged place in political discourse. There is an unquestioned assumption that the future is for the Child, and appeals on behalf of the young are “impossible to refuse.” This consensus stipulates that the Child is “defenseless” and must be protected; “reproductive futurism” makes any resistance to the privileging of children unthinkable.³ “We are no more able to conceive of a politics without a fantasy of the future,” writes Edelman, “than we are able to conceive of a future without the figure of the Child. That figural Child alone embodies the citizen as an ideal.”⁴

Indeed, at the heart of Brazil’s quest for the future was the child, the young person, the future generation. Scholars who have studied the social construction of childhood and youth have pointed to the years following World War I as the time when in many countries around the world, both general awareness of and exaltation of youth increased dramatically. In his seminal history *Centuries of Childhood*, Philippe Ariès pointed to a generational disconnect as the source of this new consciousness: “The awareness of youth began by being a feeling common to ex-servicemen, and this feeling was to be found in all the belligerent countries... From that point, adolescence expanded:

³ Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 2-4.

⁴ Ibid, 11.

it encroached upon childhood in one direction, maturity in the other... Thus our society has passed from a period which was ignorant of adolescence to a period in which adolescence is the favourite age.”⁵ Like others throughout the western world, in the 1920s many adult Brazilians began to pay closer attention to youth and the role of young people as not only the inheritors of Brazil’s future, but also the force within society which, properly controlled and directed, could help construct specific visions of the future.

This dissertation examines how the concept of youth in Brazil changed over the course of the mid-twentieth century, and accordingly, how young people took on different roles in Brazilian society that at times reflected and at times rejected the ever-changing notions of youth. In this project I trace the development of the idea of youth from its conception as a biological state to be exploited for national glory to its appropriation by young people as a rhetorical strategy for political revolution. In my dissertation research I found that, as in many other Western countries, young Brazilians in the twentieth century gained unprecedented cultural and political clout, but under particularly difficult circumstances that constantly threatened to undermine their self-realization. The history of Brazilian youth is uniquely contoured by dictatorship, which gripped the country from 1930 to 1945 and again from 1964 to 1985, and by developmentalism, in which the national government concertedly attempted to industrialize the country as rapidly as possible. I argue that young Brazilians were able to turn these two potential drawbacks into strengths to assert their own citizenship, political influence, and democratic ideals.

⁵ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 30.

The concept of youth (like Edelman's Child) is a framework through which a wide variety of social concerns and priorities can be discussed. It is on youth that a society seeks to impress its most important values (and hopes for the future); consequently, race, gender, class, sexuality, and various other social concerns can be confronted, dissected, and understood through how youth is described and regulated in any given period. Because of this, youth is a particularly useful lens for the historian, whether approaching a society from a political, intellectual, cultural, or social framework. As Richard Ivan Jobs explained in his work on youth in twentieth-century France:

Everyone, from all social groups, geographic regions, political ideologies, or religious backgrounds, had youth in common. Everyone was once young, and most adults had a vested interest in young people—their own children, grandchildren, or others in the community who would eventually grow to responsible adulthood... The concept of youth was an agreeable matrix through which adult France could deliberate on its past, present, and future.⁶

Though the history of youth has been widely studied by historians of the United States and Western Europe since the 1960s and 70s, youth in Latin America is still understudied, receiving little attention until the late 1990s. Bianca Premo has argued that this late arrival can be explained by the unique trajectory of Latin American studies within social history, out of which most histories of youth and childhood have been born. The seminal histories of childhood and youth, like Aries' *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) and Paula Fass's *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (1979), were primarily concerned with how these concepts are *modern* inventions. Premo argues:

[It is] precisely Latin America's uneasy relationship to 'modernity' and its status as both part of the 'West and as one of the 'rest' that accounts for the relative

⁶ Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 11.

absence of histories of childhood in the region until recently. From the 1960s-1980s, as Latin Americanists developed their own national historiographies, much of the social history they produced tended toward overtly politicized, structural approaches to institutional, family and ethno-history, often written with the end of explaining economic underdevelopment rather than the advent of modernity.⁷

In other words, if youth, as a term and a category of humanity, was distinctly modern as European and U.S. American scholars were arguing, how could it fit into the history of a backward, undeveloped region, where the tentacles of colonialism always grasped forward to drag society back into the past?

The emerging study of youth in Latin America is greatly indebted to the development of related historiographies of modernity in Latin America, many of which employ the notion of alternative modernities or multiple modernities, as developed by Charles Taylor, Vivian Schelling, Constantin von Barloewen, and others.⁸ From this vantage, Latin America is not a failure of modernity, but reached modernity through a different path and with a different outcome. Alternately, more critical perspectives espoused by David Scott or Anibal Quijano argue that rather than having achieved a different kind of modernity than the Eurocentric standard, Latin America's modernity is an intrinsic and inalienable aspect of global modernity.⁹ Europe's modernity was not possible without Latin America, but Europe's modernity—by virtue of being dominant—

⁷ Bianca Premo, "How Latin America's History of Childhood Came of Age," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008): 63-64.

⁸ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Vivian Schelling, *Through the Kaleidoscope: The Experience of Modernity in Latin America* (New York: Random House, 2001); Constantin von Barloewen, *Cultural History and Modernity in Latin America: Technology and Culture in the Andes Region* (New York: Berghahn, 1995). See also Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture In Latin America* (London: Verso, 1991).

⁹ David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Anibal Quijano and Michael Ennis, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America" *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-580.

still placed constraints on how Latin America's could develop. The debate between these opposing theoretical viewpoints has invigorated the historical study of modernity in Latin America, and promoted considerable new research on the history of science, industry, technology, culture, and, indeed, youth in Latin America.

There are now a handful of historical monographs on youth culture in Latin America, including Eric Zolov's *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (1999), Christopher Dunn's *Brutality Garden: Tropicalia and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (2001), Victoria Langland's *Speaking of Flowers: Student Movements and the Making and Remembering of 1968 in Military Brazil* (2013), and Andrew Kirkendall's *Class Mates: Male Student Culture and the Making of a Political Class in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (2002).¹⁰ Scholars such as Barbara Weinstein, Sueann Caulfield, and Brian McCann have included youths in their analyses of modernity in twentieth-century Brazil.¹¹ Though young people have a central role in these histories, they are still largely depicted as subjugated or conforming to expected roles of malleability, defenselessness, and submissiveness.¹²

Though I have argued that youth is a compelling framework through which to determine a nation's values and priorities, there are limitations to the method, especially

¹⁰ See also Valeria Manzano, "The Making of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality, 1958 – 1976" Ph.D. Diss., Indiana University, 2008 and Heather A. Vrana, "'Do Not Tempt Us!': The Guatemalan University in Protest, Memory, and Political Change, 1944-present" Ph.D. Diss., Indiana University, 2013.

¹¹ Barbara Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil: Industrialists and the Remaking of the Working Class in São Paulo, 1920-1964* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).; Bryan McCann *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

¹² A depiction that Paula Fass has urged historians of youth to challenge in "The World is at Our Door: Why Historians of Children and Childhood Should Open Up," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008): 27.

for a historian studying an underdeveloped country. Sociologist Marina Rebelo argues that the concept of youth, by purporting to be absolutely inclusive of a broad age group, elides important socioeconomic hierarchies that impact people's lives in myriad ways. "The concept of Youth implicitly ignores the class divisions that exist in a society. The concept groups together antagonistic social sectors."¹³ In my research, I discovered just how accurate this assessment is. Although this is a history of young people and children in all of Brazil, it is not and cannot be a history of all young people in Brazil. For the entirety of the period studied in this dissertation, including into the 1970s, a tragically large percentage of Brazilians, and especially young Brazilians, lived largely beyond the reach of the state, incapable of consumption beyond the subsistence level, and with only occasional interactions with the *nation*.

When Brazilians in the mid-twentieth century talked about (or, even more to the point for a historian, *wrote* about) youth, they meant, for the most part, middle-class young people. This makes sense for several reasons. First, Benedict Anderson has argued that it was writing that allowed nations to coalesce, or at least to be theorized by elites--a practice not available to the poor, illiterate majority of Brazilians in the twentieth century.¹⁴ Tom Nairn has agreed that the middle class has played a decisive role in the development of nations: "The arrival of nationalism in a distinctively modern sense was tied to the political baptism of the lower classes... Although sometimes hostile to democracy, nationalist movements have been invariably populist in outlook and sought to

¹³ Marina Rebelo Tavares, "*Juventude ou Classe Social?: O Debate Teórico Acerca do Movimento Estudantil*", Thesis, UNICAMP, December 2008.

¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3rd ed. (London: Verso, 2006), Chapter 3.

induct lower classes into political life. In the most typical version, this assumed the shape of a restless middle-class and intellectual leadership trying to sit up and channel popular class energies into support for the new states.”¹⁵ By using a more inclusive term, “youth” to signify a more confined reality (middle-class young people) nation-building plans could seem more expansive, more populist, more national. Additionally, as I will discuss in Chapter One, nation-building elites envisioned a middle-class future for Brazil. This is what they wanted their country to be like, so youth—the reservoirs of futurity—were understood and shaped accordingly.¹⁶

The widespread adoption of youth-oriented rhetoric and policies largely overlaps temporally with the rise of the middle-class in Brazil, which according to Brian Owensby started to form around the beginning of the time period covered in this dissertation.¹⁷ My time span ends with the installation of the democracy (the bourgeois democracy?) that would ultimately facilitate the creation of a Brazil that in 2008 economist Marcelo Neri described as a majority middle-class nation.¹⁸

¹⁵ Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977), 41.

¹⁶ The connections between the middle-class and conceptions of modernity have been widely studied by scholars from many different disciplines. See A. Ricardo López and Barbara Weinstein, eds, *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise: Middle-Class Living in a Chinese Metropolis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); and Brian P. Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999). In *The Global Middle Classes: Theorizing Through Ethnography* (Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press, 2012), Rachel Heiman et al. even explore how discourses of the middle class as “the ideal subject-citizenry” survive into the present day.

¹⁷ Owensby, Chapter 1.

¹⁸ Marcelo Cortes Neri, “The New Middle Class” Fundação Getúlio Vargas, August 2008. http://www.cps.fgv.br/ibrecps/M3/M3_MidClassBrazil_FGV_eng.pdf (Accessed March 11, 2014); This groundbreaking research and characterization of Brazilian society attracted the attention of both the press and other researchers. See Eliana Vicente, “Nova classe média? Uma abordagem antropológica sobre consumo, mobilidade e inclusão social,” M.A. Thesis, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2012; Cássio de Souza Lopes, “A ‘Nova Classe Média’ - Uma face do desenvolvimento no Brasil?” *Anais da Semana de Economia* v.1 n. 1 (2013), Parte 2; H. Yaccoub, “A chamada ‘nova classe média’: cultura material e distinção social,” *Horizontes antropológicos* v.17, n. 36 (2011), 197-231. Years before, anthropologist

Another tension between the concept of Youth in twentieth-century Brazil and the reality of the country's young people is that, though I have attempted to include examples and data from many different regions of the country to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the nationalist discourses surrounding youth, the concept was primarily an urban one. This relates to the previous point regarding the middle-class bias to the idea of youth (for the middle class was concentrated in cities), and in general to the extreme geographic inequality of the country. Though Brazil's population did not become majority urban until the 1970s, by the 1920s cities had become the seats of political, economic, social, and cultural power.¹⁹ Brodwyn Fischer has written that "the intertwining histories of urbanization and citizenship are among the metanarratives of Brazil's twentieth-century history."²⁰ As the twentieth century unfolded, it was primarily in cities that Brazilians played a role in nation-building and interacted with the state. It was in the city that one could have, as Jacques Rancière would describe it, a voice.²¹

Part of the typical understanding of youth is that they too are voiceless—through their weakness, their inherent or constructed lack of power, and because of the immaturity of their understanding. Rancière, recalling Plato, has said that such people are understood as being not capable of speech (*logos*), but only noise (*phone*) expressing pleasure or pain. Politics occurs when they claim their role as speakers. "Politics exists

Maureen O'Dougherty complicated the definition of the Brazilian middle class in her excellent study *Consumption Intensified: The Politics of Middle-Class Daily Life in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.)

¹⁹ Mauricio A. Font, *Coffee, Contention, and Change In the Making of Modern Brazil* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1990.)

²⁰ Brodwyn Fischer, *A Poverty of Rights: Citizenship and Inequality in Twentieth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 1.

²¹ Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account.”²² One of the goals of this project is to see what happened when Brazilian youth, presumed by a future-oriented but nonetheless gerontocratic society to be without *logos* and voiceless, made themselves of some account.

In short, I’m tracing how the discourse and concept of youth developed early in the century and then how *young people* were able to capitalize on the discursive power of *youth*. In doing so, young people planned, articulated, and acted upon alternative visions of the future that often contradicted what the adults who hoped to control and direct them had in mind.

Chapter One explores the incorporation of youth into Brazilian nation-building projects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period, the rearing of children moved from a strictly private concern into the public sphere as the state expanded public education and social services. Here I describe how the foreign ideologies of, first, Comtean positivism and, later, Lamarckian eugenics facilitated a transition away from a family-centered view of the young (understood as “traditional”) to a state-directed view (understood as “modern”). By looking at the politics and culture of normal schools in the first few decades of the century, I explore how the modern understanding of youth in Brazil was value-laden from its conception with classist and racist overtones.

²² Ibid, 27.

Chapter Two will trace how a new understanding of the young as important components of the nation was formalized during the *Estado Novo* dictatorship. The late 1930s saw the rise of two national youth organizations: *Juventude Brasileira* (Brazilian Youth) and *União Nacional de Estudantes* (National Student Union). Though they both were managed within the Ministry of Education, the former was concocted by Hitler Youth-inspired bureaucrats, while the latter was born as a grassroots movement among students. They both were pivotal in the demise of the dictatorship in 1945 (though in very different ways), but the former was summarily dissolved that year, while the latter remains a powerful organization today. They both provide interesting perspectives on the nascent politicization of young people in the context of dictatorship.

With the rise of democracy in mid-twentieth-century Brazil, children and adolescents became contested ground in the battle of ideologies that defined national politics more generally at the time. In Chapter Three, I will describe how youth were subject to and responded to different political and economic worldviews by looking at juvenile media and literature of the 1940s and 50s, especially youth magazines, one of the most popularly consumed media for both primary and secondary school students. Analyzing editorial content, advertisements, and purchasing patterns, I hope to understand how young people “shopped” among the competing worldviews of capitalism and developmentalism, democracy and authoritarianism.

By the 1950s the fruits of developmentalism and import substitution industrialization were a large and empowered urban working class and a rapidly expanding middle class. Whether as economically independent factory workers or as the

spoiled children of the bourgeoisie, many young Brazilians had a newfound purchasing power that allowed them to buy-in to a new global, youth-centered consumer culture. As pollsters tracked their shopping habits and commentators spewed pages of newsprint about their coolness, depravity, brashness, savvy, and/or bizarre taste in music, I will show in Chapter Four that Brazilian youth succeeded in transforming their economic power into an uncontested cultural power.

The return of dictatorship to Brazil in the 1960s and 70s found young people in a very different position than in the 1930s. In Chapter Five, I will show that young Brazilians were able to capitalize on their economic and cultural power to become perhaps the most significant political force in opposition to the military regime. In the 1970s young people explicitly and effectively exploited the rhetorical power of youthfulness to create cross-class and intergenerational alliances that fought for a genuinely inclusive and democratic vision of Brazil's future.

Glossary

If language reflects the values of the society that speaks it, Brazil is undoubtedly a youth-oriented country. Brazilian Portuguese has many more commonly used words to refer to children, adolescents, and young adults than American English.

Like other Romance languages, Portuguese distinguishes between a young person (*jovem*), young people (*jovens*), and the concept or collectivity "youth" (*juventude*), and I have attempted to be as faithful as possible in translating the usages correspondingly. However, these three terms only scratch the surface of the dozens of words that

twentieth-century Brazilians used to describe young people. At times in the pages that follow I have retained the original Portuguese term in order to allow some sense of the original connotations. Below is a list of some of the most common Brazilian terms related to youth and their English equivalents.

Jovem – Young Person (when used in the singular, usually a male)

Jovens - Young People

Juventude – Youth

Juvenil – Young

Moço/a – Boy/Girl, but usually adolescents or young adults. *Moça* can also mean “Miss”

Moçidade - Youth

Criança/s – Child, Children (almost never applied to adolescents or older)

Menino, Menina – Boy, Girl (and like the English terms, often applied to a wide range of ages)

Infância, infantil – Childhood, Child-appropriate (younger than adolescents, but *not* infancy)

Rapaz, rapazola – Guy

Rapaziada – The Guys, a group of young friends

Garota, Garoto – Girl, Boy

Moleque – Young boy, rascal (sometimes racially charged or connoting lower socio-economic status)

Adolescente – Adolescent

Guri/Guria – Guy/Girl (pre-1960 often children, post-1960 usually adolescents or young adults; regionally associated with the South)

Chapter One

When the State Invaded the Family

Positivism, Eugenics, and Education in Brazil's Old Republic

In the 1930s, Brazilian intellectuals developed an understanding of the “traditional” Brazilian family as one defined by patriarchy. For Gilberto Freyre, this patriarchal family structure included both the *casa grande/senzala* complex of mutual dependence between masters and slaves and the dominance of the paterfamilias over all others--male and female, young and old.¹ In *Roots of Brazil*, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda described the autonomous, self-sufficient “republics” of individual plantations as the foundational site for the emotional empathies of the Cordial Man, but one where “paternal power was virtually unlimited and few brakes on its tyranny existed.”² Both authors found redeeming qualities in the legacy of this “traditional” Brazilian family structure—for Freyre, racial toleration; for Buarque de Holanda, somewhat more cautiously, a proclivity for democracy rooted in the emotional intimacy of personalism.³ In doing so, they countered a tendency among Brazilian intellectuals that had prevailed in national discourse and policy-making for the previous half-century.

From the late nineteenth century, and especially after the rise of Brazil's First Republic in 1889, many Brazilian governmental and intellectual elites had been preoccupied with progress and erasing what they understood as backwardness and

¹ Quintessentially described in Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (1933), 47th ed. (São Paulo: Global Editora, 2005).

² Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Roots of Brazil*, trans. G. Harvey Summ (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 52

³ See Jeffrey D. Needell, “The Foundations of Freyre's Work: Engagement and Disengagement in the Brazil of 1923–1933,” *Portuguese Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2011), 8-19; Leopoldo Waizbort, “O mal-entendido da democracia: Sergio Buarque de Holanda, *Raizes do Brasil*, 1936” *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, v. 26, no. 76, (June 2011), 39-62.

traditionalism from society at large. Thomas Holloway has argued that in nineteenth-century Brazil there was a “general transition from the traditional application of control through private hierarchies to the modern exercise of power through public institutions,” and Mary Hicks contends that this transition gained an urgency after the abolition of slavery in 1887, as emancipation fundamentally destabilized the ordering of the patriarchal society.⁴ Now political elites sought new ways to create social order (and to police formerly enslaved populations.)⁵ For these men, the state itself needed to take action to modernize the country, but to do so it would need to undermine the status quo of the traditional family, where, in the words of Buarque de Holanda, “the private entity had always preceded the public one. (...) The private sphere invaded the public, the family invaded the state.”⁶

The 1889 establishment of a republic that deposed Brazil’s *imperial* family was a decisive symbolic move in the undoing of the traditional socio-political structure. Soon, reformers turned their gaze upon the members of the family they believed to be most receptive to state intervention: children. In 1896, Senator Lopes Trovão spoke urgently to Congress on the centrality of children to the republican program of progress, “We have a homeland to rebuild, a nation to secure, a people to forge... and to undertake this task,

⁴ Thomas H. Holloway, *Policing Rio de Janeiro: Repression and Resistance in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 1; Mary Ellen Hicks, “Migration, Gender, and the Meanings of Emancipation : Salvador, Brazil, 1887-1893,” M.A. Thesis, University of Virginia (2010).

⁵ Many scholars have looked at this ‘general transition’ by examining interactions between the state and subaltern resisters—the poor, Afro-Brazilians, and immigrants, for example. See Holloway, or José Murilo de Carvalho, *Os bestializados: o Rio de Janeiro e a república que não foi* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 1987.)

⁶ Holanda, 53.

what more supple and pliant element do we have than childhood? The time has come for us to cultivate through childhood a better youth and a more perfect humanity.”⁷

This chapter will explore the challenges to the “status quo” of children’s and adolescents’ role in society that accompanied the rise of Brazil’s First Republic. For the first time a major intellectual transformation made *young* Brazilians a central focus of the state. Though the reformers that pushed this change saw themselves as sweeping out an old, outdated order and ushering in modernity, their guiding assumptions and ideologies were at the core conservative and served to further entrench many “traditional” inequalities.⁸

In her study of the “child-saving movement” in Brazil’s Old Republic, Irene Rizzini contends that those who hoped to reform society by reforming children realized that they also needed to create *institutions* that could challenge “the hegemony of the family.”⁹ The form that these institutions took was shaped by the guiding ideologies of these republican reformers: Comtean Positivism, and later, Lamarckian eugenics. Both Positivists and eugenicists concurred that education was an essential realm for government intervention, and it became a favorite theme of progressive Brazilians. The nuances of positivism and eugenics as understood and practiced in 1890s to 1930s Brazil indelibly marked the development of education in Brazil. In particular, these ideologies

⁷ Quoted in Irene Rizzini “The Child-Saving Movement in Brazil: Ideology in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries” in *Minor Omissions: Children in Latin American History and Society*, ed. Tobias Hecht (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 173.

⁸ José Murilo de Carvalho argues that even the most radically reformist republican efforts “were basically conservative in nature, in that they reinforced the prevailing patriarchy” and sought to enforce “governmental paternalism” in *The Formation of Souls: Imagery of the Republic in Brazil*, trans. Clifford E. Landers (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 29.

⁹ Rizzini, 171.

both placed a huge focus on one particular element of family relations: the mother/child unit. Schools, and as I will show particularly normal schools, became experimental grounds for reshaping society by attempting to reform even this most basic relationship.

Positivism

The most influential philosophy in the early years of the Brazilian republican was the Positivism of French teacher Auguste Comte. Comte's first great opus was *Cours de la philosophie positive*, published in installments between 1830 and 1842. In this work, which gained him the still prevalent title of "Father of Sociology," his central concept was progress, which he understood as increasing "human" tendencies and decreasing "animal" tendencies in mankind. Social progress parallels, and is created by, an individual's progress. In infancy, he believed, the individual is motivated solely by personal subsistence, while in adolescence sexual drives compel one to enter a union with another, which culminates in parenthood. As an adult, as a spouse and parent, the individual plans for the future and the wellbeing of others. This concern for others allows for social peace—the "order" in the Comtean ideals of order and progress.¹⁰

Attempting to encapsulate the motivations of Comtean positivism, Arline Standley writes, "Comte, convinced that the intellectual anarchy of his time was destroying society, sought to establish through science a basis for general agreement. Only such agreement could, he insisted, restore social order."¹¹ Brazilian republicans, following the abolition of slavery and the political chaos of the early 1890s, looked to

¹⁰ Ibid, 76.

¹¹ Arline Reilein Standley, *Auguste Comte* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), 58.

Comte's positivism as an antidote to the pessimism they felt about a country deranged by racial miscegenation, regional antipathies, and urban popular revolts. Positivism offered a utopian, communitarian prescription. According to Murilo de Carvalho, "It viewed the republic in a broader perspective that postulated a future golden age, in which human beings would achieve their goals in the bosom of a mythic humanity."¹²

Intrinsic to Comte's idea of progress is the notion of human perfectability. How perfect a human being could become depended on their cultural and environmental milieu¹³, but education, Comte argued, is essentially important and should be "designed to provide opportunity for all."¹⁴ Comte presented his educational agenda in his *Système de politique positive*, where he discussed the nature of his coming positivist utopia. In *Système*, Comte proposes a Church of Positivism to guide mankind into the future. In the Positivist Church the superstitious notion of God is replaced by a trinity of female archetypes: Mother, based on his own mother Rosalie Boyer; Wife, based on his friend and "spiritual wife" Clotilde de Vaux; and Daughter, based on his adopted daughter and caretaker Sophie Bliaux. To be sure, Comte believed that women were physically and intellectually inferior to men,¹⁵ but that in their three natural roles—daughter, wife, and mother—they are more sympathetic and loving than men. Worshiping these qualities of woman would prepare man for the Worship of Humanity.¹⁶ In the Church of Positivism, the role of the clergy would be as educators. Each priest would teach two classes, one

¹² Murilo de Carvalho, *The Formation of Souls*, 1.

¹³ Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy*, Trans. Harriet Martineau (New York: AMS Press, 1979), 463-467.

¹⁴ Standley, 87

¹⁵ Ibid, 74.

¹⁶ Ibid, 103-104

male and one female, through a seven-year program of the seven fundamental sciences--mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, physiology, sociology.¹⁷

Despite the worship of women and this proposal for equal education, Comte proposed relegating real adult women to a purely domestic role. Life outside the home required powers, strengths, that he believed women did not possess.¹⁸ But within the home they would have responsibilities as educators. Standley explains, “Within the family they were to give their children moral guidance, to educate the young in art and poetry, and to remonstrate (gently, of course) with those who might deviate from their duty.”¹⁹ Comte’s ideal curriculum followed a strict progression. Up to age seven, a child was to receive spontaneous education in the home by the mother, especially in poetry, music, visual arts, and language. From seven to fourteen, education remained in the home, but with a more systematic development of fine arts. Finally, from fourteen to twenty-one, there would be seven years of formal education via lectures with the “priests,” building in the following order mathematics (the most basic science), inorganic then organic sciences, then sociology and moral science in the last two years.²⁰

In the 1850s, Comte wrote that by thirty-three years after the rise of Louis Napoleon--in 1851--Positivism would have gained ascendancy among French elites (he had, of course, done precise calculations). Though his European adherents would continue to expand, slowly and haltingly, for some years after his death in 1857, it was across the Atlantic that his philosophy and religion had its greatest impacts. Just thirty-

¹⁷ Ibid, 109, 59, Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, IV, Trans. J.H. Bridges et al (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1875-1877), 233.

¹⁸ Comte, *System*, I, 169.

¹⁹ Standley, 111

²⁰ Ibid, 115-16

one year after the rise of Louis Napoleon, the Positivist Church of Rio de Janeiro was founded in 1882. From the 1830s, Comte had had considerable correspondence with Brazilians, and even during the Brazilian Empire Positivism was an ever more influential philosophy and worldview. According to Sybil de Acevedo, the Republican government that took control of the country in 1889 was not merely influenced by Positivism—It was a Positivist regime, with a new flag that bore Comte’s slogan of “Order and Progress”, a new Constitution that insisted on total secularism, and a new set of government officials and bureaucrats espousing Positivist ideas.²¹ Even official government correspondences sometimes used the Positivist calendar, with months named after great thinkers—Shakespeare, Dante, and Archimedes—and year one designated as 1789, the “Year of the Great Crisis.”²²

Though positivists held many high positions in the Republican government, Brazilian positivists were overwhelmingly middle class, largely educated in the sciences and engineering. One survey found 80 percent were army officers, physicians, engineers, and professors.²³ They were known as zealous proselytizers for Comte’s ideas and were later called “the Bolsheviks of the middle class.” Their ardency was apparent in 1883 when Miguel Lemos, leader of the Positivist Church in Brazil, excommunicated the Paris church led by Comte’s successor Pierre Lafitte for doctrinal sloppiness.²⁴ The Church itself was already on the downswing by 1890s, losing members because of its fanaticism,

²¹ Sybil de Acevedo, “Introduction” to *Auguste Comte, 1798-1857: correspondance conservée aux Archives positivistes de la Maison d'Auguste Comte* (Paris: Bibliothèque National, Department des manuscrits, 1984).

²² Todd A. Diacon, *Stringing Together a Nation: Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon and the Construction of a Modern Brazil, 1906-1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 81.

²³ Ibid. 81-82.

²⁴ Ibid. 82-83.

but positivism maintained its sway in government through the 1920s, with effects that lasted decades more.

Murilo de Carvalho has argued that orthodox positivism's effects on Brazilian society were limited. "Their appeal for integration to communitarian values, made under circumstances of extreme social inequality, an intense power struggle, and unbridled financial speculation, fell on deaf ears."²⁵ Education may have been the sphere where Comte's positivism was most deliberately and successfully implemented by Republican reformers in Brazil. After all, Comte, himself a long-time and often frustrated professor, had dedicated hundreds of pages in his writings to educational proposals, and very few to, say, national economic policies. One of the Republic's first big policy shifts was the 1890 Educational Reforms of Minister of Education Benjamin Constant Botelho de Magalhães. Though criticized by Orthodox Positivists for not adhering strictly enough to Comte's plan, it was clearly inspired by positivist educational principles. It mandated universal, lay education oriented towards preparing students for higher education and rejected the traditional focus on literature in university-preparatory schools for a more scientific curriculum. And, indeed, Brazilian education was in sore need of reform. In 1889, only about twelve percent of school aged children were matriculated, and in 1900 seventy-five percent of Brazilians were illiterate. Women, on whom Comte placed all hope for future generations, had been particularly excluded from public and private education. According

²⁵ Murilo de Carvalho, *The Formation of Souls*, 28-9.

to Sandra Graham, in nineteenth-century Brazil “[g]ender more than race, legal condition, or class determined a person’s chances to learn to read and write.”²⁶

Eugenics

As positivism, and especially orthodox positivism waned in the 1910s, it was largely supplanted by eugenics, a scientific program that had international currency in the interwar period, and encompassed a broad range of beliefs and policy proposals. Today eugenics carries unavoidable association with Nazism and the Holocaust, or with forced sterilization of the disabled in the United States. In Brazil, the science took the form of what Jerry Dávila calls “soft eugenics” in which Brazilian scientists, politicians, and intellectuals who argued that a ‘degenerate’ population, such as the racially miscegenated one found in Brazil, could be improved through positive environmental stimuli, such as hygiene, nutrition, and education.²⁷

In *The Hour of Eugenics*, Nancy Leys Stepan explains that the disconnect between the “soft” eugenics of Brazil and the “hard” eugenics of, for example, Germany, stemmed from their distinct scientific bases. In the mid-nineteenth century biology and heredity were divided by two different understandings of “germ plasm”, or the cell’s genetic material. One theory, based on medieval science and proposed in its modern form by the Frenchman Jean Baptiste Lamarck in the 1800s and 1810s, contended that

²⁶ Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *Caetana Says No: Women’s Stories from a Brazilian Slave Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 102.

²⁷ Jerry Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1917-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 107

environmental factors can and will “transmutate” the germ plasm,²⁸ or, in his own words, that “All the acquisitions and losses wrought... through the influence of the environment... are preserved by reproduction to the new individuals.”²⁹ The other, nominally inspired by Charles Darwin and developed by August Weisman in repudiation of Lamarck, argued that the germ plasm was almost always inherited intact and unchanged across generations, except in the case of random mutations. This latter theory would form the basis of “Anglo-Saxon”, “hard” eugenics that flourished especially after the 1880s in Britain, Germany, and the United States. On the other hand, Lamarck’s interpretation of hereditary inspired a “Latin”, “soft” eugenics that probably saw its fullest expression in early-twentieth-century Latin America.

There were various reasons why Lamarckian eugenics appealed so much to Brazilian reformers. Lamarckianism had the advantage of being written in French, *the* second language of choice for Brazilian elites. There were also obvious moral preferences for Lamarckianism, versus Weismanian eugenics. Leys Stepan explains that eugenics was slow to gain acceptance in Europe in the nineteenth century because people found it so morally distasteful. Not only was it a science of sex, but one whose implications for heavy-handed population control were apparent. Only as Europeans grew more pessimistic about modernity late in the century was Weismanian eugenics taken seriously as a social project.³⁰ Lamarckianism, on the other hand, was a basically

²⁸ Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), Chapter 1.

²⁹ Quoted in Geoffrey M. Hodgson and Thorbjørn Knudsen, *Darwin’s Conjecture: The Search for General Principles of Social and Economic Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 63.

³⁰ Leys Stepan, Chapter 1

“optimistic”³¹ and “positive”³² belief system that offered no affront to Catholic morality, a fact that bolstered its appeal to policy-makers after the Church and the state started to realign after the Revolution of 1930.³³ This style of eugenics also presented the opportunity for “racial improvement” amid racial miscegenation, whereas the “hard” Anglo-Saxon eugenics effectively condemned Brazil’s unavoidably miscegenated population to “degeneracy.” The “Brazilian Race” could, eugenicists believed, overcome the hindrances of alcoholism, poverty, and congenital disease without depopulating itself of racial undesirables, as Anglo-Saxon eugenics would have required—an impossibility in Brazil given its demographic makeup.

Though eugenics gained more currency in Brazil immediately following the decline of positivism, Brazilian-style eugenics did not reject positivism, and acceptance by Brazilian elites may have been influenced by its *compatibility* with positivism. Auguste Comte was himself an adherent of Jean Baptiste Lamarck’s scientific theories, and called the heritability of acquired characteristics, an “incontestable principle.”³⁴ Lamarckian eugenics was understood by Brazilians of the early twentieth century as “a harmonious and humane way of perfecting nature,”³⁵ echoing the same values that attracted so many adherents to Comte’s program for creating universal social harmony. Olegario de Mouro, the vice president of a Rio de Janeiro eugenics society, cleverly called upon Comte’s influence in 1919, writing, “Sanitation-eugenics *is* order and

³¹ Ibid, 71

³² Ibid, 30

³³ Such as with the reintroduction of Catholic education in public schools in 1936, CPDOC LF t. Inst. Educ., rolo 6, fot 433 a 1008

³⁴ Quoted in George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 240

³⁵ Leys Stepan, 74

progress.”³⁶ And, like positivism, eugenics’ Brazilian supporters were mostly white, middle-class men who believed that they understood and embodied the traits and values that all humans should have in an ideal society.³⁷

The word eugenics was coined in 1883 by Englishman Francis Galton, and almost immediately began to be discussed in South American intellectual circles. In early 1918 the region’s first eugenics society was founded in São Paulo. Though its members were few (only about 140 in 1919), Leys Stepan argues that its influence was immediately apparent, because the Brazilian elite itself was small, concentrated in Rio and São Paulo and the society’s members were very prominent.³⁸ Positivism’s cult of science and the success of public health campaigns around the turn of the century gave eugenics immediate legitimacy among elites. Throughout the 1920s and 30s a boom of writings on eugenics echoed through the Brazilian intelligentsia, and both before and after the 1930 Revolution, the government adopted reformers’ obsessions with, “hygiene.”³⁹

Hospitals, public sanitation, and social work were all venues for the government to enact eugenicist policies, but as with positivism, schools were the most obvious and appealing choice. From the 1920s, eugenicists focused not only on physical health, teaching hand washing and good nutrition, but also “mental hygiene,” which focused on those they saw as delinquent and defective, chiefly criminals, immigrants, blacks and the poor generally. Clinical psychologist and chief of the Ministry of Education’s “Orthophrenology and Mental Hygiene Service” Arthur Ramos studied such children

³⁶ “Saneamento-eugenia é ordem e progress.” Quoted in *Ibid*, 90.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 32.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 48

³⁹ *Ibid*, 50.

throughout the 1930s, culminating in the 1939 book *The Problem Child: Mental Hygiene in Primary Schools*. He observed “problem children” both at school and at home, and required their caretakers to fill out surveys addressing the home environment and architecture, family history, obstetric history of the mother (including detailed information on breastfeeding), childhood illness, favorite toys and sleeping patterns. Eleven-year-old Venina Santos was diagnosed as “apathetic,” which Ramos attributed to her parents’ alcoholism, rheumatism, and headaches, as well as the fact that Venina shared a bed with her alcoholic maternal grandmother. His recommended treatment was vitalizing pills and glandular injections.

Eight-year-old Elias Antabi, described as “indifferent, spending long periods in contemplation” and “having an absolute disinterest in scholarly activities” was studied by Ramos around the assumption that his Jewish parents’ religiosity must be harming “the psychic development of their child.”⁴⁰ Though the reasoning of Ramos’s diagnosis is spurious, the case highlights the difference between Lamarckian and Weismanian genetics. Ramos believes that it is Elias’s parents’ *behavior*, not their germ plasm, that is causing problems for their son. As an English observer noted in 1931, Brazilian eugenics was “more sociological than biological.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ramos, Arthur. “A Criança Problema: A Higiene Mental Na Escola Primária,” 1939. Manuscritos. Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil. BN – M - 38,1,005 (38,1,067)

⁴¹ Quoted in Leys Stepan, 64.

Positivism, Eugenics, and the Brazilian Normal School

Education was central to positivist and eugenicist programs in Brazil's Old Republic, and schools were where proponents of these ideologies most eagerly and successfully implemented their reforms. In particular, republican reformers became enthusiastic developers of normal schools, where theoretically the front-line representatives of the state, modernity's ambassadors to children, could be both trained and indoctrinated. One of the defining characteristics of republican normal schools was the effectively total feminization of their student bodies. This transformation was significantly influenced by positivism's and eugenics' emphases on the importance of the relationship between mother and child. "Progress" required that this relationship should be perfected, and normal schools became experimental sites for combining both the educational and gender priorities of first positivism, and after the 1920s, eugenics. These ideologies drastically changed the face of teachers' education during the First Republic and into the 1930s, transforming normal schools from a place to give technical instruction to future primary school teachers into places that taught *teenaged, white, middle-class girls* to become fertile and docile *mothers*.

Teacher's education *per se* in Brazil dated back to 1835. Niteroi's private Institute of Education, which educated somewhat elite men to be tutors to very elite boys, was likely the first such institution in the country. Though Bahia's first normal school, founded in 1836, did accept some female students from its inception, these early Brazilian normal schools, based on French *écoles normales*, were a largely masculine

sphere.⁴² The first normal school in São Paulo, founded in 1846, was emulated Niteroi's model—it was male-only, had only one instructor and a two-year curriculum. In its twenty years of operation only forty teachers graduated from it.⁴³ An 1847 Sao Paulo law provided for a “Feminine Normal School”, but it was never actually founded.⁴⁴

Brazilian normal schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries generally took the form of a hybrid high school/college where primary school teachers were trained in a two or three year program. The so-called “American-model” of normal school, as a utilitarian technique for educating large numbers of potential teachers specifically for *primary* education, was developed in Massachusetts in the 1830s, and became increasingly common in Brazil in the 1870s. By the 1880s they existed in both big southeastern cities and northeastern provincial capitals, and had even begun to enjoy government sponsorship with the foundation of the Escola Normal da Corte, the Normal School of the Court, in 1879, and São Paulo's mixed-gender, three-year Escola Normal da Praça in 1880.⁴⁵

By the time positivist Republicans overthrew the Brazilian monarchy in 1889, a shift had already begun in the demographics of educators, at least at the primary school level. The local primary school teacher was as likely as not a woman. For example, in the province of Bahia in 1856 women held 15 percent of public school teaching positions.

⁴² Dain Borges, *The Family in Bahia, Brazil, 1870-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 213.

⁴³ Leonardo Trevisan, *Estado e Educação na História Brasileira (1750/1900)* (São Paulo: Editora Moraes, 1987), 83.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Trevisan, 83.

By 1890, 56 percent of Bahian teachers were women.⁴⁶ As in many other countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the feminization of both teaching and teachers' education in Brazil was motivated by both pragmatic and moralistic reasons that were mutually reinforcing and meshed well with the dominance of positivism and the expansion of public education in Brazil during the Old Republic.

An unprecedented demographic boom around the turn of the century underpinned the large-scale entrance of women into Brazilian primary school teaching. Between 1872 and 1920, the population of Brazil more than tripled.⁴⁷ This growth was attributable to both internal growth and the more than three million immigrants to the country between 1870 and 1920, of which twenty percent were children.⁴⁸ The provision of public education had been a norm in Brazil at least since the Constitution of 1824, which mandated free primary instruction “for all citizens.”⁴⁹ This stipulation explicitly excluded slaves, a substantial portion of the population, and in actuality resulted in very limited enrollment in public schools.⁵⁰ In 1885 the Inspector General of Public Instruction quipped, “General state of education: lack of teachers, lack of schools, lack of students—that’s the negative trinity in which public education finds itself.”⁵¹ Though the actual expansion of primary education during the Old Republic was fitful, it quickly became a

⁴⁶ Borges, 213.

⁴⁷ From roughly ten million to more than thirty million inhabitants. The last imperial census was in 1872, and the last Republican census in 1920. In comparison, over the previous fifty years, from 1820 to 1870, the population is estimated to have barely doubled. See “Dados Históricos,” IBGE, <http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censohistorico>

⁴⁸ “Brasil 500 Anos,” IBGE, <http://brasil500anos.ibge.gov.br>

⁴⁹ Jair Fonzar, *Pequena história da educação brasileira: tradicionalismo e modernismo : duas tendências que marcam a filosofia pedagógica brasileira* (Curitiba: Scientia et Labor, 1989), 55.

⁵⁰ Trevisan, p. 83, notes that in 1867, among a population of 8,830,000 in Brazil, there were only 107,500 students, despite a school-aged population of 1,200,000. In 1872, when the population had grown to about 10 million, there were still just 150,000 in the country.

⁵¹ Trevisan, 84.

priority of both the national and state governments. Governments at every level produced decrees and passed laws promoting education, increasing financial support, and building schools.⁵² Dain Borges argues that expanding public education received the most attention of any policy during the republican era in the state of Bahia.⁵³ In that region, by 1929, 25 percent of school-age children were enrolled in school—an enormous increase from the imperial period.⁵⁴ The combination of a demographic explosion and real government efforts to increase primary education heightened demand for teachers.

With public education quickly expanding, one of the primary draws to feminization of the teaching corps was purely economic. Female teachers were willing to work for much less money than their male counterparts. Paying teachers less allowed for more schools, more students, and fewer tax dollars dedicated to education. Women were willing to accept the lower wages for several reasons. Foremost, during the time period women's teaching work was seen as either temporary or supplementary employment. That is, young women often expected to work for only a few years until they married, and even then not to support themselves independently, but to augment their family incomes (in addition to their father's work). Indeed, the wages that women teachers received were so low that they could not be expected to provide more than supplementary income, because according to Susan Besse "[u]nless they pooled resources and divided housing costs with other family members, they were condemned to poverty."⁵⁵ However, the economic arguments for the feminization of primary school teachers stressed that beyond

⁵² Ibid, 87-94.

⁵³ Borges, 149.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 150.

⁵⁵ Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 150.

saving the government money, the practice would improve the welfare of women. In Borges's words: "Where the charitable lords of the seventeenth and eighteen centuries had provided funds for dowries to enable orphans to marry, the state government now provided jobs for schoolteachers."⁵⁶ The idea that having a profession could mean survival for a middle-class woman in hard times was widely propagated. Feminist organizations in the early twentieth century urged women to prepare themselves professionally as a safeguard against destitution.⁵⁷ More conservative women's groups saw employment as a "necessary evil" and "applauded only those women who, in the spirit of self-abnegation, dedication, and sacrifice, entered the workforce with the goal of helping their husbands or parents maintain the economic well-being and stability of the family."⁵⁸

Beyond pragmatic considerations, positivist education reformers stressed the notion that women were inherently suited to teaching, particularly at the primary level. Indeed, In Comte's own proposals for education, mothers would be the sole instructor of children until age fourteen. Primary education, once conducted within the home, had expanded into the public sphere, but its basic structure and aims need not change. Even if the state now oversaw primary education, the schoolroom could be "a continuation of the home" where traditionally gendered roles were maintained.⁵⁹ By virtue of their innate

⁵⁶ Borges, 268.

⁵⁷ Besse, 166.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 186.

⁵⁹ Maria Clara Magalhães, "A aluna da escola normal," M.A. Thesis, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (1994), 57. See also June E. Hahner, "Escolas mistas, escolas normais: a coeducação e a feminização do magistério no século XIX," *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v. 19, n. 2, Aug. 2011.

patience, gentleness, and moral rectitude women were lauded as the ideal primary school teachers.⁶⁰

The feminization of teaching fed into the feminization of normal schools, which increasingly repelled young men from entering teaching. However, like the reasons for feminization, the *de-masculinization* of teaching included both economic and ideological rationales that mutually reinforced each other. As economics priorities took men out of teaching, for decades a stigma associated with male teachers kept them out. Borges explains, “Women’s entrance into the teaching profession matched its demotion in prestige.”⁶¹ Especially at the primary level, for which normal training was aimed, male teachers were seen as weak, effeminate, unambitious, or professionally defective. For Wilson Griesang, who underwent his normal training in the 1950s, he felt his status as a minority acutely. Out of his class of 120, 95 were women. He compared the woman *normalista*’s school experience to a social club, while for the men, “We didn’t form such a bond. We just went to class.”⁶² As the idealization of woman as teacher took a more and more powerful hold through the first decades of the 20th century in Brazil, the belittlement of man as teacher became increasingly prevalent. The decreasing presence of men in normal schools over the first five decades of the century reflects the trend.

Where in 1880 the students of Escola Normal da Corte, the most prestigious public normal school in Brazil, were 51 percent female,⁶³ by 1892, only three years after

⁶⁰ A position typified by Raul Soares de Moura, “Discurso pronunciado em Ubá, no Colégio do Sagrado Coração de Maria, como paranymphe da turma de Normalistas diplomadas pelo mesmo em 1917,” CPDOC RS17.00.00

⁶¹ Borges, 213.

⁶² Wilson Griesang, interview with the author, digital recording, Santa Cruz do Sul, RS, June 18, 2007.

⁶³ “Sobre”, Instituto Superior de Educação do Rio de Janeiro, <http://www.iserj.net/sobre>

the declaration of the Republic but twelve years after its first positivist Director, the school, now called the Normal School of the Federal District, was 80 percent female.⁶⁴ By 1953, 100 percent of students were young women.⁶⁵ The Escola Normal da Bahia followed a similar trajectory, only more accelerated. As early as 1895, more than 90 percent of its students were female. Summarizing this trend Dain Borges writes succinctly, “After 1910, men virtually ceased to become teachers.”⁶⁶

Accompanying and reinforcing the feminization of teaching and normal schools in Brazil, in the Republican period normal school curricula were also feminized. In the early 1880s, the Court Normal School offered a set of 8 core classes: Gymnastics (with classes divided for men and women), physical sciences, calligraphy, algebra/geometry/trigonometry, choreography, Portuguese, French, and Religious Instruction. By the 1890s, this core curriculum had already undergone significant changes that reflected the ascendancy of Positivists. Religion, of course, was immediately struck from the course offerings, but replaced with entrance examinations that focused on moral decency. Over the first decades of the Republic, the curriculum also morphed to suit positivist ideals of what a woman should be learning. The 1880s “Choreography” was split into two required courses: dance and music, perhaps reflecting the positivist belief of woman’s innate artistic abilities and the importance of learning art in the earliest years of education. Algebra, geometry, and trigonometry were condensed into one course “Mathematics” which was little more than arithmetic. Gymnastics

⁶⁴ *Livro de Matrícula*, Escola Normal do Distrito Federal, 1892, CEMI-ISERJ.

⁶⁵ Yearbook, 1953, CEMI-ISERJ.

⁶⁶ Borges, 213.

courses, still gender segregated, now had different course material. Men studied defense and strength building, women good posture and exercises for strong but delicate hands. And by the first decade of the 1900s, in perhaps the most explicit manifestation of the feminization of the curriculum, needlework became a required course at Rio's normal school, the model institution for schools around the country, despite not being in any state primary school curriculum.⁶⁷ Similarly, at São Paulo's Escola Normal da Praça, an 1890 law designed by the state legislature, home economics and dressmaking became required courses for all female normalistas, while male students were required to take algebra, accounting, and military exercises (all of which were forbidden to female students).⁶⁸ In the 1910s and 20s, positivism's vogue was beginning to fade in Brazilian society, but kept its hold in normal schools where it combined with the newly fashionable eugenics, and bringing hygiene and puericulture into the curriculum.⁶⁹

This feminization of teaching occurred in almost all of the Western world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, I have not found an equivalent for the extent of Brazil's feminization of the curriculum. Let me give you two comparisons from the first decade of the twentieth century: The United States, whose model of normal education informed Brazil's, and Cuba, which like Brazil was a racially heterogeneous Latin American country whose elites often looked abroad for models of organizing society. In 1907, upon the graduation of his daughter from Normal School, Cuban essayist Rafael Serra wrote comparing the curricula of normal schools in the U.S. and

⁶⁷ *Livro de Matrícula*, CEMI-ISERJ.

⁶⁸ Trevisan, 94.

⁶⁹ *Livro de Matrícula; Relação de Alunos: Frequencia, 1933*, CEMI-ISERJ.

Cuba. He praised the racial diversity of the Normal College of New York (now Hunter College), which distinguished it, in Serra's eyes, from similar schools in Cuba. The rigor of its classes was incomparable, said Serra, with a very wide range of required courses, including algebra, geometry, trigonometry, physics, chemistry, natural sciences, French or German, Greek or Latin, logic, English literature, pedagogy, history of pedagogy, psychology, ancient and modern history, Greek history, Roman history, English history, American history, gymnastics, and drawing. In Cuba, as in Brazil, completion of a normal degree or other teacher training was not required in order to become a primary school teacher. The required courses in Havana were less inclusive by Serra's estimation, including only psychology, history of pedagogy, scholarly hygiene, moral philosophy, teaching methodology, history of Spanish literature, American history, modern world history, drawing, and cosmology.⁷⁰ In neither the U.S. nor in Cuba, at least according to the examples offered by Serra, did normal schools focus on middle-class womanly skills such as needlepoint and dance that played such a central role in Brazilian teacher's education. And while pedagogy, the basic methodology of education, was broadly established in these countries in 1907, it was not until the 1950s that it typically appeared in Brazilian normal schools!

These changes in the curriculum accompanied various changes in the demographics of *normalistas*. As Jerry Dávila shows in his excellent monograph *Diploma of Whiteness*, teaching had once been an important avenue of social mobility for Afro-Brazilians. But by the end of the Republic, normal school students were almost

⁷⁰ Rafael Serra, *Para blancos y negros: Ensayos políticos, sociales y económicos* (Havana: Imprenta "El Score," 1907), 128.

entirely white. At the same time normalistas became more uniformly young (almost entirely teenaged by the 1920s), single, and middle class.⁷¹ In effect, by the first decades of the 20th century, many Brazilian normal schools had abandoned the democratic project of educating a capable corps of public primary school teachers and had turned instead to transforming specifically white, middle-class, and teenaged girls into the Comtean ideal of a fertile teacher-mother.

Adelia Mariano de Oliveira was a model student with a promising future. Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1875, she was a legitimate daughter of a good family. Her parents, José and Anna Maria, were neither wealthy nor poor, but they were conscientious about their children's educations. In 1898 at the age of 23, Adelia matriculated at the Escola Normal da Corte, a prestigious teacher's college in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Before enrollment, Adelia submitted to the school certification that she was over age 15, vaccinated, with good hygiene, and fully-educated in a manner appropriate to her age, sex, and social standing. Found to be in good standing in these regards, Adelia took her entrance exams. Attending morning and afternoon classes over the next three and a half years, Adelia refined her knowledge of the world, studying French, music, gymnastics, and decorative arts, among other subjects deemed necessary for a soon-to-be primary school teacher. In 1902 she finished her course of study at the Escola Normal da Corte, and the following year passed her teaching exams, now fully qualified to educate the children of Brazil.⁷² Adelia was a model normal student. However, it seems that she was far from the *typical normalista* in early 20th century Brazil. The seemingly intuitive path that Adelia took in

⁷¹ *Escola Normal, Ianno 1927*, CEMI-ISERJ.

⁷² *Instituto de Educação, Secretaria*, CEMI-ISERJ, Livro 8: 1898-1905.

her education, enrolling in a normal school, progressing at a steady pace, and upon graduation entering into the field of teaching, was not representative of a great number of *normalistas*, perhaps the majority. Adelia stands out among many *normalistas* for two reasons: one, she completed the course of study; two, she then became a teacher.

Dropping out of normal school was widespread. Among Adelia's classmates at Escola Normal do Rio de Janeiro, many never graduated. Sometimes, students left school for unavoidable reasons. One of Adelia's classmates, Honorina Maria da Costa, died before completing her degree. Over a year and a half of study, Honorina excelled, doing particularly well in Music, French, Calligraphy, and Needlepoint. Enrolled in the night course, Honorina probably worked another job during the day, but perhaps saw a future as a teacher as a way of bettering her lot. During her last full semester, Honorina began to falter. Her exam scores fell off and she couldn't pass the final exam in Gymnastics. Shortly after enrolling for her fourth full semester, in 1903, Honorina's academic transcript was cut short. Her record ends abruptly, "—Passed Away—".⁷³ Another classmate's disappearance is more mysterious, but under seemingly more common circumstances. Alice de Carvalho Cabral first enrolled in day-classes for the second semester of 1898. She did well in her Gymnastics, Needlepoint, and Music classes, but barely passed Portuguese. For three years Alice didn't enroll in classes, for whatever reason, but in 1901 she enrolled again for day-classes. That semester she never showed up for final exams, and never again enrolled in courses. By 1903 she was

⁷³ *Secretaria* 1898-1905.

deemed a real drop-out and her name was removed from the student file. The last entry beside her name simply read “Did not reapply for enrollment.”⁷⁴

How many *normalistas* graduated from normal school? How many of the graduates became teachers and for how long? The answer is uncertain, and undoubtedly varied from state to state, city to city, school to school. As the circumstances and influences of *normalistas* varied, so did their decisions on what kind of life they wanted to lead. In general, Honorina’s experience seems to have been more common than that of Adelia. Students disappeared from attendance records at a Bahian normal school from 1929 and 1930 with astounding frequency. In 1929 Maria Rosa Cançado, in a class with 12 other women, started missing days soon after classes began, and ended up “dropping out”, missing every single day of class from the first of May until the end of the school year in November.⁷⁵ When in 1930, only two girls out of a class of 21 students dropped out, the teacher made proudly made special note of it in his journal.⁷⁶

Ill-health, lack of funds, or simple discontentedness led to many dropouts, but even among those who graduated from normal schools, becoming a teacher was not guaranteed. In *A Escola Pitoresca e Outros Trabalhos* A. Almeida Júnior, a teacher at São Paulo’s Escola Normal da Praça, examines the social circumstances and the potential futures of his school’s 37 graduates of 1927.

One still hasn’t decided; nine don’t intend to teach; four will teach but more or less unwillingly; seven will only teach in the capital city and, seeing that this is practically impossible, they’ll either teach unwillingly or not at all; four impose

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Personal journal of Gustavo Capanema, April 1929, Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GCd 1929.04.00.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

certain other conditions; twelve, finally, are disposed to work no matter where, with a great deal of enthusiasm.⁷⁷

Many *normalistas* instead went on to become housewives and mothers, foregoing professional work outside of the home. Were normal school administrators simply in a state of denial about *normalistas*' probable future? By many accounts, they were not. Though the proposed goal of normal schools, both public and private, was to train primary teachers it was a well-known and even publically acknowledged fact that a great number of *normalistas* would never become teachers. With this truth taken into account, on a conscious or subconscious level, the Brazilian educational system trained *normalistas* not only for a potential future as professional teachers, but also as middle-class housewives. Normal schools were as much finishing schools as vocational institutions.

Almeida describes the education in the normal school where he taught as “a degree in waiting-for-a-husband”.⁷⁸ The most popular classes are those which “had a practical application in creating wives compatible with the high social positions of their future husbands.”⁷⁹ Even among those that truly wished to teach, a domestic life was deemed an important part of their futures:

It's notable, and let's say completely normal, that of the 37 young ladies surveyed, there wasn't a single one who that even joked about foreswearing marriage. None aspired to celibacy. With more or less enthusiasm, all of the 37 were either already engaged or waiting for the enchanted prince to come take them away.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ A. Almeida Júnior, *A Escola Pitoresca e outros trabalhos*, 2nd edition (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1953), 114.

⁷⁸ Almeida, 104.

⁷⁹ Maria Cândida Delgado Reis, *Tessitura de destinos: mulher e educação, São Paulo 1910/20/30* (São Paulo: EDUC, 1993), 58.

⁸⁰ Almeida, 104-05.

Many nineteenth-century observers were squeamish about eugenics' explicit connection to sexuality. And as eugenics was transformed normal school curricula and student bodies in the early twentieth century, its proponents often purposefully prudish when describing its effects.⁸¹ More critical observers, however, emphasized the apparently widespread sexualization and fetishization of *normalistas*. Adolfo Caminha's 1893 novel *A Normalista* is an early example of the sexualization of normalites. The novel's Lolita-esque *normalista* Maria do Carmo, on the surface so perfectly encapsulating Comte's ideal daughter-as-goddess en route to mother-as-goddess, is, for Caminha, both a victim and perpetrator of bourgeois lasciviousness. In *Parque Industrial* (1933), ex-*normalista* communist Patricia Galvão, disparagingly portrays normal schools as sexual training grounds for grasping aspirants to middle-class leisure. She spins off reformers' obsession with the morality and health of *normalistas*, and explores a darker side to the theme of the *normalista*'s body. In her novel she complains of the lax morality of *normalistas* and presents promiscuity as a major cause of drop outs. After a girl is caught alone in a room with her boyfriend, the gossip at the school derides her, "This is why *normalistas* have a reputation. They demoralize us!"⁸² Pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections force her young characters out of normal training. Though wholeheartedly critical of *normalista*'s complacency and even complicity in their

⁸¹ Seen in excerpt from *Correio Escolar*, "A educação embora humanista dever ter um character genuamente nacional," s.d. CPDOC – R303, where, though theories of mental hygiene and phrenology are discussed openly, "sexual education" is discussed vis-à-vis the advantages and disadvantages of coeducation.

⁸² Patricia Galvão, *Industrial Park*, trans. Elizabeth and K. David Jackson (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 29.

sexual subjugation, Galvão does, nonetheless, see the hypersexualization of *normalistas* as oppression.

Today, many countries experience the enduring effects of the nineteenth-century's feminization of teaching—above all, we have women teachers, especially in primary schools. However the way in which Brazilian normal schools were managed during the Old Republic, inspired by Comtean gender roles and educational models combined with a eugenicist preoccupation with genetic improvement, created lasting detriment to the Brazilian educational system. The most important effect of this positivist normal curriculum was an extreme shortage of qualified primary school teachers that lasted quite acutely into the 1960s. Particularly in rural areas and interior cities, local primary schools not infrequently had *illiterate* teachers.⁸³ Though normal schools turned out graduates by the thousands, this did not translate into actual teachers. And even those normalite graduates who did turn to teaching, for however long, were ill-equipped to actually teach the subjects required by successive Ministries of Education. Though they might be excellent cross-stitchers and very elegant dancers with the most delicate hands, they were neither trained in teaching methods nor educated in basic subjects like geometry, chemistry, or until the 1930s even history.

Positivist and eugenicist reformers during the Republic and into the 1930s, sought to modernize the country by encouraging the state to become actively involved in the welfare, upbringing, and education of the young. However, despite their desire to squash

⁸³ “Ensino Normal,” CPDOC, CMA pi Mariani c 1948 01.00

traditionalism, they were reluctant to fully challenge the status quo. White, well-to-do men, these reformers were jealous of their position in society and unwilling to completely undermine the patriarchal structure that had given them such privilege. In *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, Gilberto Freyre described young women as the most vulnerable and most repressed members of the patriarchal family. “The girl,” he wrote, “was denied even the slightest appearance of independence—even to speak before her elders. A responsive or intelligent girl would provoke horror and punishment.”⁸⁴ In the Republican-era normal school, white, middle-class teenaged girls were taught not how to rehabilitate underprivileged children, but how to give birth to and bring up as many future white, middle-class children as possible—to reconfigure Brazil’s population not through genocide, but through rampant reproduction. In this way, with a multi-generational goal and a willingness to interfere with the *most* private aspects of life, the modernizing Brazilian state made one of its first efforts to assert the primacy of the public over the private. The outcome, perhaps, was, as Roberto DaMatta has argued of Brazilian society more generally, a “between space” where the public could invade the private and the private could invade the public.⁸⁵

Normal schools are a useful case study in the role of youth in the early twentieth century for a number of reasons. First, because these were schools where teenagers were being prepared (in one way or another) to interact with children, they were the focus of debates that touched upon a wide range of ages, from small children to adolescents,

⁸⁴ Freyre, 510.

⁸⁵ Roberto DaMatta, *A Casa e a Rua: Espaço, Cidadania, Mulher e Morte no Brasil*, 5th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1997), especially 11-17.

offering a broad view of how youthfulness was conceived of in Republican Brazil. Also, the prevalence of positivism among well-educated members of the middling sectors meant that the ideology was strongly represented in the professoriate and administration of schools. Thus, normal schools provide a particularly stark example of the influence of positivism in how the newly-empowered state acted upon youth. Likewise, eugenicist thought placed great emphasis on the intersection of woman and child, and so was definitively influential in normal schools. Finally, and perhaps most importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, what happened in normal schools had far-reaching effects on subsequent generations. What I call the feminization of normal school curricula and the ensuing inadequacy of normal programs in effectively training and *placing* well-qualified primary teachers not only reinforced racial and class hierarchies, but also subjugated successive generations of *youth* by denying them effective educations. As I'll show in the following chapters, education and literacy were tremendously important for allowing young people to participate in nation-building and for eventually becoming politically active members of the nation.

Chapter 2

Growing Up in the *Estado Novo*

In the 1920s, the oligarchic political and economic power structure of the Old Republic faced challenges from diverse sectors of Brazilian society, and in 1930 the “Liberal Alliance” of Getúlio Vargas rose to power with widespread popular support. But by the mid-1930s ideological and political opposition to the regime contributed to a tumultuous “state of siege” that begat paranoia and violence throughout Brazil.¹ Communists, liberals, and fascists led uprisings that would ultimately contribute to the formation and consolidation of Vargas’s authoritarian *Estado Novo*, “New State”, regime. All of these factions, like the Positivists and eugenicists before them, sought influence over youth as a way of influencing the future shape of society. They used the rhetoric of protecting the young as a weapon in their political struggle. Vargas, as the at least temporary victor in this battle of ideologies, was the most able to enforce his vision of youth’s role in society. Two new youth organizations, established in the same year shortly after the founding of the *Estado Novo*, *Juventude Brasileira* (Brazilian Youth, JB) and the National Student Union (UNE) became important instruments of control in Vargas’s regime. This chapter will first explore the conditions and concerns that contributed to the rise of the *Estado Novo* and the place of young people within that political environment. Then, I will describe the foundations, organizational bases, ideological influences, and activities of *Juventude Brasileira* and UNE.

¹ Stanley E. Hilton, *Brazil and the Great Powers, 1930-1939: The Politics of Trade Rivalry* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1975), 168.

Examining the history of youth organizations during the *Estado Novo* will challenge two commonly-held historiographical assumptions about the regime: that the *Estado Novo* was non-ideological and that the *Estado Novo* was basically unchallenged until 1945. The *Estado Novo* has long been understood by many historians, both in North America and Brazil, as having been purely personalistic: “the regime of ‘His Majesty, the President.’”² Thomas Skidmore notably described the regime as “without any consistent ideological basis. Vargas hoped to preempt for own political advantage the direction of social change and economic growth in Brazil. Despite the corporatist trappings, his Estado Novo was a highly personal creation.”³ However, I will argue that examining the relationship between organized youth and the government demonstrates how powerfully a coherent (if necessarily flexible) *estadonovista* ideology was projected onto young Brazilians. The history of these organizations, particularly UNE, will also challenge Skidmore’s oft-cited assertion that “During the Estado Novo, Vargas’ efficient censorship of public opinion had silenced the voices of dissent.” The *Estado Novo* was the time when a significant number of Brazilian youth made their first steps away from being politically acted upon toward becoming political actors. The regime that created JB and UNE would ultimately be brought down, in no small way, by JB and UNE.

² João de Scatimburgo, quoted in Nelson Jahr Garcia, *Estado Novo Ideologia e Propaganda Política: A Legitimação do Estado Autoritário perante as Classes Subalternas* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1982), 49

³ Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 32

The rationale of the *Estado Novo*

In 1934, the broad-based revolution that had brought Getúlio Vargas to power passed a reformist Constitution and shortly thereafter Vargas was elected to a four-year term as President. Though violence was required to install Vargas in 1930, and to put down secessionist revolts like the Paulista War of 1932, by 1934 a stable and even partially democratic government seemed poised to move forward with its social and economic reforms. Daryle Williams writes of these “critical years,” “The new constitution promised to democratize Brazilian republicanism. Important liberalizing provisions included the constitutional guarantee of women’s enfranchisement, the protection of civilian liberties, and the extension of state protections to various occupational groups, including unionized workers. Liberal reforms hoped that the return to constitutional rule would create a foundation for a strong national political system.”⁴ However, by the time of scheduled elections in 1938, Brazil had just faced four politically tumultuous years marked by partisan revolts and finally the imposition of a nationalist and authoritarian dictatorship.

Throughout much of the 1930s, Vargas saw Communism as the gravest threat to his regime. Founded with Comintern support in 1922, the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) had seduced many former anarchists from the industrial working class, gained support in the countryside while adherents campaigned against the Old Republic in the late-1920s, and by the mid-1930s saw itself in a position to challenge the Vargas presidency. In 1935, Communist rebels rose up in Natal, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro, and

⁴ Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 60.

quickly found that they were *not* in a position to challenge the regime.⁵ The resulting crackdown led to mass imprisonments of Communists and a pervading sense of paranoia in the government.

Though the PCB was hardly a serious threat to the military and police power of the Brazilian state, neither before nor after the 1935 uprising, Vargas's fears of communist infiltration and plotting were not unfounded. Since the 1920s, Brazilian communists had propagandized heavily those sectors of society they deemed most supportive and/or in need of their revolution, including the young. In the 1930s, communist intrigue riddled even the tamest stronghold of middle-class Brazilian society: the normal school. In 1932, some boys from the Red Federation of Students (*Federação Vermelha de Estudantes*) passed out bulletins written "especially for normalistas" to the girls at Rio's Institute of Education one day after classes. When the bulletins showed up littered around classrooms and school bathrooms, the Institute's director, Lourenço Filho, reported the incident to the police. A 1936 incident at the same normal school shows just how much the stakes of Brazil's 'red panic' had increased after the 1935 Communist uprising. The school librarian, Dona Margarida, revealed to Lourenço Filho that she had uncovered an assassination plot against Getúlio Vargas tangentially involving one or more Institute teachers. At Lourenço Filho's request, the police took depositions from various teachers. The next week, an Institute of Education teacher was interviewed by *O Povo* newspaper accusing Lourenço Filho himself of being a communist, a Bolshevik, and, correspondingly, of hiring the sort of teachers who would want to do a thing like

⁵In Shawn C. Smallman's succinct turn-of-phrase, "The rebels never had a chance." See *Fear & Memory in the Brazilian Army & Society, 1889-1954* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 51.

assassinate Vargas. What more evidence do you need, the paper asked, than the presence of books about the Soviet Union in the school library? Lourenço Filho's letter of explanation to the President, clearly penned immediately upon his first reading of the *O Povo* article, is panicked. His normally curved and elegant handwriting is replaced by a scrawl as he explained his actions over the past week, defended his innocence, and decried communism. Lourenço Filho, a friend of Education Minister Gustavo Capanema and of Vargas himself, retained his position unscathed.⁶

In the mid-1930s, a much more powerful and realistic threat to the Vargas government came from the same ideological sphere that had brought the regime to power. Liberalism, as both a domestic and international force, both tangibly and ideologically menaced the regime. The 1935 founding of the National Liberal Alliance (ANL) was one of the most numerically significant contestations of Vargas's presidency.⁷ The ANL did have a rather tenuous relationship with the PCB,⁸ but their agenda was ultimately electoral. The Rio de Janeiro youth-directed magazine of the ANL, *Juventude*, described itself as "a democratic magazine [...] that will fight for the immediate interests of youth", including better working conditions in factories and fields, fewer working hours to improve health, free medical and dental care for students and workers, primary schools that distribute food and clothing, lower fees for secondary schools, and "against the anti-democratic, military, and dictatorial clowns."⁹ Their calls for more fully-realized

⁶ LF t. Inst. Educ. Rolo 6, fot 433-1005, FGV-CPDOC.

⁷ According to Brian P. Owensby, as many as four hundred thousand members joined the organization within just four months of its founding. See *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 141.

⁸ See Smallman, 51, 206.

⁹ AEL/R/0033 "Apresentação," *Juventude RJ*, 1:1, 1 May 1935, p. 1

electoral democracy and a greater challenge to industrial oligarchies quickly won the ANL the ire of Vargas's national security forces and the organization was summarily outlawed just a few months after its founding.¹⁰

After 1935, with the apparent destruction of Communism and Liberalism as tools for protesting the inadequacies of Vargas's regime, the far right rose to fill the vacuum of dissent. The Brazilian Integralist Action (AIB, or *Integralistas*), was a fascist political party strongly influenced by both Portuguese and Italian fascism.¹¹ Founded in 1932, the "Green Shirts" spent much of the mid-1930s clashing with Communists and Liberals in the streets of Brazil.¹² The party was particularly attractive to teenaged boys and young men of European descent, and after 1935, their numbers expanded and even Vargas began to adopt their symbols and slogans, including using their motto "Fatherland, family, and religion" in major speeches.¹³ In 1937, as the country prepared for the upcoming presidential election, armed conflicts between Integralists and disenfranchised left-wing dissenters terrorized many Brazilian cities.¹⁴

In this struggle of ideologies, many key government and military leaders attributed the violence and political chaos of the mid-1930s to "aliens," "internationalism," and "foreign ideologies."¹⁵ Such rhetoric coincided with a sense that Europe (the source of these alien philosophies) was past its time and even on the verge of collapse. In 1934, Carlos Martins, later ambassador to Washington, wrote to Foreign

¹⁰ The rise and fall of the ANL are explained in greater depth in Owensby, Chapter 6.

¹¹ João Fábio Bertonha, "Plínio Salgado o integralismo brasileiro e as suas relações com Portugal (1932-1975)," *Análise Social* 46, no. 198 (January 2011): 65-87.

¹² Hilton, 169-170.

¹³ Ibid, 168-9.

¹⁴ Ibid, 169-70.

¹⁵ Smallman, 55.

Minister Afrânio de Melo Franco, warning of Europe's "collective insanity" and of the "imminent change or end of European civilization."¹⁶ It seems that even children may have sensed this preoccupation with Europe's coming demise. In 1936, as the Second Italo-Ethiopian War raged on the other side of the planet, a teacher from Rio's Escola Estados Unidos sketched notes on a overheard conversation between a group of her twelve and thirteen year old students: "Italy won, but she's gonna go at it with England. Then England will fight with Germany, Germany with France, France with Spain, Spain with Portugal, and Europe will end." According to the teacher, one student even framed his contribution to the conversation with an apparent conscientiousness the superiority of Brazilian "racial democracy" over European nationalist imperialism, saying, "The 'Selaisie' says that as long as there's even one black man left in Abyssinia, he'll keep fighting. But as long as there are blacks, Italy will keep fighting. She doesn't like blacks."¹⁷

As war loomed in Europe and European ideologies destabilized Brazil, Vargas "conspicuously" endorsed no candidate for the 1938 election.¹⁸ Having made his plans and appointed a friendly Minister of War in (later president) Eurico Dutra, Vargas released reports of a supposed Communist plot of mass assassinations of elected officials. On November 10, 1937, with both the military and the Integralist party behind him, Vargas declared the *Estado Novo*.¹⁹

¹⁶ Quoted in Hilton, 5-6.

¹⁷ Arthur Ramos, "Conversas Com Crianças," sd., BN – M – 38, 1, 003

¹⁸ Skidmore, 24.

¹⁹ Ibid, 24-29.

Policies and Instruments of Control of the *Estado Novo*

A children's book about the life of Getúlio Vargas, later disseminated to every schoolchild in Brazil, described the advent of the *Estado Novo* like this:

On the 10th of November, 1937, the congressmen arriving at the capitol found the doors closed: nevermore will you hear there those stupid and useless chats and 200 mil-reis a day for each of them. The people filled the streets with joy. The sky filled with stars. On that night, a night filled with light and happiness, the President arrived at the radio microphone and announced the birth of the *Estado Novo* and the death of the Most Excellent and Illustrious Madame Politics... And on that day even the worms complained that her rotting corpse was poisonous.

Vargas's radio broadcast and release of a new Constitution on the evening of November 10, 1937, spelled out many of the new policies of the *Estado Novo*. Vargas abrogated the 1934 Constitution, dissolved congress, gave himself a six-year term and the power to rule by decree, and suspended interest payments on foreign debt. "The constitutional organization of 1934, poured in the classic molds of liberalism and a representative system, revealed lamentable faults," he argued that night, and "[was] outdated in relation to the spirit of the time [...] and intended for a reality that had ceased to exist."²⁰

Though the initial response in Brazil was either quiet or quieted, the rest of the world was either shocked or intrigued by Vargas's move. Newsweek claimed "Vargas Makes Brazil First American Fascist State."²¹ The next week, Newsweek followed on with the headline: "Fellow Dictators Now Dream of Imitating Vargas."²² The German Ambassador to Brazil wrote blithely: "As for the effect of the turn of events on Brazil's relations with Germany, it can neither economically nor politically be an unfavorable

²⁰ Quoted in Hilton, 171.

²¹ Headline, *Newsweek*, November 22, 1937.

²² Headline, *Newsweek*, November 29, 1937.

one, since the president, who is friendly towards us, remains in power.”²³ Though in the coming months Germany and Brazil did draw closer together economically, Stanley Hinton argues that Vargas worried about his new regime’s close links with fascist governments and the Integralist party in Brazil. The first few months of the *Estado Novo*, though proclaimed throughout the world as a fascist dictatorship, were largely concerned with limiting the influence and power of the Integralists, perhaps to demonstrate that this change in government was a purely “Brazilian phenomenon.”²⁴ The AIB was outlawed and then decimated after instigating a putsch in early 1938.

Despite this rejection of Integralism, the consolidation of the *Estado Novo* reflected in many ways the transformations that fascist states in Europe were making. The new Constitution of 1937 was largely based on Poland’s April Constitution, and in some Brazilian circles was even disparagingly dubbed *a Polaca*, “the Polish One”, a nickname for European prostitutes.²⁵ Besides deconstructing all forms of electoral politics, the Constitution and early decrees implemented new mechanisms of authoritarian control. The national police, which had had anti-insurgent authority since 1935, became a full-fledged secret police under Vargas’s direct control for silently stamping out dissent. The Department of Propaganda underwent a partial merger with the “Special Police” to become the Department of Printing and Propaganda (DIP) that oversaw censorship of all books, periodicals, and plays, as well as speeches and correspondence by government

²³ Quoted in Hilton, 173.

²⁴ Hilton, 174.

²⁵ Levine, 51.

officials. By late 1938, sixty percent of all newspaper and magazine articles were *written* by the DIP.²⁶

How would this new regime and its authoritarian apparatuses affect young people? Vargas had made the improvement of living conditions for children an important part of his regime's policies and rhetoric since the early 1930s, and young people featured prominently in this new *estadonovista* Constitution. Article 127 reads "Children and youth should be the objects of care and special guarantees on the part of the State, which will take all the means necessary to assure them the physical and moral conditions of a safe and healthy life and a harmonious development of their faculties." "Moral conditions" and "harmonious development", two ideas which belie the conservative and corporatist ideology of the new regime, would guide the government's interactions with *Juventude Brasileira* and UNE.

Juventude Brasileira

The earliest seeds for the formation of a national youth organization were planted in early 1938 by Francisco Campos, Minister of Justice and one of the most powerful far-rightists in the *Estado Novo*. In memos disseminated to the President's office and the Ministries of War and Education he proposed the creation of a Youth Army, like the youth groups in Germany, Italy, and Portugal, with military ranks and ruled by military discipline. Using the highly nationalistic language that had already become typical, both publically and privately, in the Brazilian government, Campos wrote that he envisioned youth "oriented

²⁶ Ibid, 60.

in a single direction [...] and disciplined in the elevated principles of patriotism, which is the appointed service that the *Estado Novo* gives to the Patria and, above all, to the Future of Brazil.”²⁷

Campos believed that a centralized and disciplined youth organization along the lines of the Hitler Youth could help inculcate the regime’s goal of national devotion in young people, especially those from the urban working class, which as late as the 1930’s was described as “essentially foreign.”²⁸ A British visitor to Brazil in 1940 wrote, “Germany, like Japan, considers her immigrants in South America as ‘minorities’, fellow countrymen that can conveniently acquire foreign citizenship but that should retain their ties of cultural and political utility to the Fatherland. (...) In fact, the German consular corps and commercial agents have already begun to infiltrate the Brazilian colonies with their programs and propaganda of ‘racial solidarity.’”²⁹ Though in 1938 Brazil maintained friendly relations with the countries that had contributed most of its immigrants—Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, and Japan—Campos hoped a youth army could effectively indoctrinate the next generation to see themselves as Brazilians *first*.

In response to Campos’s call to arms, synopses of different extant youth organizations were quickly disseminated to the relevant Ministers, including descriptions of the structure, funding schemes, and activities of Germany’s *Hitlerjugend*, Italy’s *Opera Nazionale Balilla* and *Giovane Fascista*, and Portugal’s *Mocidade Portuguesa*. One industrious bureaucrat even researched parallel organizations in the United States

²⁷ Francisco Campos, Memo, s.d., GC g1938.08.09

²⁸ Gambini, 58-9.

²⁹ Quoted in Gambini, 61.

before concluding that “the tradition of North American liberalism does not permit a national organization connected to the state”, and so youth leagues were private, like the YMCA.³⁰

Minister of War and key co-conspirator in the establishment of the regime, General Eurico Gaspar Dutra, recommended caution when trying to emulate these foreign fascist organizations. “In order to achieve the envisioned goal, it becomes necessary that the organization of Brazilian youth be made in accordance with our realities, good or bad, and never under the models that don’t adjust to our environment... Listen, Brazil is essentially different from those nations.” First, he argued, Brazil was defined by social and geographic heterogeneity and disparity: “The conditions of life in Milan are more or less similar to those in Turin. And the poorest town in Germany still has a school, a sports field, and a police station... Brazil has cities that are bigger than Belgium, and where life works quite differently than in a typical Portuguese village.” Second, illiteracy, not lack of military discipline, was the most important hindrance to the nation. Third, he noted, Brazil was not a totalitarian state under perpetual threat of war.³¹

This criticism prompted discussion on the role of militarism in the proposed “Youth Army.” The Ministry of War was itself divided on the issue. Dutra questioned the necessity of military leadership after calculations revealed that the proposed format would require about one fifth of all sergeants in the Brazilian military to serve as cell leaders. The Director of the Military Library believed that a militarist model was necessary, but perhaps could be done more in the style of Scouting, though “All

³⁰ Documents on the foundation of *Juventude Brasileira*, CPDOC GC g1938.08.09

³¹ Eurico Dutra, Memo re: Youth Army, no date, GC g1938.08.09

international institutions, including Scouting, present the danger of infiltration by propagandistic elements with exotic ideas or of the influences of organizations like ‘Intelligence Service’, ‘*Gestapo*’, ‘*Komintern*’, ‘Secret Service’, ‘*Service d’Informations*’, etc.” Of most importance, he argued, was that boys be instructed and disciplined by men. “With the type of instruction that’s practiced in Brazil, we will risk, as we’ve already seen examples of, creating a generation of weak and useless *rapazes*, effeminated by the Freudian influence that they feel during their entire period of development. In France and Germany there are male teachers in sufficient numbers to educate boys (*meninos*) so that they grow up with the masculine characteristics that they should rightfully have.” (He blamed the lack of male students at normal schools for this deficiency.)³²

The Ministry of Education, under Gustavo Capanema, expressed deep concerns about structuring the organization as a “youth army” at all. An unsigned letter from the ministry argued that excessive military presence would create distrust, especially among the partisans that the regime had dedicated the mid-1930s to destroying. “If it assumes a paramilitary character or a fascist coloration, Integralism and communism will rise again.” However, did that mean that it would be better to wait and see how the coming war ends before deciding how to organize Brazilian youth? “No! No matter the economic and military outcome of the war, liberal democracy has already lost politically and socially. Its fundamentals are irredeemably condemned... Christian corporatism that

³² Aristoteles Xavier, letter to Capanema et al, 21 May 1940, GC g1938.08.09

smashes Jewish financiers and international monopolies will float above the waters of the coming flood.”³³ What form, then, would a Christian corporatist youth organization take?

From Campos’s proposal of a youth army in early 1938 until March 1940, the Ministries of War and Education were overtaken by incessant bureaucratic squabbling on this issue, with only occasional input from the President’s Office. The Ministry of War hashed out a proposed decree by mid-1938, for “The National Organization of Youth”, voluntary for all children ages 8 to 17, self-funded, directed under the National Division of Eugenics and Medical Assistance, and featuring frequent anthropometric assessments, rural labor rotations, and a great deal of pre-military training. Minister of Education Gustavo Capanema responded to the proposal, “Millions of 8 to 18 year olds do not an army make!” He urged the elimination of work rotations, medical assistance, and military education for a focus on moral and civic instruction, under the direction of the Ministry of Education, beginning at age seven (when children started school), and obligatory for all students lest it become partisan. In conclusion, he noted, “If you think it’ll pay for itself through member donations, you’re crazy.”³⁴ The President’s contribution to the process included exhortations to wrap the whole thing up, and occasional gibes at Capanema. While hashing out some final details in late 1939, including which historical figure would be the patron of the organization, Vargas joked about Capanema’s choice of the revolutionary Tiradentes, who like Capanema was from the state of Minas Gerais: “Tiradentes was basically impotent and hardly an exemplary hero!”³⁵

³³ “Notas reservadas” memo, s.d., GC g1938.08.09

³⁴ Gustavo Capanema, memo, 19 September 1938, GC g1938.08.09

³⁵ Letter from Getúlio Vargas to Gustavo Capanema, s.d., GC g1938.08.09

Finally on March 8, 1940, Decree-Law No. 2,072 established *Juventude Brasileira*, ‘Brazilian Youth’. Its structure closely cleaved to Capanema’s proposal made a year before, though its patron was the Duque de Caxias, a nineteenth century war hero who, like Vargas, was from Rio Grande do Sul. Upon publication of the decree, individuals and organizations that had been tangentially related to the process of its creation warmly congratulated Capanema, who had ultimately made himself the brains behind the JB and the man on top of the organization chart. The director of the Museu Paulista praised the JB for encouraging, “the security and enhancement of the *Patria*, love of military duty, discipline, attachment to the home, perseverance in work, perfection of physical education and respect for hygiene, reverence for the flag and national anthem, vehement interest in intellectual and cultural development,” in short, all the nationalist and corporatist values that the regime espoused.³⁶ The Boy Scouts of Brazil, founded in 1924, immediately offered to integrate with *Juventude Brasileira*, and a decree quickly took them up on the offer, leaving them no choice in the matter.³⁷

Though 211,000 youths took part in inaugural parades throughout Brazil in the spring of 1940, it took years more for the Ministry of Education to resolve what JB would actually *do*. Questions of uniforms, badges, flags, and funding consumed uncountable man-hours of bureaucratic work. Between 1940 and 1943, 17 decrees issued by Vargas dealt with *Juventude Brasileira*. Months of debates preceded a 1940 contest in which students would write an epic poem about JB, with the winning entry to be enshrined as

³⁶ Letter from Alfonso de Tauney to Gustavo Capanema, 20 May 1940, GC g1938.08.09

³⁷ Letter from União de Escoteiros Brasileiros to Getúlio Vargas, March 1940, GC g1938.08.09; Decreto-Lei 2.310, 14 June 1940.

the organization's "official poem." Ironically, in the end all of the entries were deemed unacceptable. The Ministry promulgated a long-list of holidays to be celebrated in JB cells—33 in total. October 23rd was Day of the Aviator, September 21st Tree Day, April 7th Abdication of Dom Pedro I Day, November 27th Day of the Communist Uprising of 1935 and its Victims. Most important, April 19th, Getúlio Vargas's birthday, was the Day of Youth. The slough of holidays each had an accompanying historical, national, or ethical lesson, but also seemed designed to make work—to keep them busy, both the bureaucrats and the children.

Eventually JB came to have two primary activities: extra classes at school led by specially screened teachers that inculcated moral and civic duties, and mass rallies in support of Getúlio Vargas and the *Estado Novo*. Capanema, considering what lessons were most important for Brazilian youth of the 1940s to learn, opined, "The Brazilian *moço* is a severe judge of his ancestors, because unfortunately he does not believe in his race and lives struck with admiration of all things foreign ... The young generations were educated in the illusion of Brazil being a latent paradise that hasn't already bettered itself solely through the negligence of its inhabitants."³⁸ The work of JB, then, would be to instill nationalism and respect for a corporatist social order, where each individual had an appointed and respected (if necessarily limited) role in society with corresponding duties and obligations. Both of these values could be promoted, the regime believed, through stimulating a cult to Vargas.

³⁸ Internal Memos, Ministry of Education, June 1941, CPDOC GC g1938.08.09

In the lesson plan disseminated for the May 1st Workers' Day holiday, all of these elements featured prominently. On April 30th students of every age at every school in Brazil would be taught, first, that Workers' Day is not just a day off school, but "a day of spirit and fervor, a day of national confraternity"; second, that through learning to work "the young can prove that ultimately all professions in a Christian and democratic society are equally noble"; and third, that workers' rights had already been guaranteed by President Getúlio Vargas, including the eight hour work day, holidays, minimum wage, pensions, workplace safety, and unions.³⁹ Because Capanema had successfully lobbied for JB membership to be mandatory for all students, this message's range was huge.⁴⁰

The mass rallies of *Juventude Brasileira* were events on an enormous scale and tended to have explicit pro-*Estado Novo* messages, the easier to hear and understand in a crowd of thousands, the better. At one Rio de Janeiro rally, a teenaged JB member was chosen to deliver a speech written by the Department of Printing and Propaganda on the role of the Brazilian girl and woman in society. In this speech the socially conservative gender values of corporatism were made uncommonly explicit, perhaps because it was written for a young audience, "The Brazilian woman must fight, fight hard, not to become equal to man in his daily work, but fight to make healthy homes that men will protect... If the husband can't make enough to support a couple, the wife can certainly go to work, but only if it's strictly necessary. And she should still do the work of running the

³⁹ "Message from the Ministry of Education to the Directors of Juventude Brasileira in primary schools and secondary schools – Commemorating the Day of Work" CPDOC, GC pi Capanema, G 1943.04.30, rolo 7 fot 719-720

⁴⁰ Perhaps as little as 25% of the approximately 8 million Brazilian children in this age bracket were enrolled in school in 1940 (See David N. Planck, *The Means of Our Salvation: Public Education in Brazil, 1930-1995* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), but that still means 1 out of every 20 Brazilians studied this exact lesson on April 30, 1943.

house, where she's irreplaceable. A single girl can more easily work and *should*.”⁴¹ These rallies, though made up of youth, also preached powerful messages to adults regarding the extent of Vargas's power and authority in the country. A 1942 rally speech by Capanema hinted at the apparent effectiveness of Vargas's domination of young Brazilians, saying, “There was once a time when education was considered preparation for life, a preparation for the future. You were for the future. Not today! Today, with the support of President Getúlio Vargas, you already *are*. That is to say, you already exist, as a present reality, with a present value, as an essential force of the present.” He concluded, “Getúlio Vargas is hope. Getúlio Vargas is the greatest hope. Before him your attitude must be, Brazilian youth, nothing less than undying loyalty.”⁴²

But by 1942, the role and rhetoric of JB was already being questioned. After years of diplomatic negotiations, and finally under strong pressure from the United States, Brazil entered World War II on the side of the Allies. Vargas and the Ministry of Education no longer wanted JB to so closely resemble Europe's fascist youth armies. As a show of friendship with the U.S., JB added a new holiday and lesson plan to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Thomas Jefferson in April 1943, but 1943 was almost wholly given over to squabbling about how the JB might subtly restructure while still maintaining its nationalist, pro-Vargas color.⁴³ The daily functioning of the organization changed little.

⁴¹ Speech by Nely Laranja Menezes, 19 August 1941, Rio de Janeiro. CPDOC GC g1938.08.09

⁴² Speech by Gustavo Capanema, 18 April 1942, Rio de Janeiro. CPDOC, GC pi Capanema G 1942.04.18, rolo 7, fot. 678-683

⁴³ “Message from the Ministry of Education to the Directors of Juventude Brasileira in High Schools and Middle Schools [colégios e ginasios] – Bicentenary of the birth of Thomas Jefferson”, April 13, 1943 GC pi Capanema, G1943.04.13, rolo 7, fot 712-713

By 1945, the *Estado Novo* was under fire. The contradictions of Brazilian troops fighting and dying in Italy to defend democracy, while being unable to vote in their own country,⁴⁴ had slowly contributed to a storm of dissent. Though Vargas had promised an election at the end of the war, distrust of the regime exploded in early 1945. In March of that year, most leading newspapers concerted to stop submitting articles to the DIP for censorship. One of the very first issues they addressed after refusing censorship was *Juventude Brasileira*. A series of articles in Rio's *Correio da Manhã* lambasted the organization and its leadership. Capanema was framed as the nefarious mastermind behind a dark plan to brainwash the children of Brazil. "The Minister who walked around after the Revolution of 1930 wearing a black shirt, wanted to give his own timid contribution to the undisguised fascism that's been instituted in this country since 1937. He adopted a plan similar to *Giuventu Fascista* [sic], the administration of which he considered his totalitarian duty."⁴⁵ He was particularly criticized for having invented the stipulation that JB membership be mandatory, which at the time he had argued would prevent it from being partisan. The newspaper interpreted it as another element of the brainwashing: "It was the obligatory presence of all students of all ages that gave the impression that he was trying to instill in those developing minds the principle of respect to the dictatorial regime and to the men that needed to take advantage of this regime in order to perpetuate their own power."⁴⁶ However, the paper also argued that Capanema's scheme had been an utter failure. "If there was a fascist plan that never took hold in this

⁴⁴ This juxtaposition was reputedly popularized by General Dutra after his visitation of the troops in Italy in late 1944 according to Nelson Jahr Garcia, 17-18.

⁴⁵ *Correio da Manhã*, 4 March 1945

⁴⁶ Ibid.

country, despite the interests of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship, it was this ‘*Juventude Brasileira*’ styled after the ‘Hitler Youth.’” Indeed, claimed the *Correio da Manhã*, the JB had never truly existed because Brazilian youth “always manifested an instinctive revulsion for this organization, inspired and designed after the Nazi model,” and any time they had marched in parades and “waved the flags” they had been forced to by the DIP.⁴⁷

Juventude Brasileira truly had been designed to indoctrinate youth with loyalty to the regime and its “Christian corporatist” values. It was invented as a mechanism of control, to enhance the power and legitimize the authority of the *Estado Novo*. But in 1945, *Juventude Brasileira* became one of the most powerful arguments *against* the regime. In a very youthful country like mid-century Brazil, almost every single member of urban, middle-class society would have been affected by the requirements of JB, as their child, grandchild, niece or nephew was obliged to buy uniforms, recite anthems, and attend parades celebrating Vargas’s power. After the legitimacy and physical domination of the *Estado Novo* had already been challenged (as I’ll discuss in the next section on UNE), JB became a singularly repulsive aspect of the dying regime, one that had the reach and rhetorical power to unite millions against the regime.

The organization fell apart quite quickly in 1945. In August the Rio de Janeiro school directors’ union wrote Capanema about an upcoming scheduled JB rally. They promised they would try to make the students march, but vacillated, “It is feared that any attitude of insistence assumed by the directors of the schools could provoke disfavorable public relations and unforeseen consequences. Feeling, on one hand, responsibility to

⁴⁷ *Correio da Manhã*, 3 March 1945

prevent this, and on the other, not wanting to cease collaborating for the glory of civic celebrations, and in face of the outbreak of flu that, even though it is getting better, is not yet wiped out, we directors decided to consult with you, Minister, on what we should now do concerning the convenience of whether or not the parade should happen.”⁴⁸ The parade did not take place. In October, the regime fell and JB bureaucrats stopped receiving paychecks. *Juventude Brasileira* simply faded away.

UNE, the National Student Union

The National Student Union was established almost simultaneously with *Juventude Brasileira*, but through a significantly different process. In December 1938, student unions from around Brazil met in Rio de Janeiro for the second annual National Student Congress. The most important resolution of this congress was that these disparate unions should make a more lasting, cohesive, and formal bond that would allow more consistent efforts to improve conditions for students. To achieve this end, the Congress negotiated with the federal Ministry of Education for funding to establish a headquarters, the *Casa do Estudante do Brasil*, and officially formed the National Student Union.

By mid-1939, student leaders had coordinated 76 student unions from 17 states, including high school, college, and university students, into its membership. They quickly established a charter that proclaimed, “The National Student Union, inspired by democratic principles, is the autonomous entity of representation and coordination of the

⁴⁸ Letter from O. Iraúia Lund to Gustavo Capanama, 17 August 1945, CPDOC GC g1938.08.09

student bodies of the establishments of higher learning in the country.”⁴⁹ The work and activities of the organization were largely determined by input from its constituents. Their first national meeting included discussions of international exchanges, intervarsity sports, balancing the responsibilities of women students, hygiene, tuition, and fees. The directorate soon conducted a national survey of members, with questions like “Do you plan to work in an urban or rural area?”, “Do you like sports?”, “Has working impeded your studies?”, “Do you live with your family?”, and “What national problem most concerns you?” in an effort to more accurately gauge the living conditions and priorities of constituents.⁵⁰ UNE even commissioned a study to determine what most impeded secondary and post-secondary students in the Northeast, among the poorest regions of the country. The study determined that “the preeminent necessity of buying books,” when “our libraries are truly museums of antiquities,” was more than many poor students could bear. They recommended public libraries throughout the country and university libraries with lending rights to enrolled students.⁵¹

Though autonomy was a founding principle of UNE, its biannually elected leaders discovered early on that in order to achieve their goals, the organization must have not only a working relationship with the national government, but even a *dependent* relationship. As Gustavo Capanema had argued to JB organizers, student donations alone could not and would not support the management of a national organization. As a consequence, UNE appealed directly to Getúlio Vargas when initially seeking

⁴⁹ *Estatutos da UNE*, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

⁵⁰ *Student Census of the Universities of Brazil*, November 1941, GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

⁵¹ Aluizio Moreira Lima, “The Poor Student and Doctrinaire Influences”, presented at 5th National Congress, September 18, 1942 GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

government recognition and support. They stressed that “almost the totality of student organizations in the country are harmoniously united in this body,” but that “[w]ithout the support and tutelage of the government it is not possible to create, within the current Brazilian reality, an organization that lends sufficient and efficient assistance to students, nor to coordinate their extracurricular activities.” They were careful though, considering that the “current Brazilian reality” was the *Estado Novo* dictatorship, to insist upon autonomy from the outset. “Without the guarantee to students of political and administrative autonomy,” the directorate warned, “it will not be possible to make them accept a centralized organization.”⁵² Vargas accepted their petition, placed UNE under the purview of the Ministry of Education, and UNE reciprocally added a stipulation to their charter limiting their role in the ideological battles of the day: “UNE may not participate in any partisan domestic politics.”⁵³

The tension between autonomy from and dependence on the *Estado Novo* essentially shaped the first years of UNE’s existence. Brazil’s entrance into World War II sparked two conflicts, of different kinds and degrees, between UNE and the regime. Shortly after severing relations with Germany, in March of 1942 the Brazilian government seized the headquarters of the Sociedade Germania, a stately mansion at Praia do Flamengo no. 132 in one of Rio de Janeiro’s most fashionable neighborhoods.⁵⁴ UNE, now a firmly established national union with connections to the state, was given the newly acquired building as a larger headquarters. However, conflict quickly arose

⁵² Letter from the *Casa do Estudante do Brasil* to Getúlio Vargas, 10 august 1939, GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

⁵³ Estatutos da UNE, GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

⁵⁴ Gambini, 69.

when just a few months later, the Secretariat of *Juventude Brasileira* was relocated to share quarters with UNE. The students entered into what Gustavo Capanema called “a state of open agitation,” and outraged telegrams flooded into the Ministry of Education from student associations all over Brazil. One concerned student group from Manaus, over 1700 miles from Rio, telegrammed: “Your excellency directed that the building on Rua Flamengo was for UNE and UNE only!” Meanwhile, seeing that there was contention as to the ownership of the building, the Aeronautic Health Service appealed directly to Vargas for use of the mansion. Capanema, inundated with pressures from UNE constituents, finally obtained their sole use of the building in perpetuity.⁵⁵ This episode, essentially a struggle over government resources, but also of status within the government, was UNE’s first real test at mobilization. The union showed that they could effectively organize students from numerous regions of the country to achieve goals in the national capital.

The limits of this capacity, and of UNE’s organizational autonomy, were on display at roughly the same time as the debate over the Flamengo mansion was raging. The battle was over whether and up to what point UNE would be permitted to confront the government on a policy matter. Specifically, Brazil’s declaration of war, though accompanied by huge levels of propaganda and pro-war sentiment throughout the country, divided UNE members on the question of whether the organization should take a position against forced conscription. The struggle broke out when president H lio de Almeida, on behalf of many students and members of the Union, began to lobby against a

⁵⁵ Various memos, telegrams, notepads from GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

potential military draft as a threat to students. Before his election to the UNE presidency, Almeida, an engineering student from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, had been one of the primary organizers of a student movement in support of ending Brazil's neutral stance in the war and declaring against the Axis.⁵⁶ But as UNE president in late 1942, Almeida began to lobby the government for a guarantee that students would not be drafted, should conscription become a reality. With all of the regime's focus on war mobilization, even this rather mild affront was impermissible to Vargas. Almeida was forcibly removed from the UNE presidency in early 1943, with a renunciation speech drafted by DIP. Now, the new position of UNE became one of "unconditional support for the wartime politics of the Brazilian government." The leadership oriented its activities around the question: "How can students effectively work for the complete mobilization of the economic resources of the country, maximizing their usefulness for the necessities of war?" The group held war bond drives and raised funds for the Air Force.⁵⁷ The Union's rhetoric also became stridently pro-Vargas, even adopting the "fifth column" language that was common in the more paranoid propaganda of the time. The "Manifesto of Bahian Students" at the Sixth National Congress reads like it could have been delivered at a *Juventude Brasileira* rally, "As students, *moços* full of patriotism and enthusiasm, we raise high the flag of national unity with the government... Our flag will crush the fifth column, redeem out spilt blood, and totally destroy and desecrate the Axis murderers. Long live the unity of all Brazilians behind their government! Long live

⁵⁶ Mônica Kornis, *Verbetes biográfico de Hélio de Almeida*, CPDOC.

⁵⁷ UNE internal memo, s.d., GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

President Getúlio Vargas! Long live UNE!”⁵⁸ By mid-1943, UNE seemed to be *demobilized* by the government. They had tasted the power and, for Almeida, perhaps even the violent force of the regime, and had submitted to towing the line. However, this defeat was just the first battle in a war that would, in the end, bring down a dictator.

Before World War II, UNE’s relationship with the government had been cordial, but hinted at a deeper rivalry. With a great deal of polite obsequiousness, student leaders and government officials had spat barbs at each other for years. A 1940 UNE event when Minister Capanema visited his home state of Minas Gerais illustrates how and on what points student leaders saw themselves as being at odds with the regime. A medical student speaking at the meeting described youth as “a renovating force and the dynamic promoter of the greatness of the Patria” an apparently uncontroversial idea, especially fashionable in fascist rhetoric of the day, that pointed to the rhetorical power of the idea of youth. Another student’s speech followed, assuring Capanema: “Be secure in the sincerity that animates [our homages to your Excellency], because they are sent from young hearts, and the young don’t lie, because in the words of Ingenieros [José Ingenieros, Argentine positivist then communist], ‘they’re not complicit in the past.’” Local student union leader Aureo Fulgencio then came in for the kill.

Yesterday [after your speech] your Excellency said that *moços* are irreverent and don’t like to applaud. You’re right, your Excellency. Generations struck by war don’t like to applaud because they suffer from the worst social ill: they don’t trust... The advice that your Excellency gave to the *mocidade* of Minas Gerais on that memorable day rang loudly in our ears: Study and don’t get involved in politics... As long as *moços* have to work in order to pay for their studies, and so

⁵⁸ “Manifest of Bahian Students” delivered at UNE Sixth National Congress, July 1943, GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50 fot 388 a 992

can't dedicate themselves completely and wholly to their books, pedagogical reforms will mean nothing.

Though superficially civil and engaging, given the political environment in which it was delivered this speech can be understood as a powerful condemnation of the regime.

Fulgencio, protected behind cordiality, told a government minister that the young do trust him or his regime, rebuked him that the young *must* concern themselves with politics in order to protect their interests, and perhaps most audaciously, reminded Capanema that his audience of students *did not applaud* during his speech! Law student Célia Medeiros delivered the last speech of the day to smooth things over: "We believe in the future. The past doesn't matter... But we need lights, beliefs, so that we don't go down an ignoble road that leads us to destruction."⁵⁹ This gentler theme asked only, Throw us a bone and maybe we can work together. Capanema, the regime's main interlocutor with UNE, was not oblivious to the students' skepticism. In 1941, while the government and UNE still maintained generally positive and productive relations, Capanema said in a speech, "Students, as youth, are thus the hope, the *threat*, and the promise" [italics added], a statement that within a repressive dictatorship was itself a kind of a threat.⁶⁰

After UNE's chastening over war policy, elements of the pre-war style of criticizing the government slowly began to seep back in to student leaders' public speeches. In August of 1943, UNE hosted a lunch in honor of Minister Capanema's birthday, and Antônio França, no longer a student but one of the founders of UNE, used it

⁵⁹ Speeches by, in order, Odilon Vasconcelos Barros, Oscar Lobo Pereira, Aureo Fulgencio, and Célia Medeiros at União Universitária Feminina de Minas Gerais meeting, Belo Horizonte, MG, 1940. CPDOC GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50, fot. 388 to 992

⁶⁰ Speech by Gustavo Capanema, delivered to Central Directorate of Students, 5 May 1941, Rio de Janeiro., CPDOC GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50, fot. 388 to 992

as an opportunity to reassert UNE's independence from the regime. In his speech he obliquely referred to the injustices of UNE president H lio de Almeida's forced resignation and Capanema's role in hand-selecting Almeida's successor, "It's auspicious to point out that by a happy coincidence your President, the student H lio Mota, finds himself in charge of UNE in a moment when all students and all *mo idade* should be united, strictly united, and faithful to their traditions to help our Nation win the war, destroy fascism, and gain peace: organizing Brazilian democracy in accordance with the principles of the Atlantic Charter, to which we officially adhere."⁶¹ Fran a's conclusion ably turned the regime's war position against itself. UNE, initially formed in its own charter as a democratic institution and which before the ousting of its president had organized its activities and policies to be responsive to the needs of its constituents, was affirming itself as a force for democracy in Brazil.

Shortly after this luncheon, the government began to suspect it had erred in allowing H lio Mota to be the new UNE president. The students were becoming only increasingly active and hostile. Though discouraged by Capanema from doing so, UNE had resolved to send a delegation including Mota to Santiago to the Pan-American Congress of Students, organized by the Chilean Communist party. As the group made their way across the Southern Cone, they were tracked by spies affiliated with the Secret Police and their correspondence was intercepted. Agent "Zeca" wrote to the Brazilian embassy in Santiago on September 16, 1943, "They've continued on towards there in caravan, via Buenos Aires. They include various Paulista students, some of whom are on

⁶¹ Speech by Ant nio Fran a, UNE, 10 August, 1943, Rio de Janeiro, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50, fot. 388 to 992

file with state police as adepts of the Muscovite creed.” Revealing the ineptness of the *Estado Novo*’s international espionage, he continued, “São Borja does not wish to be kept in the dark about the activity of these *moços*. In fact, he wishes to know every detail of what they do.”⁶² São Borja was Getúlio Vargas’s hometown in Rio Grande do Sul, and not a very clandestine codename. A second spy missive about the delegation described an intercepted letter from a student to a friend back in Brazil, where the writer complained, “The Bolivian and Venezuelan delegates are going to start a serious campaign against imperialism, trying to distract the attention of the congress which should be focusing exclusively on the problem of winning the war.”⁶³ This letter either represented a difference of opinion among the Brazilian delegates or a deliberate attempt at misinformation in light of a knowledge of their mail being censored, because the Brazilian delegation eventually signed on to the resolutions of the congress, a scathing critique of the United States, which were then forwarded to “São Borja.” A final missive, from October 30th, assured the recipient that they’re still watching “Emilio Mota”, though that may or may not have pleased “São Borja” who wanted *Hélio Mota* under surveillance. The next day Mota, whom Capanema had deemed a “safe” new UNE President and whose name the secret police couldn’t even be bothered to correctly remember, would set off a storm that would fundamentally destabilize the *Estado Novo*.

On the night of October 31st, at the Centro Académico XI de Agosto, the student union of the University of São Paulo law school, Mota (who was also the President of

⁶² Missive from “Zeca”, Rio de Janeiro, to “Dr. Alvaro Trindade Cruz”, Brazilian Embassy, Santiago, 16 September 1943, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50, fot. 388 to 992

⁶³ Missive from “Fernando Maia”, Santiago, to “Dr Waldir Medeiros Duarte”, Copacabana, 16 September 1943. CPDOC GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50, fot. 388 to 992

this local chapter) rose to give a speech that concluded with “Down with the Estado Novo!”, a sign of solidarity with the 92 politicians from Minas Gerais that a week earlier had issued a pro-democracy manifesto. As Mota returned to his apartment early in the morning, he was arrested by state secret police. On November 1st, the Centro Académico XI de Agosto law students issued their own manifesto in light of their president’s arrest, saying: “This is why we’ve come, finally, to publically and solemnly denounce the so-called ‘*Estado Novo*’ ... as a political regime absolutely incompatible with democracy.”⁶⁴ Minister Capanema was among the first in Rio de Janeiro to receive word of these events, as condemnations and statements of solidarity flood in from student groups around the country. Capanema urged Vargas to order Mota’s release, but by the time the command was reluctantly carried out by state secret police, all hell had broken loose.

Vargas had ordered Mota’s imprisonment early in the morning of November 1st, and his release at one o’clock that afternoon. “If it had been immediately complied with,” wrote one observer of the aftermath, “everything else that happened could have been avoided. [...] I’m talking about the attack by 200 men of the Special Police, armed with machine guns and tear gas (in the middle of the university.) Seizing the student union, they grabbed about 80 non-combative students and beat each one of them in the most disrespectful, cruel, and humiliating way, [...] finishing the heroic act by destroying the furniture, artwork, and archives of the building. The prisoners were only released by order of the President of the Republic.”⁶⁵ Though Vargas seemed to be furiously

⁶⁴ Manifesto of Centro Académico XI de Agosto, November 1 1943, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁶⁵ Letter from Cardoso Mello to Gustavo Capanema, 9 November 1943, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

backpedaling, anxious to mitigate the conflict, his own secret police had escalated the incident to a point where it could no longer be controlled.

In the first two weeks of November 1943, events accelerated. Universities throughout the country declared general strikes that then extended to secondary schools. UNE, moving cautiously, officially petitioned the government for an investigation. A government functionary noted, “In the cinemas, whenever they show national news reports, there’s already begun to be disagreeable whispers when an image of the President appears on the screen.”⁶⁶ Striking students organized a rally in downtown São Paulo for the afternoon of November 9th. A bureaucrat watching from his office building described the occasion, after the students had gathered:

Then came the repression. And it came like you would never have believed, treating the defenseless *rapazes* and all of the people that literally filled the center of the Capital, during the evening rush hour, when many people normally walk the streets. Downtown was soon invaded by firetrucks, a large number of cavalry troops with loaded rifles and bayonets, Special Police with assault vehicles and machine guns. For a long stretch of time [in the downtown squares] students and the people, including women and children, that found themselves in the streets, were overwhelmed by horses’ hooves, bayonets, water hoses, and machinegun fire. Despite being a member of the government, I was not able to find out the scale of this disgrace. No one yet knows. I’m certain of one dead *rapaz* and about 16 others wounded, some gravely, others still between life and death, with perforations of the intestines, in risk of amputations, etc. In the Esperança Hospital there are still 10 students. Many of them are boys of 15 or 16 years, high school students who’d hoped to be lawyers, doctors, etc. This is the scene, it all its rudeness.⁶⁷

This incident was perhaps the most significant single incident of violent repression in the *Estado Novo*, at least since the crack down on the Integralists in 1938. Though the regime celebrated and publicized its decimation of the Integralists, they rightly judged that

⁶⁶ Letter from Monteiro de Barros to Gustavo Capanema, s.d. CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Brazilians would not applaud the slaughter of schoolchildren. The newspapers, censored, could not report the tragedy.

Even without newspapers, even with a repressive secret police that had now demonstrated its willingness to attack those who might think themselves “safe,” word of a bloodbath with thousands of witnesses could not be silenced. On November 10th, the day after the attack in São Paulo, Vargas gave an interview to commemorate the establishment of the *Estado Novo* six years earlier and promised elections at war’s end.⁶⁸ A Paulistano friend of the regime wrote on November 17th, “Thanks to the resolution of the President [the promise of elections], everything seems to be returning to the status quo, life is finding its normal rhythm.”⁶⁹ But the “normal rhythm” of the *Estado Novo* was now gone forever. Various schools that had joined the strike now issued manifestos that condemned not just the actions of the regime, but the regime itself. The São Paulo School of Medicine was especially vehement: “We are acting now in accordance with the most basic principles of DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE, AND CLASS SOLIDARITY.” Mota’s law school began a series of public censures of the DIP, calling for freedom of expression and an end to news censorship.⁷⁰

By early 1944, UNE had enough agreement from its members across the country to come out as an actively revolutionary, anti-*Estado Novo* organization, issuing the statement, “We are for the repatriation of exiles and political amnesty. We are for the reinvigoration of Judicial Power, weakened and undermined by extemporaneous decrees.

⁶⁸ Levine, 72.

⁶⁹ Letter to Gustavo Capanema, 17 November 1943. CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁷⁰ Manifestos, telegrams, etc from November 1943. CPDOC GC g1938.04.18, rolo 50, fot. 388 to 992

We are for the restitution of individual liberties, for the freedom of speech, for the unoppressed and de-subordinated press, for the freedom of movement and assembly.”⁷¹ UNE essentially ceased its normal activities, and became a pro-democracy *political* force, unwilling to wait for the foggy future of “the end of the war”. With students being murdered in the streets, this was the activity that most promoted UNE members’ interests.

It came as no surprise to the student leaders, then, when in June 1944 UNE was denied permission by the government to hold their annual conference in Rio. The regime cited war costs, transportation difficulties, and food shortages, though certainly *not* the previous November in São Paulo. The Ministry of Education recommended to UNE they try having the conference by correspondence instead.⁷² UNE, cognizant of the threat they presented to the government and thus of their power vis-à-vis the regime, cajoled Capanema, “To not have this Congress will resonate negatively in public opinion, whose confidence in the Chief of the Nation needs to be, in this moment more than ever, strengthened.”⁷³ Vargas acceded to the conference, but under a variety of conditions. Capanema himself drafted a letter “from UNE” promising to be quiet, to hold no parade, to make no mention of strikes, to say nothing about national politics in relation to elections or constitutions, to take no stand against the government or its policies, and NOT to mention Mota or dredge up anything about November in São Paulo, “except, if

⁷¹ “Plataforma Universitária pela Democracia”, UNE, 22 May 1944, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁷² Letter from Genival Santos to UNE, 19 June 1944, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁷³ July 12, 1944 memo from UNE to Capanema, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

necessary, a serene description.”⁷⁴ Capanema assured Vargas, “I will be vigilant and in permanent contact with the students to prevent any unexpected incident.”⁷⁵ However, according to the DIP agents assigned to spy on the congress, the taboo subjects were ALL the students talked about. Finally students from far away from São Paulo were able to receive full accounts of the atrocities committed by the secret police there.

Though the Congress in Rio went off without violence, clashes between students and police now accelerated outside of São Paulo, even after the political atmosphere in Brazil began to liberalize. In December 1944, ten UNE leaders were arrested in Rio, though never charged with any crime. On New Year’s Eve, Vargas gave a speech at the Automobile Club of Rio conceding that since the Mineiro Manifesto in October 1943 “pressure against the dictatorship [had grown] slowly louder and louder.”⁷⁶ Soon thereafter he promised elections before the end of 1945. Only after this concession did students begin to gain significant support in their revolution from other sectors of society. In January, Brazilian writers demanded freedom of speech. In March, newspapers began to bypass censorship. But the regime still had teeth, and students would continue to bear much of the brunt of the *Estado Novo*’s repression. On March 3rd, in Recife during a political rally in support of presidential candidate Eduardo Gomes, eight students were arrested, many injured, and one was killed. The Pernambuco Student Union telegrammed Capanema a poignant memorial to their fallen member, Demócrito de Sousa Filho, “indescribable indignation. profound loss. unforgettable brilliant comrade. martyr for

⁷⁴ 20 July 1944 letter “from UNE” to Gustavo Capanema, written by Gustavo Capanema, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁷⁵ 21 July 1944 letter from Gustavo Capanema to Getúlio Vargas, CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁷⁶ Do Vale, 31-32

democratic cause. inspires all of brazil.”⁷⁷ Two weeks later, dozens of engineering students in Rio were arrested *en masse* in the middle of class. Now, with newspaper coverage, these events inspired indignation in cities around the country, and not only among students. Distrust of and antipathy towards the *Estado Novo* (though not necessarily against Vargas) resonated in almost every sector of society. UNE’s VIII National Congress in the winter of 1945 was radically pro-Democracy with no attempts to assuage the regime, despite the fact that the government *was still funding* the conference. They issued 104 resolutions for “Defense of Democracy and a long-lasting Peace as a solution to our Problems,” including recommendations for agricultural redistribution, workers’ rights to strike and autonomous unions, development of the country’s petroleum resources, and “free, fair and direct elections.”⁷⁸

After the coup to remove Vargas from power in October 1945, *Juventude Brasileira* simply faded away. UNE, founded with purpose by young men and women who saw themselves as having a stake in collective organizing, continues to exist today with millions of members in every state of Brazil. After 1945, UNE returned to its original goal of identifying those issues that were of most concern to high school and university students and lobbying for resolutions. But they’d shown they were capable of bringing down a dictatorship, and as we’ll see in chapter five, if need be they could do it again.

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⁷⁷ Telegram from Pernambuco Student Union to Gustavo Capanema, s.d., CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

⁷⁸ Resolutions of UNE’s VIII Congress, Rio de Janeiro, 1945., CPDOC GC g1938.04.18

The histories of these two youth organizations—the JB and the UNE—offer insights into the nature of the *Estado Novo* and Brazilian society under that regime. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the *Estado Novo* is often remembered today as being a basically unchallenged dictatorship. As Skidmore argued long ago, “Before 1945, there was only one significant statement by the opposition,” the Mineiro Manifesto of October 1943.⁷⁹ The history of UNE during this time period clearly indicates that since its inception UNE had been critical of the dictatorship, and that from November 1943 until 1945 presented a significant and continuous threat to the legitimacy and domination of the *Estado Novo*. Though the Mineiro politicians did face repression for their “cautious manifesto,”⁸⁰ dozens of Brazilian students were injured, arrested, and at least two killed for their ongoing challenges to government authority during the final years of the regime. This suggests, at a minimum, that the demise of the *Estado Novo* was not nearly so sudden as most historians who contend that it spontaneously unraveled in 1945 argue.

Both UNE and JB also illustrate the ideological and organizational underpinnings of the *Estado Novo*, challenging the assumption that it was a purely personalistic regime. While the propagandistic elements of JB did strongly feature a cult of personality to Vargas, “Christian corporatism” was an equally important value that the organization tried to instill in young Brazilians. Christian corporatism under the Vargas regime stressed laborism, conservative family structures, and intense nationalism. Historian Nelson Jahr Garcia argues that the basic goal of the *Estado Novo* was social peace. He

⁷⁹ Skidmore, 48.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

concedes that much of the regime's propaganda did indeed focus on Vargas, as the "father of the poor" or "the greatest worker", but that the rationale of this propaganda was to *legitimize* the regime so that it could achieve its overarching goal of social peace, an environment where both the poor and the rich could flourish. The attempts at the reorganization of society during the *Estado Novo* aimed to prevent crisis and conflict and to politically demobilize potential opposition.⁸¹ To do this Vargas set up over the course of the 1930s, and especially after 1937, a series of new bureaucracies, transferring politics as much as possible into the hands of the government, but not solely into the hands of Getúlio Vargas. In the history of both of the youth organizations studied in this chapter, there are numerous examples of bureaucrats developing policies, sometimes totally independently (as in the formation of the JB by the Ministries of War and Education with essentially no input from Vargas), sometimes convincing Vargas to change his mind (such as having the UNE conference in Rio in 1944), or even *against* Vargas's wishes (such as the unilateral action of the secret police in São Paulo in November 1943.)

Juventude Brasileira and the National Student Union were conceived of in the same year, in the same city. But the difference in their fates is largely due to the difference in their goals and organization. JB was an attempt by the state to forcefully manipulate youth into conforming to the regime's ideal of how the Brazilian of the future should behave and believe. UNE was a grassroots organization, founded and led by young students, that sought to identify what young Brazilians wanted for themselves. The

⁸¹ Garcia, Chapters 1, 9.

failure of JB and the success of UNE highlight one of the earliest examples of Brazilian youth asserting themselves as a powerful political force, not to be acted upon, but to *act*, a trend that would further develop over the course of the twentieth century.

Chapter 3

Selling the Future

Juvenile Literature in Brazil's New Democracy

On December 2, 1945, General Dutra, Vargas's former Minister of War, who had urged thoughtful caution during the founding of *Juventude Brasileira*, was elected to the Presidency of Brazil by an absolute majority. With Dutra's election, meaningful electoral democracy arrived in Brazil for the first time. Though significant restrictions on voting eligibility still existed, signally the disenfranchisement of illiterates,¹ seven and half million Brazilians, half of them women, cast votes in 1945.² Now millions more Brazilians than ever before faced the choice of what sort of future they wished for their country. In the 1940s and '50s, Brazilians also had increasing opportunities to *cast a vote* on the direction of their own lives through how they spent their money. Wages and purchasing power steadily increased after World War II, especially for urban working and middle classes, the fastest growing segment of the population.³ Never had so many Brazilians had the opportunity to shape their day-to-day lives through their purchasing power and the choices it permitted.

Though the early years of democracy in Brazil developed relatively peacefully, in contrast to the tumultuous and sporadically violent years preceding and during the *Estado*

¹ John D. French argues that this policy, reinforced by a decree by Vargas in mid-1945, was an attempt to prioritize potential *urban* voters over rural voters, which would both decrease the power of rural oligarchs and increase Vargas's chances at future electoral victories. See "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 Brock (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 147.

² This means that about 17% of the total population (including minors) voted in this election. In comparison, in 1930, only about 3% of the total population voted. See Robert M. Levine, *Father of the Poor?: Vargas and His Era* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 75.

³ See John J. Crocitti, "Vargas Era Social Policies," in *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives*, ed. Jens R. Hentshke, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 153, and Fausto Brito, "The displacement of the Brazilian population to metropolitan areas," in *Estudos Avançados*, 20:57, May/Aug. 2006.

Novo, the 1940s and early 1950s was a time of intense competition between ideologies and interests. As during the Old Republic and the *Estado Novo*, young people again became the focus of much political contention. What was different from earlier periods is that now the young “who came of age between 1931 and 1946 had never voted in an election, ... [and] new alliances seeking to capture the enlarged electorate” were looking to these voters and those coming up behind them.⁴ Indeed, even Brazilians too young to vote attracted the interest of political and business elites. Now, however, instead of trying to forcefully mold children and adolescents into ideal future citizens, politicians and business leaders began an experiment in *wooing* young Brazilians.

Many historians understand the ideological struggles of Brazil’s early democratic period as a contest between urban industrialists, who had gained much ground politically between 1930 and 1945, and the rural oligarchy, still fiercely trying to stay in the game.⁵ This view is not entirely wrong, but electoral returns from this period and a nuanced reading of the political discourses of the era show how ideological preferences could cut across class lines and obvious economic interests. Rather than strict ideological camps, a web of positions and oppositions structured political preferences. Two major nodes of contention in this web were the opposition between internationalism and nationalism and that between authoritarianism and liberalism.

⁴ Levine, 76.

⁵ This interpretation is reproduced in two popular textbooks, Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 7th ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2004), 366, 375; and Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 163-64.

During and after World War II, Brazil's economic dependence on the United States increased significantly. The U.S.'s share of Brazil exports doubled between 1938 and 1941, and American goods maintained a strong position in the Brazilian economy for years to come.⁶ The United States also offered economic and technical assistance in two of the great infrastructure projects of the 1940s: the establishment of the Volta Redonda steel mill and the exploitation of Brazil's newfound oil reserves. U.S. cultural influence also became more pronounced. U.S. manufactured goods, music and films permeated urban Brazilian markets, even when the government sought to protect local industry with tariffs and credits. While agriculturally-dependent rural oligarchs might welcome increased trade with the United States as a market for their raw goods, and urban industrialists might wish to squelch it in favor of domestic production, many other sectors of society saw their own interests at stake in the question of how close a relationship Brazil should have with the U.S. In his history of the internal politics of the Brazilian army, Shawn C. Smallman found that in the 1940s and '50s, the military was itself divided into two factions: nationalists and internationalists. The internationalists, who included most of the highest ranking officers, wanted to take advantage of U.S. offers of training and equipment. At the same time, they feared nationalism, within their own ranks and in society at large, which they saw as being friendly towards Vargas who sought to leverage nationalist sentiments in mobilizing the working class for political ends.⁷

⁶ Levine, 82.

⁷ Shawn C. Smallman, *Fear & Memory in the Brazilian Army and Society, 1889-1954* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), Chapter 5.

In the late-1940s and early-1950s, there remained a sharp tension between authoritarian and liberal impulses, as if many Brazilians were not quite sure just how stable their new democracy would be. In many ways, Vargas's presence loomed over the myriad political and economic issues of the day. The two major candidates during the 1945 election avoided mention of Vargas and the *Estado Novo*—though one of them, General Eurico Dutra was a Vargas protégé—but the former president still had a powerful image as a friend of the poor, bolstered by many years of effective propaganda. James Woodard argues that Vargas's popularity among the poor reflected a sharpening class divide: "Vargas was not hated by the *classes cultas* [elites] because he was a populist; he was a populist because he was hated by the *classes cultas*."⁸ The *Queremistas* of 1945 (so-named for their chants of "*Queremos Getúlio!*", "We want Getúlio!"), supported by the Ministry of Labor, assured that Vargas's influence would not quickly die out.⁹ A new constitution was soon promulgated, but many of the laws and the bulk of the bureaucracy of the *Estado Novo* remained in tact. Though Dutra's victory could be seen as a victory for Vargas¹⁰, Dutra's presidency explicitly rejected economic protectionism, against the protests of the industrial elite. However, laborism, strongly linked to Vargas-era authoritarianism, maintained a hold over the economic and social lives of city-dwellers of all classes.

⁸ James P. Woodard, "'All for São Paulo, All for Brazil:' Vargas, the *paulistas*, and the Historiography of Twentieth-century Brazil," in Jens R. Hentschke, *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.)

⁹ Maria Celina D'Araújo, *Sindicatos, Carisma & Poder: O PTB de 1945-1965* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1996), 26.

¹⁰ John W.F. Dulles seemed to agree with his biographical subject on this question, in *Sobral Pinto: "The Conscience of Brazil": Leading the Attack Against Vargas, 1930-1945* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas press, 2002).

A final ideological aspect of the era, denigrated by positivists during the First Republic but now firmly established in social discourse, was Catholicism. The framing of Brazil as a Christian nation had been an important tenet of the Vargas government. At no time since the nineteenth century had Christianity and Catholicism figured so centrally in political discourse as in the 1940s and 1950s. Issues surrounding children were particularly subject to religious intervention. In the conservative state of Minas Gerais, between the 1930s and 1950s, a movement developed condemning the works of the notable children's author Monteiro Lobato as heresy. In 1936, the Association of Catholic Teachers of Diamantina, "denouncing the great evils that could come, for the faith and for the Christian education of children, from the latest works of Monteiro Lobato," petitioned their Archbishop to ban them from the Archdiocese. In the 1950s, even after Monteiro Lobato's death, a monsignor penned *The Juvenile Literature of Monteiro Lobato, or, Communism for Children*, "a humble defense of the Kingdom of God," featuring an introductory letter by Pope Pius XII. The polemic condemns the children's author as a materialist, an atheist and anti-Brazilian (by virtue of having ridiculed the essentially Brazilian values of parental respect, the superiority of Christianity over other religions, the spirituality of the soul and the indissolubility of marriage, etc.)¹¹ The argument made enough of a splash among Brazilian readers as to merit numerous printings, and even a second edition in 1959.

Many mid-century Brazilians took it for granted that the state must play a role in protecting Christian values. A short-lived children's magazine from Curitiba, in the far

¹¹ Padre Salles Brasil, manuscript of *A literatura infantil de Monteiro Lobato, ou, Comunismo para crianças*, FCRB.

south of the country, bemoaned the (spurious) fact of falling birthrates in Brazil, in its second issue in 1951. In a feature aimed at mothers, the editors wrote, “In many countries, after the war, there was a notable increase in birthrates, something about not waiting. In others, like ours unfortunately, there was a decline! How will it be in future years? The answer doesn’t fall totally on statisticians, but on Christian families. They know the problem and the solution. But it falls also on the State to defend the family.”¹² Though political and economic issues were hotly contested under the new electoral system, a broad-based consensus seemed to agree on a vague sense of Christian morality, and that protecting this morality protected Brazilianess and the nation.

Smallman’s study of ideological disputes within the Brazilian army in the 1940s rightly notes, “Ideology did not appear in a vacuum. It was contested and debated... The Brazilian army’s ideological evolution cannot be separated from the bitter factional conflict that wracked the army over a period of years.” Indeed, many of the values and interests being debated in society in general, and particularly in relation to youth, had their roots in the “bitter factional conflicts” of the 1930s. In this chapter, I explore the place of juvenile literature in this ideological contest against the backdrop of the Vargas years between 1930 and the mid-1940s. These debates represent the earliest airing of issues that became far more salient with the return of electoral politics from 1945 forward.

¹² “Que tal a criança?,” *O Garoto: Revista Infanto-Juvenil*, 1 January 1951, Curitiba.

Juvenile Literature in Mid-Twentieth-Century Brazil

The political values under debate in the new democracy, and the traditional values that remained largely unquestioned, found a place in the children's and juvenile literature of the era. In writing and editing specifically for a young audience, ideologues and reformers were performing work that they saw as having a much farther reach than if their audience were adults. Monteiro Lobato encapsulated this sentiment: "Few have the right idea of what a child means to the world, to humanity. Children are humanity preparing itself for the future. The future!, what a tremendous word! The future is everything, it is continuity, perpetuation. Humanity's past in some few millions of years. The present is today. Everything that humanity will be tomorrow is inside the child of today."¹³ Of course beyond such existential or political reasons, there were also powerful economic rationales for writing for young people.

In a study of textbooks during the Vargas era, Jerry Dávila stressed the elite nature of Brazilian education. "Very few students would ever read these books," writes Dávila. "In 1946, Mário Augusto Teixeira de Freitas, the director of the Brazilian census bureau, concluded that of the centennial generation born in 1922 and raised largely during the Vargas era, only 17 percent had completed third grade and fewer than 4 percent had concluded high school. Indeed, in 1940, only 45 percent of Brazilians between the ages of 15 and 19 even knew how to read."¹⁴ However, this assessment sidesteps the fact that in 1940 about one third of the total literate population of Brazil was

¹³ Quoted in "O planejamento do futuro," *O Garoto: Revista Infanto-Juvenil*, December 1950, Curitiba.

¹⁴ Jerry Dávila, "Myth and Memory: Getúlio Vargas's Long Shadow Over Brazilian History," in Hentschke.

between ages 5 and 15. In fact, since census data began reliably recording literacy rates by age cohorts starting in 1920, literacy among 5 to 15 years old Brazilians was always significantly higher than among the general population, and markedly so in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.¹⁵ When population growth is taken into consideration, the mid-century was a period of an extremely youthful reading audience in Brazil. This fact probably reflects an ever-increasing ability of the state to build and maintain schools with a sufficiently capable curriculum to teach reading and writing and a general urbanizing trend across the country. Literacy at mid-century varied dramatically by geography. Rural areas and the poverty-stricken Northeast were overrepresented in illiteracy compared to the relatively wealthy South and Southeast. The country's population was becoming increasingly concentrated in Southeastern cities in the mid-century. In a 1951 study of teenage boys who were mechanical apprentices in São Paulo, over eighty percent of the respondents, all of whom were literate, "came from households whose head could read and write."¹⁶ Though these apprentices may not have been representative of working-class boys throughout the country, it is clear that, with certain geographical constrictions, young urban Brazil was able to read and eager to do so.

Children's and juvenile literature in Portuguese was much less developed in the early-twentieth century than, say, in English or French. Only in the 1930s, with the publishing and massive popularity of most of Monteiro Lobato's works, did the genre develop in Brazil. In 1936, the Ministry of Education undertook a study to: 1) create a

¹⁵ Alceu Ravanello Ferraro, "Analfabetismo e níveis de letramento no Brasil: o que dizem os censos?" *Educação e Sociedade*, 23:81, pp. 21-47, December 2002, p. 34-35

¹⁶ Weinstein, 222.

critical summary of all works of juvenile literature in Portuguese, whether originals or translations; 2) choose those foreign works that should be prioritized for translation; 3) determine the age-appropriateness of the literature; 4) determine which works were “pernicious” or “without value”; and 5) give the government suggestions for the development of good juvenile literature in Brazil. The committee members included writers for adult audiences, pedagogy specialists, teachers, and a smattering of Ministry of Education bureaucrats. In defining juvenile literature, they determined that it must include only works that were not specifically didactic. “We’re thinking of juvenile literature in the sense of focusing exclusively on the taste and natural interests of the child... However, it’s not possible to let a child grow up entirely to their pleasure, entirely following their instinctive interests, abandoning themselves to their primitive impulses, because this child is not a member of a primitive society. He lives and is going to live in a complex society which he needs to be able to adjust and adapt to.”¹⁷ In this definition, the committee expressed the motivation of many mid-century Brazilian writers and publishers for youth—this literature should be entertaining, youth should *want* to read it, but it must also have a social agenda that complemented the race-improving eugenicist project of the early twentieth century.

The committee found that the list of all books in Portuguese fitting their definition of juvenile literature, including translations, came to only 658 volumes. However, in 1937, 150 new works were published and added to the list, showing how rapidly and enthusiastically this new genre was being developed. The committee developed a scheme

¹⁷ GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

for rating books on a scale from zero to one hundred based on form, presentation, appropriateness and various other values (for example, +10 points for simplicity of expression.) Some “negative qualities” could result in -100 points, such as “morbid stories; suggestions against national unity; immoral ideas or expressions; and instigation of racial, color, or class hatred.” The committee also devised lists of dozens of books that should be prioritized for translation, mostly from English. The member charged with analyzing German children’s literature identified a few collections of folk tales worth consideration, but deemed that “[c]urrently, it would be necessary to categorize German children’s books as books for German children in the Nazi regime, with Nazi intents, to educate Nazi children, and to fortify their current conception of Nazi patriotism, which would not be of much interest to our very different Brazilian children.” Unlike German, French had many lovely books that should be immediately translated.¹⁸

In their research, the committee soon noticed that the most prolific form of juvenile literature in the country were the “supplements,” magazines or illustrated newspapers published by the leading papers and typically released weekly. Unlike the Sunday comics of American newspapers, the supplements were usually sold separately. Committee member José Lins do Rego (by that time author of half a dozen novels for adults, including the classic *Menino de Engenho* from 1932) wrote: “I read with great interest the juvenile supplements that our newspapers publish with their Sunday editions. I ascertained that they all appear to be exactly the same. The topics, the stories, the anecdotes give the impression of having come from the same brain.” Despite his

¹⁸ Ibid.

contempt for the medium, he conceded that they were widely read across the country, and in the Federal District, “as much in [rich] Copacabana, as in [poor] Meyer.” Alfredo Chaves, a newspaper vendor in the upscale Botafogo neighborhood, affirmed that the juvenile supplements were the most sold paper on the day each one came out.¹⁹

In 1939, the Ministry undertook a more thorough study of the supplements, investigating the nine juvenile magazines then published in Rio de Janeiro. The study was purportedly in response to a letter from a Niterói schoolboy complaining that the supplements did not “satisfy the desires and necessities of the new generation.”²⁰ A November 1939 survey of readers and their mothers showed that the supplements were wildly popular and by far the most consumed works of literature by young *cariocas*. The fifteen hundred students surveyed hailed from public and private schools in diverse neighborhoods around the city and ranged in age from roughly nine to sixteen years old. Seventy-nine percent claimed to read at least one of the nine magazines regularly and 38 percent were such devoted fans that they reported dreaming (literally) about stories from these magazines. The only form of entertainment more widely consumed was cinema—eighty-two percent claimed they regularly went to the movies. The mothers surveyed were not generally concerned with their children’s obsessions with these magazines, and 35 percent stated that they believed the magazine had positive effects on their kids—teaching them to study more, write and speak better, brush their teeth and eat better.²¹

¹⁹ José Lins do Rego, “Suplementos Infantís”, report for GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

²⁰ “The Nationalization of Reading for Children” in *Suplemento Juvenil*, 29 July 1939

²¹ November 1939 Study of 9 Rio Suplementos, GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

In their own critical summary of the content of the magazines, Ministry of Education bureaucrats closely analyzed a random sampling of recent issues of each of the nine magazines. They measured the content against social and political mores that they hoped to instill in children. Their two major concerns were first, that “the most constant topics are police stories and sensational adventures with scenes of cruelty and violence” and second, that “the content, taken from foreign publications, ignores anything Brazilian; the majority of them are almost entirely foreign in content, and half are entirely [foreign in content].” The lack of Brazilianness was reflected by the foreign authorship of about 66 percent of all content in the nine magazines, and by more stories explicitly taking place in a foreign country than in Brazil. It was also seemingly demonstrated by a disappointing revelation from the readers’ survey. When asked what foreign country they would most like to visit, 38 percent of respondents answered the United States, scores more than the distant second place answer with only 7 percent, Portugal—a site of Brazilian heritage.²²

In the following months and years, bureaucrats debated how to improve the juvenile magazines. Suggestions included documenting and reporting sales to see just how extensively circulated the most noxious material was, giving an annual prize for the best magazine, recommending “certain topics” to publishers, or having the DIP (Department of Information and Propaganda, the government censor’s office) shut down magazines at the Ministry of Education’s suggestion. One publisher, in response to the Ministry’s complaint that too much content was produced abroad, argued that there

²² Ibid.

simply were not enough Brazilian cartoonists to fill the pages of the magazines. This rationale produced one of the most significant initiatives regarding cartoons that the Ministry undertook in the early 1940s—instructing the director of the School of Fine Arts to consider implementing a course in cartoon drawing.²³

Though the Ministry took very little *action* to rectify what they saw as the problems with juvenile magazines, Education minister Capanema and his lieutenants certainly *complained* a lot about them, and the discussion spilled over into the public discourse, both during and after the fall of newspaper censorship. In March 1941, Adolfo Aizen, the publisher of the important newspaper *A Nação* and three juvenile supplements, including the immensely popular *Suplemento Juvenil*, wrote to Capanema concerning what Aizen considered the ill-conceived attacks on juvenile magazines, or at least *his* juvenile magazines. His three magazines for children and adolescents had, in that year, a total circulation of 250,000 a week, distributed by 300 agencies around the country—a testament, he affirmed, to how they could not be nearly as horrible as the Ministry's 1939 study suggested. "The highly debated issue of juvenile literature—indiscriminately attacked by individuals who are ignorant of the work done by this business, or who confuse our publications with others edited here in Rio" needed the input of an insider. His experience in the industry gave him three key insights that he used to defend the genre. First, he argued that "the foreign stories (American in the majority) are not in any way harmful. In all of them you find the same moral foundation: ... the victory of good over evil." Second, in light of the *Estado Novo* push for nationalist content,

²³ Ibid.

“[e]ducational, civic, and national themes should be dealt with in juvenile magazines in a manner that won’t lose the reader’s interest. Nothing would be more counterproductive than for the publications to completely abandon their most popular adventure stories and to dedicate their pages entirely to educational and civic lessons... Without readers, there’s no possible benefit the magazine could have.” And third, correspondingly, that “[e]ducational and civic features should be presented colorfully, well-illustrated and interestingly.” Aizen recognized that the American comic strips were what made his magazine so economically successful and so distinct from less-successful and forgotten supplements. His letter to Capanema defended American content morally, artistically, but also nationalistically, because it got youth to read magazines that also included paeans to Vargas.²⁴

In early 1942, the Ministry drafted a decree that stated that no juvenile magazine could be published in Brazil without registration from the Ministry of Education and the DIP. Registration could be withheld or revoked for a variety of reasons. Magazines that were exclusively or largely about “crimes, criminals, and police adventures” were prohibited. All magazines must have a specialist in education on staff. And there would be no registration if the magazine was “considered inconvenient to the interests of national education,” later clarifying that “inconvenient” meant sensationalist content. Importantly, the drafted decree also required that at least 50 percent of all content must have Brazilian authorship. A revised draft dealt more generally with juvenile literature,

²⁴ Letter from Adolfo Aizen to Gustavo Capanema, 31 March 1941, GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

and attempted to ensure that all children's literature would fully conform to *Estado Novo* norms. It prohibited anything that was

against the national unity, independence, and honor of Brazil; promoting violence against the regime; offensive to the President, army, navy, or other national organization; denigrating to national traditions and heroes; negative about the future of the human race; claiming the superiority or inferiority of any region of the country; inciting racial hatred; promoting class antagonism; disparaging the religious sentiment of any sect; threatening to the family and the indissolubility of marriage; stressing the inutility of human life and virtue; grammatically defective; scientifically incorrect; not in Portuguese.²⁵

The most successful magazines were largely willing to print any form of *Estado Novo* propaganda, but the demands for 50 percent national authorship were intolerable (and probably unfeasible) for profit-minded publishers. In response to this proposal, Roberto Marinho, the publisher of *O Globo* and its subsidiaries, and with Aizen already one of the most powerful media magnates in the country, sent a daringly angry letter directly to Vargas. He claimed that this proposal was instigated by “men with a misguided sense of patriotism” who were ignoring the advice of child psychologists and the truly educational motives of the juvenile magazines. “These foreign cartoons are *international* efforts, read in every modern, patriotic country in the world,” he insisted. He noted that in spite of the war England, France, Germany and Italy *all* published them. Marinho stressed that he and his editors were “dedicated to civic propaganda”, but would be ruined if the government took away their ability to publish foreign comics.²⁶ In the short term, these debates were basically moot. The DIP already had the authority to close

²⁵ Drafts of *decreto-leis*, January 1942, GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

²⁶ Letter from Roberto Marinho to Getulio Vargas, 1942, GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

down newspapers at any time, for whatever reason, and these drafted proposals were never taken up and decreed into law.

As the debates over children's literature and magazines continued in the 1940s and 1950s, they paralleled conversations happening around the world. Perhaps the most famous (or notorious) condemnation of comic books is 1953's *Seduction of the Innocent* by New York psychiatrist Fredric Wertham. Wertham presented a sweeping criticism of comic books, and especially crime and horror comics, as "a distillation of viciousness."²⁷ He argued that children and adolescents who read these magazines tended towards violent behavior, misogyny, hypochondria, and homosexuality (inspired by lesbian gangs in *Wonder Woman* and the palpable eroticism between Batman and Robin.) The toxicity of these magazines was so severe, Wertham claimed, that many foreign countries had entirely banned the importation of American comic books. Following Sweden and Holland's lead, "[a]t the end of 1953, the sale of American comic books which sow racial hatred against Asiatic people was forbidden by law in Mexico... The Australian Journalists' Association has asked for a ban on the importation of American comics. In the Union of South Africa their importation has also been prohibited. The law there specifically includes old issues. Voices against comic books have also been raised in Brazil and Egypt, in Indonesia, in India, and in South American countries. It is a chorus of dismay."²⁸ In fact, since 1944, the Mexican government had exercised considerable control over the content of comic books with the Rating Commission of Illustrated Publications and Magazines, founded in response to public concern about the content of

²⁷ Fredric Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, and Company, 1953), 94.

²⁸ Ibid, 293.

both American *and* domestically-produced magazines. The Commission monitored periodicals for “slang, depictions of crime, and imagines of nudity and sex.”²⁹ The influence of this *Seduction of the Innocent*, and Wertham’s testimony to Congress, led in the United States to the founding of the similarly-motivated Comics Code Authority. In Brazil, where no such regulating agency was ever formed, crime comics like Globo’s *X-9* were not targeted by dissenters any more harshly than more innocuous supplements. In fact, the U.S. ban of the production and sale of horror comics in the mid-1950s, stimulated domestic production in Brazil.³⁰

From their earliest days in the 1930s to their downfall after the advent of television in the late 1950s and early 1960s, juvenile supplements had a powerful place in the everyday lives of young urban Brazilians. Amid larger political and economic debates about nationalism, internationalism, liberalism and authoritarianism, what messages were actually disseminated in these magazines? In the following sections, I will examine the content and management of three juvenile magazines, uncovering three distinct worldviews that would come to vie for the hearts and minds of young Brazilians in their new democratic society.

***Gazetinha*, Part I**

Though the entire history of the genre would be shaped by the political tensions of the Vargas era, the juvenile magazine in Brazil was first conceived of some months prior

²⁹ Anne Rubenstein, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, & Other Threats to the Nation: A Political History of Comic Books in Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 2, 94-5.

³⁰ Gonçalo Junior, 243.

to the Revolution of 1930. In September 1929 in São Paulo, *A Gazeta* newspaper launched the very first “supplement” aimed specifically at children and adolescents.³¹ *A Gazetinha*³², “The Little Gazette”, opened its first edition with the rousing headline, “Brazil walks on the feet of children!” Employing the already common idea of child-as-future *A Gazetinha* explained that “[t]he headline of this page summarizes an entire educational program. Through it, Brazilians will arrive at our common goal: making the *Pátria* great, for the greatness of her sons. *A Gazeta* now begins to take part in this august work and so launches the first issue of our children’s edition—a little stone placed in the structure of the great labor that will be the Brazil of tomorrow!”³³ The earliest issues featured a blend of short stories, arts and crafts lessons, a few non-serialized comic strips, health tips, and essays about scientific wonders. Some issues would also contain short plays to learn and perform with friends or siblings and instructions for parlor games, entertainments more important in those pre-television and even mostly pre-radio days.

For the first five years of its existence, *A Gazetinha* was the only magazine of its kind in Brazil, and relied heavily on foreign-produced material to fill its pages. *Felix the Cat* appeared in the very first issue, along with a notice that foreign children’s magazines could be bought at a certain store in São Paulo, “including the excellent magazines of the genre in English, Italian, and Castilian.” The only reliably weekly feature for several

³¹ “Comic books”, per se, were already established in Brazil, at least since the 1905 release of the magazine *O Tico-Tico*, an edited collection of cartoons with diverse political and social commentary of decidedly little interest to children. Gonçalves Junior, 25, 48.

³² This magazine went by a variety of names during its publication, including *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, *A Gazeta Infantil*, *A Gazeta Juvenil*, *A Gazeta Infanto-Juvenil*, etc.. It was typically referred to by readers, its own editors, and social commentators as *A Gazetinha*, the name it is remembered by today, and which for simplicity’s sake, I will use exclusively. Most issues of the magazine are today compiled by the Biblioteca Nacional as a collection called “*A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*”, and are thus referenced in my footnotes.

³³ *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, 5 September 1929, BN PR-SPR663.

years was a comic called “Lessons from Daddy,” an assortment of educational tidbits about science and world history, produced by King Features Syndicate of Great Britain, a subsidiary of the Hearst Corporation. By 1936, *Betty Boop*, *Brick Bradford*, *Rin-Tin-Tin* and other American comics appeared weekly. And by 1938, in a grand coup the editors were keenly proud of, *Gazetinha* premiered their exclusive rights in Brazil of Superman, “*O Superhomem*.” Free to invent the genre in Brazil, *Gazetinha* gravitated towards looking abroad for models. Even the scant domestically-produced material often was *about* foreign countries and their superiority. In October 1929, only two features were clearly by Brazilian authors.³⁴ The first called for a new national “Week of Children’s Books,” “as they have in other countries.” The second extolled “The Latest Progress of German Education” where “education is modern in all of its fields, and the perfection of the body proceeds in parallel,” in true eugenicist fashion.

The rhetoric and content of *Gazetinha* in the 1930s, wavered between a fanaticism for modernity and the *new*, and a pervading economic, social and cultural conservatism. The regular “Scientific Wonders” feature communicated to young readers just how amazing the future they would inherit could be, while stimulating admiration for engineering and technology. One week, the feature would astonish with a description of an “electric towel” that blows air dry to your hands, and the next with news of “a box of matches that is also an ashtray.”³⁵ Another early example entitled “How they will clean houses in the future: synthetically” imagined a distant day when houses would be made

³⁴ In the absence of bylines for almost any of the material in *Gazetinha*, or indeed any of the juvenile magazines of the era, as well as a general tolerance for what might be called plagiarism, it’s difficult to firmly identify the national origin of much of the magazines’ content.

³⁵ *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, 5 Sept 1929, 7 Nov 1929

of cement and steel, furniture and dishes of Bakelite, pillows of artificial silk, and cushions of fake leather. “Chemistry will be able to produce items at a cost so low that the stained or dirty ones could be burned and replaced with new ones. These are the dreams of chemists and if they achieve them, it’s possible that man, eternally discontent, will still find reasons to complain about the high cost of living.”³⁶ *Gazetinha*’s touting of modernity could also have real political implications, such as the late-1929 article “A Part of Progress: Good Highways,” presaging one of Brazil’s great endeavors of the 1950s and 1960s.³⁷

The content of the magazine could also be very traditionalist. Early recurring features included “Opera’s Famous Love Stories” and “Famous Wives of Famous Men.” The portrayal of women in the pages of *Gazetinha* was chaotically ambivalent, blending more ‘modern’ portrayals of women as participants in public life with more conservative portrayals of women-as-housewives. Particularly in the early 1930s, the magazine stressed the importance of traditional family power relations, and published various essays outlining a child’s proper behavior in the domestic sphere. Obedience was the imperative. “Obedience is the fundamental duty of a son. Parents are the only judges of the necessary limits of obedience. The child cannot or should not argue with the orders he receives from his parents, nor get mad if the orders are not reasonable.”³⁸ These messages probably belie the identity and values of the publisher more than the readers. When *A Gazetinha* decided to dedicate its centerfold spread to pictures of readers submitted by

³⁶ Ibid, 19 September 1929

³⁷ Ibid, 5 Sept 1929; Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Chapter 5.

³⁸ *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, 17 April 1930, BN PR-SPR663

readers themselves, the photographs published were almost uniformly of babies bedecked in lace. These illiterate infants, the newborn children of São Paulo's well-to-do, could not have been *A Gazetinha's* main consumers—but they were a powerful symbol of the hoped for face of the country.

A Gazetinha must have had many thousands of readers who never wore lace gowns as babies, because by the mid-1930s, it was clearly a major money-maker for *Gazeta* publishing. In 1930, the magazine published its first advertisement, for a children's clothing shop, one of 12 advertisements published that year. By 1933, the number of ads had grown to 26 over the course of the year, now taking up much more page space with a Lacta Chocolates campaign that bought full pages every few weeks. By 1936, 62 ads were published, and 216 in 1938. The growth of advertising in the late-1930s also reflects the fact that the magazine began appearing more regularly. In December 1936, it came out twice weekly. The need for additional content drove the importation of more and more American content. Shirley Temple comic strips, detective adventure strips, and a new "*Gazetinha* in Hollywood" feature with film news and headshots of stars filled the pages. In 1938, issues began to be released three times weekly, but the new additional pages were filled up almost entirely with advertisements. The wholesome "Lessons from Daddy" was discontinued.

Like the commercial, heavily-industrialized city of its publication, *A Gazetinha* was a money-maker. Having invented a new genre, the juvenile supplement, its publishers milked it with apparent success. However, the greatest impediment to *A Gazetinha's* continued success was perhaps that it was too *paulistano*. In the 1930s, the

magazine faced a number of conflicts with the Vargas government that often paralleled the state of São Paulo's relationship with the regime. In April 1930, the first explicitly political essay appeared in the pages of *Gazetinha*, a short piece entitled "The Republican Constitution." Though Vargas's revolution was not yet underway, the essay warned, "[t]he Republic offers guarantees, to protect us from the incapacities, birth defects, or passions or sins of only one man. We must avoid ever putting our republic in the hands of only one man."³⁹ In November 1930, shortly after Vargas's rise to the Presidency, *Gazetinha* ceased publication. It remained closed through the secessionist revolt of São Paulo in 1932. When printing resumed in September 1933, the magazine simply noted that it was beginning "a new phase, after a three-year forced interruption."⁴⁰ In the mid-1930s, the essays written in-house adopted the language of *pátria*-tism, without neglecting São Paulo-loyalism. One paean called "Our *Pátria*" typified this kind of double-coding, "The nation we were born in is the one we should love most in the world... São Paulo is the land of my birth (*terra natal*), and Brazil is my *pátria*. There I was born and there I must die! Be it in joy or in pain, our *pátria* is always loved."⁴¹ In 1938, despite a general tendency towards American content, the publishers added a feature called "The Brazilian Treasure Chest" with historical anecdotes and poems about Patriotism, an *Estado Novo* necessity for juvenile magazines. With some concessions, *Gazetinha* kept pushing the limits. A 1939 essay called "Patriotism" could easily be read as a critique of the regime:

³⁹ *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, 17 April 1930

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 14 September 1933

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 26 April 1934

We live in an age where everyone talks about patriotism, civics, nationalism, and as you've noticed, it's a tendency especially in the regimes of violence.... Our patriotism, for a young nation in the midst of developing all of its qualities and practices, should never succumb to exhibitions of force and aggression. Our patriotism should consist in honoring the glories of the past, the conquests of the present, and the victories yet to come, under the norms of Law and Justice.⁴²

Though the Ministry of Education's plan for shutting down newspapers was never effected, the *Estado Novo* had other instruments of control. In March 1940, the DIP refused registration to 420 newspapers and 346 magazines, among them *Gazetinha*. By the time it reopened 8 years later, the world had changed dramatically.

O Globo Juvenil

Launched in Rio de Janeiro in 1937, *O Globo Juvenil* was the youth supplement of the powerful *O Globo* media brand headed by Roberto Marinho. *O Globo Juvenil* rapidly gained readers and popularity, maintaining itself as the leading juvenile magazine throughout the mid-century. In content, the magazine was anything but innovative. It followed the lead of *A Gazetinha* and cross-town rival *Suplemento Juvenil*, blending comic strips, fun facts, history and geography features, with serialized detective stories. Unlike *Gazetinha*, *O Globo Juvenil* entered the market with a strong line-up of North American comics, including *The Phantom*, *Prince Valiant*, *Zorro*, *Lil' Abner*, and *Jungle Jim*. Though released weekly at an extremely low cost, the supplement had notably high production quality with a high proportion of color printing and playful, modern designs. In the 1939 survey of supplement readers by the Ministry of Education, *O Globo Juvenil*, though founded only two years earlier, was clearly the leader of the pack. Seventy-four

⁴² Ibid, 25 Feb 1939

percent of respondents said they had read *O Globo Juvenil* before, and 55 percent said it was their favorite magazine. The survey also found that more than 90 percent of the magazine's content was produced outside of the country, more than any other supplement. Young consumers were apparently not as concerned with national authorship as the ministry: *O Globo Juvenil*'s 1938 average readership per issue was 55,570 in Rio de Janeiro alone.⁴³ This success reflected the business acumen of its owner, as well as the political savvy of its editors.

O Globo and its subsidiaries were big business, and owner Roberto Marinho treated them as such. With *O Globo Juvenil* he gave consumers what they appeared to want—exciting, interesting, well-illustrated comics, for the most part—at a price they could afford (kept low by importing content). He created brand loyalty and then used that loyalty to induce consumers to buy more. Though advertising did not figure prominently in the magazine's early years, other *Globo* products were heavily endorsed. The monthly large format comic book *Gibi*, a sister publication, was always highlighted the week before its release. Editors would also try to upsell *O Globo Juvenil* readers, advertising “*Ferdinand the Bull* in newsstands now! Only 6\$000!”, a collection of comic strips roughly twice the length of a typical issue of *O Globo Juvenil*, but at a price twenty times higher.⁴⁴ Marinho was also willing to subvert the market in order to achieve his own capitalist goals. In 1938, publishers of *A Gazetinha*, *O Globo Juvenil*, and *Suplemento*

⁴³ November 1939 Study of 9 Rio Suplementos, GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

⁴⁴ Advertisements in *O Globo Juvenil*, November 1939, BN 4,368,04,01

Juvenil secretly agreed to a price-fixing scheme, in an effort to push out all other juvenile magazines.⁴⁵

A Gazetinha, under the leadership of Cásper Líbero, also innovated new ways of boosting profits, including the widespread introduction of advertising into youth publications, but ultimately came to ruin under the might of the *Estado Novo*. *Globo Juvenil*'s position, on the other hand, would never be truly threatened by politics. From its creation and throughout World War II, the pages of *O Globo Juvenil* were replete with the civic-minded nationalism that characterized *Estado Novo* propaganda. Mixed in with the comics and stories that comprised 90 percent of its content, every issue contained some patriotic theme or message. Odes to the national flag, excerpts from Vargas's Christmas Day speeches to children, memorials to the victims of the 1935 Communist uprising, and May Day celebrations appeared regularly. The establishment of Juventude Brasileira merited a long introductory essay and an exhortation to join, "All Brazilian youths should enroll in its ranks where you will learn to serve the *pátria*, to admire its past and to trust in and work for its future."⁴⁶ Before Brazil joined the war, the topic was strictly avoided with few exceptions. When the magazine (along with *Suplemento Juvenil*) increased its price in mid-1940, it explained that the war in Europe had led to a decrease in the wood production of Scandinavia. Importing paper now from Canada was dramatically more expensive. "This is why *Globo Juvenil* is speaking of war to you," as if they otherwise should not or could not.⁴⁷ The author of the explanation definitely did

⁴⁵ Gonçalves Júnior, 63.

⁴⁶ *O Globo Juvenil*, 26 March 1940

⁴⁷ *O Globo Juvenil*, 18 June 1940.

not explain that the paper scarcity was also due to the DIP having gained control over all paper imports in order to exert pressure on newspapers and magazine—part of a scheme that would contribute to the closing of *A Gazetinha*.⁴⁸

Weeks later, with news of the war ubiquitous in every media, the magazine addressed the issue more directly in an essay entitled “Neutrality”:

Until now we have not talked about the war because we don’t want to provoke the bad feelings brought on by this catastrophe, and because of this we won’t speak about it anymore, but today will be an exception to remind all of you about your duties to Brazil as a neutral country. We can be in favor or against any of the countries at war. Intimately, we have the right to desire the victory of any of them because of any personal sympathy or because we judge that their side is in the right. What we should not do is publically give our opinion so that those who think differently than us can also have their rights without provoking any serious conflicts, compromising the neutrality of Brazil. We suffer in silence for the good of the *patria*, certain that at the end of this conflict humanity will continue the march, interrupted for only a moment, towards solidarity and love between men.⁴⁹

The idea of neutrality, so eloquently described for young readers, was essential to the *O Globo* agenda. All of the political content of the supplement belied a deeply apolitical capitalism. If reproducing *Estado Novo* propaganda was the price of doing business, Marinho was willing to “suffer in silence” and pay it. Anne-Marie Smith tells of one moment of weakness for Marinho, when he became “infuriated with incompetent, unqualified censors” in the early 1940s: “He publicly assaulted one in the offices of *O Globo*, following which the newspaper’s publication was suspended for twenty-four hours and an order for Marinho’s imprisonment announced, although later suspended. In the memoirs of a journalist who witnessed the scene, the event was memorialized because

⁴⁸ Smith, 18.

⁴⁹ *O Globo Juvenil*, 11 July 1940

of Marinho's prestige and because it was so out of character for the generally accommodating publisher."⁵⁰

Marinho's reputation reflected a reality of collaboration with the regime. When he wrote to the Ministry of Education to complain about the proposal for increasing national content in juvenile magazines, he could credibly (if instrumentally) argue that despite *Globo Juvenil* and *Gibi*'s reliance on foreign cartoons, they were "dedicated to civic propaganda."⁵¹ After Brazil joined the war, the magazine continued to follow the government's line, gently edging away amid the domestic political turmoil of 1944 and 1945. When democracy returned to Brazil and heterogeneous ideologies vied for influence, explicitly political content simply disappeared from the pages of *Globo Juvenil*. Advertisements now sponsored the pages once dedicated to patriotic essays. The magazine committed itself fully to the low-cost, high-reward policy of importing American comics, and gained exclusive rights to the syndication of the majority of the Golden Age of Comics most popular works, including *Superman*, *Captain Marvel*, and the widely adored *Marvel Family*. Having survived the *Estado Novo* better than most publications, *Globo Juvenil* retained its number one position in 1950, easily weathering the transition to democracy.⁵²

For *Globo Juvenil*, the apparent internationalism of its content, which so worried the Ministry of Education, was based on the benefits that the free movement of economic goods, in this case the intellectual property of comic strips, could have for Brazilian

⁵⁰ Smith, 20.

⁵¹ Letter from Roberto Marinho to Getúlio Vargas, 1942, GC g1936.04.29, rolo 42 fot 814 to 1061

⁵² Gonçalo Júnior, 121.

industry—or more pointedly, the one individual business that dominated the entire domestic industry of juvenile magazines. Dutra's experimentation with free market policies in the late-1940s potentially created a net good for *O Globo*, but many other industries would suffer from such policies. Industrial production, though generally booming between 1946 and 1955, saw periods of decline during Dutra's presidency, causing discontent among industrialists who lobbied for greater protectionism.⁵³ His administration also suppressed workers' demands for higher compensation. Though low wages kept costs down for industry, they also limited domestic industry's market (including for companies like *Globo*.)⁵⁴

Sesinho

Ideology in post-war Brazil did not always overlap perfectly with economic interests, but political divisions often paralleled class divisions. While the Vargas government had at least rhetorically included workers in the national agenda, during the Dutra years the working class was somewhat marginalized, often disenfranchised by illiteracy, and suffering from stagnant wages. Class conflict seemed to many, both poor and rich, to be the greatest threat to democratic stability.⁵⁵ As described by Barbara Weinstein, one of the most significant moves by the Dutra administration to address this tension was the 1946 decree founding of the Industrial Social Service (*Serviço Social da Indústria*, SESI). An expansion of an industrial education program founded by Vargas in 1942, SESI was

⁵³ Levine, 77

⁵⁴ Ibid, 78-9.

⁵⁵ Weinstein, 140

framed as an organization for the “defense of the worker’s real wages (improvement in housing, nutrition, and hygiene), assistance for domestic problems resulting from difficult living conditions, socioeconomic research, and educational and cultural activities designed to enrich the individual and stimulate productive activity.”⁵⁶ The government mandated that every industrial firm in the country must pay two percent of its annual payroll into SESI coffers, but in return would have authority over the management and programming of the organization. The project frustrated industrialists, who saw it as an added expense at a time when they believed Dutra’s trade policies were already leading them into destruction, but boosted by a generous budget SESI programs rapidly spread throughout the country.⁵⁷

With the slogan “For Social Peace in Brazil”, SESI founded social centers and workers’ cafeterias, opened playgrounds and factory schools, and wrote and edited magazines for workers, working women, worker’s wives, and working class children, in an effort to “oversee the creation of responsible worker citizens.”⁵⁸ Launched in December 1947, *Sesinho* was SESI’s juvenile magazine. Of the 100,000 issues printed monthly, half were sold cheaply at newsstands and half were distributed for free at SESI social centers.⁵⁹ According to Gonalo J nior, *Sesinho* was purposely constructed as an attack on the amoral messages of *Globo Juvenil*, and was hailed by its creator Vicente Guimarães as “the magazine of intelligent children,” one “written, drawn, and completely

⁵⁶ Decree-Law 9,403, quoted in Weinstein, 112.

⁵⁷ Weinstein, 140.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 220.

⁵⁹ Weinstein briefly describes *Sesinho* as “one of Brazil’s first regular publications exclusively for children” (249), though in truth it was the last founded among the major juvenile magazine in the mid-century style.

made in Brazil.”⁶⁰ The magazine’s content was mostly based on two characters. Guimarães wrote weekly introductions and instructive essays under the alias “Vovô Felício,” a kindly grandfather with spectacles. The second character was a little boy named Sésinho, whom Vovô described in the first issue as “strong, wise, brave, and beautiful, who will serve as an example to Brazilian children. He’s also the son of an industrial worker, and a classmate of you all.”⁶¹

The content of the magazine comprised illustrated history and geography lessons, short plays to perform, quizzes, civic essays, and cheesy, poorly-drawn comic strips with feeble punchlines in their final cells. The comic strips with the most professional illustrations were those about Sésinho. In them, the little working-class cartoon boy demonstrated how to behave properly and healthfully at various times of day. One, set in the early morning stated, “[t]his good little boy is so smart: when he gets up he goes to brush his teeth. He also takes a bath first thing in the morning.”⁶² Another communicated nothing more than that “Sésinho eats milk, bread and butter, and coffee for breakfast.”⁶³ How did Sésinho spend his afternoons? “Sésinho eats a hearty lunch, washes his hands with soap, and spends three hours on his homework.”⁶⁴

Readers were invited to join Sésinho’s Club, by mailing in a photo with their name, age, school, their father’s job, their future job, their favorite book and their favorite football club. The respondents varied in age from around seven to fifteen years old, with most about aged about twelve years, slightly younger than members of readers clubs of

⁶⁰ Gonçalves Junior, 129.

⁶¹ *Sesinho*, No.1, December 1947, BN PR-SPR 797

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Sesinho*, No. 4, 1948.

⁶⁴ *Sesinho*, No. 11, October 1948

Globo Juvenil or *Suplemento Juvenil*, evidence perhaps of the more juvenile content of the magazine but also of adulthood arriving sooner for working-class youth. The questions asked for joining the Club changed somewhat in *Sesinho*'s first few years. "What is your father's job?" changed to "What is your father or brother's job?", presumably to accommodate fatherless children, but ignoring the obvious alternative of "What is your mother's job?" The inquiry into the reader's school was dropped entirely after many thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen year old respondents had to reply, "No school." The most striking feature of these readers was their geographic diversity. While São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were still heavily represented (as heavily industrialized cities), members came from every region of the country. The national scope of the magazine was made even clearer by the recurring photograph features of children at SESI-sponsored events, often holding their free copies of *Sesinho*. Peripheral states such as Rio Grande do Norte and Mato Grosso appeared more frequently in these photo spreads than their population or industrial output would indicate. Another recurring feature, introduced in 1952, discussed each month the geography and history of a different Brazilian state. This geographic diversity attested not only to how expansive a program SESI had quickly become, but also to the inclusive nationalism Guimarães and the organization in general.

In 1950, Getúlio Vargas returned to the scene of national politics and created a whirlwind with his overwhelming election to the Presidency as the head of his new labor party, the *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (PTB, Brazilian Labor Party).⁶⁵ This new phase

⁶⁵ In a three-man race, Vargas won 48.7% of the vote. Even in São Paulo, the state where anti-Vargas sentiment had been strongest during his dictatorship, he won three times as many votes as the runner-up. See, Levine, 79-80.

of Vargas's career, and of Brazilian politics in general, centered on the renewed dominance of nationalism and laborism, a combination that came to be known as *trabalhismo*. In this way, *Sesinho* was consummately of the times. Nationalism, employed by the *Estado Novo* as a discourse for maintaining social peace, was strongly emphasized in the magazine. Vargas's election inspired a special, full-color illustrated insert called "The Boy Getúlio Vargas" describing how even as a child Vargas had planned his life as one of service to the nation: "There grew in him a love for his country and his people, studying the history of his *Pátria* e taking note of its major problems. He always studied, feeling that his destiny lied in learning about his country. He dedicated himself to his studies like a soldier preparing for battle, arming his spirit with all the necessary knowledge until the hour when Brazil would need him and he would be called to serve."⁶⁶ Every lesson Vovô Felício taught tied back in to the idea of national duty. When encouraging children to eat healthy snacks and get plenty of fresh air, he warned, "Your health is not only your own. On it depends the happiness of your parents and the great of your *pátria*... Brazil needs strong citizens to take it ever higher on the road to progress and civilization, increasing its reputation around the world."⁶⁷ Even picky eating was a danger to the nation "I DON'T LIKE IT. It's a terrible phrase that harms the health of the individual, contributing to unhappiness in the home and the poverty of the country." What made picky eating so dangerous? "You can't be a strong worker if you don't eat your vitamins."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ "O menino Getúlio Vargas" in *Sesinho*, no. 41, April 1951

⁶⁷ *Sesinho*, no. 11, October 1948.

⁶⁸ *Sesinho*, no. 47, October 1951.

SESI, as an organization led by Brazilian industrialists and sponsored by the Brazilian state, had a natural interest in nationalism. In national politics, this contingent lobbied for economic protectionism and subsidies. Nationalism as formulated by the *Estado Novo*, as a tool for social peace, was also a convincing narrative. In *For Social Peace in Brazil*, Barbara Weinstein argues that factory owners saw themselves as having an essentially antagonistic relationship with their workers. Though SESI may have on the surface appeared to be a tool for interclass cooperation and assistance, industrialists, initially displeased by the government mandate, eventually used the organization as a tool for labor control. Weinstein explains, “In their construction of the workers as an obstacle to modernization that could not be removed by higher wages alone, [SESI] could draw upon long discursive traditions that portrayed the ‘popular classes’ as ignorant, unhealthy, and dangerous.”⁶⁹ *Sesinho*, then, was an investment in the future, in the next generation of workers. If properly guided and instructed, today’s poor children could be tomorrow’s compliant and complacent workers.

During the new Vargas presidency, “the Brazilian worker occupied an ever more prominent place in public discourse,” and *Sesinho* attests to that.⁷⁰ However, Weinstein paints a grim portrait of SESI’s relationship with workers, which she says was quite different from Vargas’s more sympathetic *trabalhismo*, which celebrated the worker’s efforts while seeking to effect changes in his material standard of living.⁷¹ In *Sesinho*’s treatment of labor, Weinstein’s pessimism basically holds true. The magazine clearly

⁶⁹ Weinstein, 220.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid, 219-220.

treated its young working class readers instrumentally. Vovô Felício's first introductory essay made that clear: "You are, my little grandchildren, the workers of Brazil of tomorrow. Our *pátria* expects a lot from you. It's the children of today, especially the working class children that Brazil trusts for its constant progress. Prepare yourselves, my grandchildren, with enthusiasm and faith, enriching your intelligence and exercising your physique, so that in the future our *pátria* can count on you as perfect industrial workers."⁷² Even the more entertaining parts of the magazine were designed to instill positive associations with being an industrial worker. One recurring feature taught readers basic construction and mechanical skills—how to repair a radio, how to build a bookcase. The magazine covers of 1949 and 1950 each portrayed little Sésinho dressed up and performing the work of a different manual profession, though the March 1949 cover about glassblowing included a warning that this profession was banned for boys under age 18 because it was "very dangerous and demands great physical effort, harming the growth of young men."⁷³

Not only did the magazine instruct readers that their destiny was to be workers "for the *pátria*", but it attempted to mold them into the kind of workers that SESI's patrons desired. Obedience was a constant theme. "Every man," wrote Vovô Felício, "no matter how rich or important he might be, must obey the laws of the country, the rules of traffic, the order in lines, the laws of nature, the orders of his superiors... Obedience is a part of order, peace, and progress." Equating the laws of nature with the orders of one's "superiors", Vovô went on to explain how obedience actually works—in school, at home,

⁷² *Sesinho*, no. 1, December 1947

⁷³ *Sesinho*, no. 16, March 1949.

or in the workplace: “When you believe that an order is not right, because superiors can also err, do it without arguing. Later, ask for confirmation, inquiring with delicacy about what seems wrong.”⁷⁴ Even industrial safety did not trump the mandate of obedience. During the 1950 election, *Sesinho* republished “Civic Commandments” by turn-of-the-century Republican Coelho Neto. The essay commanded mid-century youths to “Honor God... Consider the flag the living image of the *Pátria*... Listen to and obey your superiors, because without discipline there is no balance. When you feel tempted, find refuge in your work.”⁷⁵ Lack of obedience and discipline could create *vadiagem*, the laziness and truancy that industrialists scorned and believed to be a fault of workers that higher wages would only exacerbate. *Sesinho* readers must begin reforming such instincts *now*, “It’s your duty *today*... to obey your parents and teachers and to study and prepare yourselves morally and intellectually for future struggles.”⁷⁶ Such references to obedience also featured prominently in SESI’s adult publications. Nearly every reference to labor tied into the *pátria*, and every discussion of patriotism was connected to readers’ futures as workers. In the pages of *Sesinho*, nationalism was used as a rhetorical device to legitimize the “anti-populist” agenda of SESI.⁷⁷

Though the magazine’s content stressed the class identity of its audience, it also betrayed either an ignorance or an ignoring of what it was like to actually be working-class. Middle-class consumerism was treated as a norm that workers must take part in. Having washing in the bathtub of a brightly tiled, electrically-lit dedicated bathroom,

⁷⁴ *Sesinho*, no. 4, March 1948

⁷⁵ Reprinted in *Sesinho*, no. 35, October 1950

⁷⁶ *Sesinho*, no. 62, January 1950

⁷⁷ Weinstein, 228.

Sésinho would eat a hearty breakfast prepared by his stay-at-home mother. But John Crocitti shows that in 1950, 57 percent of industrial workers in Brazil did not earn enough on a single income to sufficiently feed a family of four, even if they dedicated 100 percent of their income to food.⁷⁸ Grammar lessons exhorted readers to “speak correctly.”⁷⁹ Though advertisements were very rare in *Sesinho*, the few that appeared were for practically unattainable items like movie projectors and televisions!⁸⁰ An early 1950s survey of students in SESI’s sister-organization for industrial education found that their homes were typically “shacks, shanties, huts, and other types of rudimentary structures” and in São Paulo only 35 percent had indoor toilets and the average number of persons per bedroom was three.⁸¹ Meanwhile, “Our Home” features in *Sesinho* offered suggestions for improving the beauty and efficiency of different rooms in a house—a house with *many* rooms, haute décor, blenders, and toasters. Despite SESI’s lobbying against minimum wage increases, *Sesinho* still urged young readers to buy into the post-war dream of consumerism. To buy was to be civilized, to be healthy, to be modern.

Gazetinha, Part II

In March 1948, on the anniversary of its closure by the DIP, *Gazetinha* returned to newsstands. Editors explained the eight-year hiatus as “an interruption motivated by the difficulties of the last war, including the paper shortage.”⁸² In 1940, the magazine had been a serious competitor of *Globo Juvenil* and a pioneer in advertising to children and

⁷⁸ Crocitti, 153.

⁷⁹ *Sesinho*, no. 9, July 1948

⁸⁰ See *Sesinho*, no. 20, July 1949, and no. 42, May 1951

⁸¹ Quoted in Weinstein, 224.

⁸² *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, 18 March 1948

adolescents. Now, they had lost all their rights to American comic strips, and floundered in their content. “Readers will notice the effort we’re making and will always make to present ‘*coisas nossas*’ [‘our things’, Brazilian content], to stimulate feelings of patriotism and nationalism almost forgotten in these days when we live intensely internal lives”, the editors explained.⁸³ Early issues were much more educational than before the hiatus, with short stories about Brazilian history and geography lessons comprising much of the content. A few crudely drawn cartoons by Brazilian authors were accompanied by a small number of Italian comic strips, including a serialization of the Emilio Salgari novel *The Mystery of the Black Jungle*. Slowly, *Gazetinha* obtained syndication of a few American works. *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* appeared, only a decade after the height of Buck Rogers’s popularity in Brazil. In June 1949, they introduced Mighty Mouse, shortly after the inclusion of Hilda Terry’s “Teena” about the (mis-) adventures of a teenage girl in Suburbia, USA. Teena represented a new type in the post-war period, both in the United States and Brazil, and was the first artifact of anything being called “teen” in Brazil that I have found.⁸⁴

In August 1949, less than a year and a half after the relaunch of *Gazetinha*, the magazine underwent a total redesign and issued new numbering. Comic strips and geography lessons disappeared entirely. The design was modernized, and now most illustrations were photographs. “*Fotonovelas*” appeared, like comic strips but with photos and more adult themes. Sheet music, romantic stories, and tougher crossword

⁸³ *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, March 1948

⁸⁴ Oxford English Dictionary places the first known usage of the English “teen-ager” in 1941, in *Popular Science Magazine*. “Teen”, to describe a person, entered North American usage a few years later. The third oldest example in OED came from the *Charlottesville Daily Progress* in 1957 which noted “Today’s teens spend money carefully.”

puzzles provided variety. Sexy but modest young women posed on the covers. Advertising reappeared, for clothes, for travel, and for “The Bobbysocks Girls’ Club” (Clube da Garota Soquete), a community for “Fun, Fashion, and Good Friends—JUST FOR GIRLS!” One recurring feature visited schools around the São Paulo region, an occasional practice for many juvenile magazines since the 1930s, but now *Gazetinha* visited colleges and universities to meet readers in their late-teens and early-twenties. These girls were unvaryingly students, unmarried, romantic, existentially dissatisfied, but hopeful about their future careers—that is, teenagers.

Gazetinha had pioneered the genre of the juvenile magazine in Brazil, and successfully monetized it. In 1949, they again innovated a new form of media, being one of the first adopters of the *fotonovela* and the teen magazine. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, most of the supplements and juvenile magazines born in the 1930s and 1940s reduced publishing frequency before disappearing entirely.⁸⁵ Television now reached larger audiences, and adolescents tended to adopt different interests than the latest *Prince Valiant* installment. *Fotonovelas* filled the supplements’ void on newsstands. Globo accepted the change, and eventually gained dominance in Brazilian television. *A Gazetinha* only ceased weekly publication in 2011, though new issues are still published regularly online.

⁸⁵ “Biblioteca Nacional exhibe mostra de fotonovelas,” *Blog da Biblioteca Nacional*, <http://blogdabn.wordpress.com/2012/03/24/exposicao-sobre-fotonovelas-na-bn-revive-o-fenomeno-de-vendas-da-decada-de-70/>; Gonçalves Júnior, 182.

Conclusion: Inventing the Young Reader as Consumer

In late 1945, the French Foreign Service invited children from around the world to participate in a drawing contest called “How do you imagine liberated Paris?” Six thousand children from throughout Brazil submitted entries, and the French embassy in Rio de Janeiro gave away a thousand prizes to participants. The contest was widely publicized and covered in editorials in major newspapers and on radio throughout the country. En route to an exhibition in Paris, all the drawings were lost, only to be rediscovered in Rio de Janeiro six years later. A lot of hype ended with a fizzle, but the contest’s enduring legacy related to how the Brazilian advertising and publicity industries interacted with youth. A São Paulo *Folha da Manhã* editorial argued,

At the heart of this little innocent contest is a serious warning to our businessmen, as well as valuable suggestions for our advertising experts. It’s proving to us, once again, the incomparable importance of children as an element in the irradiation of ideas and demonstrates their high value as a factor in consumption. We’re not ‘minding’ the children. Industry, and even less so commerce, doesn’t know how to exploit this latent consumer. Advertising abandons children to a secondary plane with no importance, not understanding their extraordinary value as an intermediary in the most delicate and complex of psychological reactions... The reason behind [the success of children’s books, the contest] is transparently obvious: A child is a big spender, an incorrigible addict, full of caprices and manias. Take a look at the budgets of the most modest working-class homes: the child costs much more than the adults. No one begrudges a child expenses that would never be permissible for a ‘big person’ of the same social and economic standing.⁸⁶

Though *Gazetinha* had adopted heavy advertising in the late-1930s, most of the ads were directed towards mothers worried about their children’s health or wanting to buy their children’s affection. A 1938 Antarctica ad proclaimed the drink as “The Mother’s Beer,” “that all mothers should prefer if they want their children to be strong and robust.” A

⁸⁶ BN – Manuscripts – 24,3,1 no1 to 24,3,3 no 3

União sugar ad recommended the brand for all children who seem “low in spirits... too lazy to even think.—Give her sugar!”⁸⁷ However, in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, young Brazilians became much more heavily advertised to and commercialized. In 1947, Vogue Publicity agency ran an ad in *Publicidade & Negócios* (Publicity & Business) magazine on behalf of their client Globo. “Is it worth it to publish in children’s publications?” asked the ad, explaining that a US study claimed that consumers between eight and twenty years old had as firm of brand recognition and consumption preferences as adults. It also affirmed that 75 percent of young Brazilians who knew how to read bought juvenile magazines. “And in this field, *Gibi*, *Gibi Mensal*, *O Globo Juvenil*, and *X-9* offer the largest circulation of publications for youth.”⁸⁸ This advertisement would itself inaugurate the age of heavy advertising in the media most consumed by young Brazilians.

The attempts to seduce youth as consumers developed alongside attempts to persuade youth to read and by reading to adopt a certain worldview. Ultimately in the ideological battles of the early democratic period, no ideology gained more adherents than materialism, broadly construed. Those who looked abroad for models of progress wished to emulate the comforts and standard of living of richer countries—and the United States came to epitomize that model in many Brazilian minds. A new focus on workers’ rights and privileges was poised to accelerate the potential growth of national industry.

⁸⁷ In *A Gazeta: Edição Infantil*, 18 June 1938, 25 February 1939

⁸⁸ Cited in Gonçalves Junior, 121.

Chapter 4

“The Youth Know What They Want”

The Economic and Cultural Power of Youth in the 1950s and ‘60s

For young people who grew up after the years of the Vargas dictatorship, Queremismo and the elections of 1945 and 1950, politics must have seemed bewilderingly fractious and unstable. This instability would have come into stark relief in August 1954 when Getúlio Vargas, accused of involvement in an assassination attempt on a political opponent and under threat of a military coup, committed suicide in the presidential palace, leaving a cryptic letter hinting at dark international forces arrayed against him. The country’s descent into mourning was tempered by reasons for optimism. The economy was good and the population was unprecedentedly youthful.

Historians of the United States and Western Europe have noted similar apparent incongruities in the 1950s. Despite the intensification of the Cold War, hyper-nuclearization, and the bloody beginnings of the Civil Rights movement, post-war economic booms and baby booms created a sense of good times. In this chapter I will explore how the economic successes of Brazil’s “populist democracy”¹ led to a significant reconfiguration of society that brought young Brazilians ever greater levels of economic and cultural power. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, youth began to slip the bonds of manipulation for others’ political or social gain, asserting new economic and cultural preferences driven by their own values and priorities. In short, I will examine in greater depth the emergence of the Brazilian teenager.

¹ Called the “Populist Republic” by John D. French in *The Brazilian Workers’ ABC: Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern São Paulo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) and the “populist pact” in Giovanni Semeraro, *A primavera dos anos 60: a geração do Betinho* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1994).

The concept of the teenager is closely associated with the “juvenilization” of popular culture in the mid-twentieth century, particularly in the United States, and the earliest descriptions of teenagers come from that country.² But the rise to prominence of an international teen *culture* was based on commercialism and market motivations. In *Teenagers: An American History*, one of the first historical studies to outline the rise of teenage culture, Grace Palladino argues that during the 1930s and World War II a conceptual shift occurred in the roles and expectations of young people in the United States. While most Depression-era teenagers left school early and spent most of their teenage years working,³ work shortages “finally pushed teenage youth out of the workplace and into the classroom.”⁴ It was as students that young people conformed to the ideal developed earlier in the twentieth century of the American “adolescent.” By 1940, the majority of 17 year olds earned high school diplomas.⁵

Oddly, it was not as workers with purchasing power, but as dependents with allowances, that American teenagers became targeted as consumers. Palladino writes, “Ever since the word ‘teenager’ first came into popular use around the time of the Second World War, the group has been linked to ‘buying power and influence,’ a heady combination that promised big business to postwar moviemakers, cosmetic firms, clothes manufacturers, and even grocery stores.”⁶ The first usage of the (then-hyphenated) term

² Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 41.

³ In Britain, the majority was even larger than in the United States, with 70% of fourteen year olds employed full-time in 1938, according to David Fowler in *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (London: The Woburn Press, 1995), 7.

⁴ Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), 5.

⁵ Ibid, xiii.

⁶ Ibid, xii.

“teen-ager” in *The New York Times*, in October 1942, was a testament to the concept of the teen-aged consumer, referencing the purchase of war bonds at New York’s Saks Fifth Avenue by high school girls.⁷

In 1945, the twenty-five year old promotion director of *Seventeen* magazine, Estelle Ellis, confidently described the “typical” teenager as one who would be immensely appealing to business and advertisers:

Our girl Teena is sixteen years old. She’s five feet four and a quarter inches tall and tips the scales at 118 pounds. She goes to a public high school, expects to graduate next year at the age of 18 and go on to college with a B.A. or B.S. in mind. Her chances of going to college are good, since Teena’s mother is in favor of higher education! And her father can afford to foot all her college bills. He’s a professional man... a business man... a white-collar worker. Teena could work her way through college if she had to... she earns money even now, minding babies after school. And it’s not just ‘pin money’ she’s working for either... when Teena works she earns \$13.84 a month—all of which she keeps for her own expenses. This, in addition to a regular family allowance—\$2.13 a week, which she spends on movies, bus fares, cokes, school supplies, lunches, candy, etc.⁸

In Chapter Three I argued that in the early years of the democratic period young Brazilians became increasingly targeted by advertising and commerce, and explained that the demographic overrepresentation of young people as well as educational trends that caused an unusually youthful literate population contributed to these marketing practices. At the same time, large-scale changes in the Brazilian economy heightened the economic clout of youth, especially by the mid-1950s. In this chapter, I will show how these economic developments led to significantly different experiences between Brazilian and

⁷ Kelley Massoni, *Fashioning Teenagers: A Cultural History of Seventeen Magazine* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010), 27.

⁸ Quoted in Massoni, 92. Massoni notes that 1944’s \$13.84 would have equaled \$163.00 in 2009; \$2.13 would be \$25.80

American teenagers, and caused international youth culture to be expressed distinctly in the two countries.

The Economic Power of Youth

The economic good times that defined the mid-twentieth century in Brazil had their roots in the Vargas period. It was under Vargas that developmentalism, the concerted governmental and private efforts to industrialize, modernize, and capitalize the country as rapidly as possible, took hold. Originally a response to the Great Depression, developmentalist policies encouraged the growth of domestic industries and markets through tariff protections, credits to favored industries, minimum wages that encouraged domestic consumption, and public-private partnerships like SESI. Vargas's policies might have begun the process, but by the end of his tenure in 1945, the Brazilian economy had not been totally revolutionized.⁹ Agriculture retained the largest share of GNP and as late as 1950 over 60 percent of Brazilian workers were employed in that sector.¹⁰

From the 1940s to 1960s, worldwide agricultural growth was very slow, especially for those crops Brazil had long dominated. The sugar market grew an average of 3.8 percent annually, coffee at 2.2 percent, while the world export of manufactured products was growing yearly at 6.6 percent. It became impossible, according to Werner Baer, "to imagine how the country could hope to achieve high rates of growth while

⁹ Brodwyn Fischer has argued that before 1945, the Brazilian government *wrote* many good laws, but that after 1945 those laws were *enacted*. See *A Poverty of Rights: Citizenship and Inequality in Twentieth-century Rio De Janeiro* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ Werner Baer, *The Brazilian Economy: Growth and Development*, 2nd edition (New York: Praeger, 1983), 61. By comparison, it was about 10 percent in the U.S. in 1950.

relying principally on the exportation of primary products.”¹¹ Though free-market reforms during the Dutra presidency sparked some significant but unreliable growth, the return of Vargas to the presidency in 1950 marked a turning point. A coherent development policy of import substitution industrialization could now take selective advantage of an *internationally* strong market, rather than just fending off the blows of the Depression or returning to a position of dependency on the exportation of commodities.

The presidential election of 1955 brought to power the president who became the face of Brazil’s mid-century boom. Despite only winning a plurality (36.6 percent) of the vote, Juscelino Kubitschek became one of only two presidents to finish his term in a constitutional manner between 1930 and 1964. His successes and his allure were simultaneously political and economic. During his campaign and throughout his presidency, Kubitschek was noted for his conciliatory politics. Rising to power through an alliance of the centrist PSD and populist PTB¹² (both parties originally founded by Vargas), he was able to maintain the support of Congress and the Armed Forces throughout his tenure in office. These disparate interests converged around Kubitschek’s economic policies, called *o Programa de Metas*, the Goals Program.¹³ This program touched almost every aspect of the national economy under the slogan of “Fifty Years of Progress in Five.” Goals included the expansion and improvement of infrastructure, chiefly railroads, highways and ports; doubling national wheat production; building new

¹¹ Ibid, 62.

¹² PSD, *Partido Social Democrático*, Social Democratic Party and PTB, *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro*, Brazilian Labour Party.

¹³ Maria Victoria de Mesquita Benevides *O governo Kubitschek: Desenvolvimento econômico e estabilidade política* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1976), 23-28.

warehouses, silos and meat processing plants; increasing national production of nitrogen fertilizers from 18,000 tons annually to 300,000; and especially the creation and expansion of capital goods industries, including automobiles, tractors, and heavy-tonnage ships, by doubling, tripling, even nonupling the production of products like steel, aluminum, cement, alkalis, wood-pulp, and non-ferrous metals.¹⁴

By 1960 most of the goals had been achieved or were in train. The growth in such a huge variety of industries was facilitated by and further encouraged unprecedented amounts of foreign investment. Annually during the Kubitschek years foreign capital inflows were roughly equivalent to the previous *decade's* total. Industrial growth averaged 13 percent a year, and over the course of the 1950s, real wages increased 26 percent.¹⁵ But it was the construction of a futuristic new capital Brasília in the remote interior that captured the popular and international imagination, becoming the *ne plus ultra* of the Kubitschek presidency.

In this period of enormous economic growth, youth played an unprecedented role in its realization, while also reaping many of the benefits of this new development. Perhaps the most significant difference between the Brazilian and U.S. American teenagers in the mid-century was their relationships with work. While almost all American teens had gained the opportunity to be students, dependent on odd-jobs and family support, Brazilian youth continued to labor outside the home (as they always had,

¹⁴ Roberto Medaglia, *Juscelino Kubitschek: President of Brazil, The Life of a Self-Made Man*, 1959, 68-71.

¹⁵ Atul Kohli, *State Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 183-186

to the detriment of their formal educations) and even gained increased prominence in the national economy.

As the overwhelming majority of U.S. American adolescents abandoned work for schools, they developed a new relationship with work that was unusual in the mid-century world, even in wealthy countries. Part-time, low-skill jobs were deemed appropriate for immature employees. Such jobs were touted more for their potential to instill positive social values rather than for their income potential, which would typically be only supplementary to an allowance provided by parents. A YMCA-produced guide aimed at counseling parents on how to interact successfully with their teenage children put it this way: “There is nothing quite so effective in teaching a teen-ager the value of a dollar as letting him earn it. Being dependent upon the family for every cent bothers many a teen-ager; having a chance to earn at least some his own money helps a young person feel independent, and increases his self-esteem and self-confidence as well as helping him find out how well he likes certain kinds of work.”¹⁶ The author recommended babysitter, car washer, window washer, lawn mower, grocery bagger, and delivery boy as suitable positions for young people to learn the “value of a dollar.”¹⁷

Throughout the rest of the industrialized and industrializing world in the mid-twentieth century, most young people continued to work in the adult labor market. In Britain, as late as 1938, seven out of every ten children had already entered the adult labor market by age 14. In the 1950s, though the average age for beginning work had

¹⁶ Evelyn Millis Duvall, *Today's Teen-Agers* (New York: National Board of Young Men's Christian Associations, 1966), 149.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 152.

risen, 90 percent of teenagers still worked blue-collar jobs at least part time.¹⁸ In many parts of Latin America, youth had worked alongside adults in industrial environments for decades, but increasingly in the mid-twentieth century, young workers worked mostly around other young people. Efforts to modernize industrial production in Latin America were frequently influenced by Taylorist scientific management which emphasized using relatively advanced technology coupled with movement efficiency to increase industrial profits. Ann Farnsworth-Alvear has described how the importation of Taylorism to Colombian textile mills radically changed the composition of the workforce. In the 1930s, Colombian mill employees were about 80 percent female and by the 1960s were 80 percent male. Farnsworth-Alvear explains that male workers were seen by managers as more physically capable of the demanding, fast-paced labor in a scientifically managed factory.¹⁹ Elsewhere, the demographic shift in workers that accompanied Taylorism was one that privileged youth—for many of the same reasons that Farnsworth-Alvear points to with regard to men generally. Chilean historian Peter Winn, looking at a textile plant near Santiago, encapsulated the transformation writing: “In 1960, some four thousand *obreros* [workers], with an average age of forty, worked at the Yarur mill. By 1970, the number of blue-collar workers had dropped below two thousand; and their average age, below thirty... The installation of the Taylor System, which required physically strong

¹⁸ David Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (London: The Woburn Press, 1995), 7, 93.

¹⁹ Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, *Dulcinea in the Factory: Myths, Morals, Men, and Women in the Colombia's Industrial Experiment, 1905-1960* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 7-11.

and self-directed workers, had compelled Amador Yarur to hire a new generation of *obreros*.”²⁰

In Brazil, the Taylorism-inspired shift to a younger workforce in industrialized settings occurred largely during the period of rapid industrialization and technical modernization of the 1950s. Unlike 1960s Chile, the shift was further encouraged by the continued legality and social acceptability of paying minor employees a lower wage than adults who performed the same job. In February 1946, the short-lived *Jornal da Juventude*, aimed at working class youth, wrote that “the most important goal for Brazil’s new democracy should be prohibiting workers under age 14 and paying their parents enough to take care of them.”²¹ The reality of post-war youth employment in Brazil was quite different. Though child labor laws did set the minimum age of work at fourteen, economic pressures and social norms continued to drive most children, even in urban areas, into the labor force at the conclusion of primary schooling. Barbara Weinstein explains that the gap between finishing school at age twelve and beginning *legal* employment at age fourteen became known as the *hiato nocivo*, the harmful hiatus. For these two years, working-class children found illegal employment or worked in the informal sector, where “educators worried that two years of unsupervised or unroutinized activity would encourage mischievous and even criminal behavior and make it more difficult for these future workers to conform to the factory routine.” To compensate, the industrialist-funded National Service for Industrial Training (*Serviço Nacional de*

²⁰ Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile’s Road to Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 83.

²¹ *Jornal da Juventude*, 1:2, February 28, 1946; AEL/J/0267

Aprendizagem Industrial, SENAI) developed vocational courses for twelve and thirteen year olds which, in the words of Weinstein, were meant to “expose them to the manual arts so that they, together with their instructors, might discover their particular ‘vocation’ or calling, always presumed to lie, as a consequence of the social origin, in the sphere of industrial employment.”²²

Enrollment in these and similar courses clearly traced the growing presence of youth (to the exclusion of more mature adults) in Brazilian industry in the mid-century. In 1943-1947, minors under age eighteen comprised about forty percent of SENAI graduates. By 1953-57, minors had increased to 61.6 percent, while the total number of graduates had increased many times over.²³ The trajectory of graduation from SENAI classes likely closely followed the actual hiring trends in factories, given that by the mid-1950s the Industrial Social Service (SESI, of which SENAI was a part) was almost universally known and widely utilized by industrial workers, especially in the city’s industrial capital São Paulo.²⁴

Young workers in commerce (as opposed to industry) were significantly harder to trace and reach out to. *Comerciários* tended to receive lower wages, were less likely to be union members, and thus likely had less class consciousness and awareness of the services available to them as members of the working class. Surveys by the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Opinião Pública e

²² Barbara Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil: Industrialists and the Remaking of the Working Class in São Paulo, 1920-1964* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 129.

²³ Ibid, 345. By contrast, in the 1968-1971 time period, when the presence of minors in factory work had greatly declined (as I’ll explore in Chapter Five), only 9.9% of SENAI’s 194,826 graduates were minors.

²⁴ IBOPE/PE 014 Pesquisa de Opinião Realizada Entre Operários da Cidade de SP, Por Incumbência do SESI, April 1954

Estatística, IBOPE) do provide a patchwork glimpse into the presence and beliefs of young people working in commerce. A 1951 survey by SENAI's commerce counterpart asked *comerciários* in Rio de Janeiro their opinion on the potential construction of a dance hall. Forty-seven percent of the women surveyed admitted they would have to ask their father's permission to go, a strong indication of youth among the respondents.²⁵ A 1962 survey of *comerciários* in Rio, selected for representativeness, excluded any respondents below age eighteen, but 36 percent were between ages 18 and 24.²⁶ Though IBOPE excluded younger teenagers from its surveys, a 1969 study of *comerciários* in twenty-one state capitals found that over 96 percent reported having begun full-time work before age eighteen, with many confessing to having begun well before age fourteen—pointing to an extremely youthful population of workers in the 1950s and early 1960s.²⁷

The increasing prominence of youth in the labor market had an impact on family budgets. Looking at young British workers in the interwar period, David Fowler quotes a labor leader who argued in 1928, “No father with an assured income would throw his child into the labour market to sink or swim at 14.”²⁸ But Fowler's interviews with blue-collar retirees pointed to a different understanding of youth labor. One respondent said, “I started in the mill in 1930 when I was fourteen... The way they used to think then, you had to earn your keep, it wasn't a question of going to learn something where you didn't get a wage for four years. You had to start when you turned fourteen to earn money.” She pointed not to pure economic desperation, but a cultural value of teenagers “earning their

²⁵ IBOPE / PE/ 010 – 1951, *Pesquisa a comerciários*, RJ, 1951

²⁶ IBOPE/PE/036 *Pesquisa sobre padrão de vida, hábitos e atitudes dos comerciários da capital, realizada por solicitação do SESC*, 1962

²⁷ IBOPE/PE 106-108 *Pesquisa sobre os comerciários total ponderado*, Jan/Feb 1969

²⁸ Fowler, 7.

keep.”²⁹ In 1950s Brazil a similar value seemed to survive. Teenagers were expected to contribute to all family expenses, in no small part because most families required their teenaged children’s incomes to survive. In an early 1950s survey sixty percent of SENAI apprentices were partially responsible for basic household expenses. According to the survey, the “head of household” (typically the father) contributed just 43 percent of family income. In non-SENAI homes, heads of household contributed only 37 percent. This was a sharp decline from earlier surveys of working-class homes in São Paulo, where heads of household had contributed between 65 percent and 71 percent, further testament to the growing economic power of working class youth, at least in family dynamics.³⁰ In the previously mentioned 1962 survey of *comerciários*, twenty percent of the youngest respondent group were their household’s *sole* wage earner.³¹

Though expected to help financially maintain the household, social norms also allowed young workers to reap some individual benefit from their labor. SENAI apprentices in the early 1950s kept about 23 percent of their income to themselves (26 percent for a control group of other working-class teens.)³² Personal money went towards buying clothes, snacks, records, Carnival costumes and, especially, going to the movies.³³ Young working-class Brazilians at mid-century were dedicated cinephiles. A 1951 survey of young commercial workers (among the worst paid of all urban employees), found that 93 percent reported regular attendance at the movies, and more than 50 percent went

²⁹ Ibid, 17.

³⁰ Weinstein, 222.

³¹ IBOPE/PE/036.

³² Weinstein, 223.

³³ Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 204-5.

more than twice a week.³⁴ Though the cinema was popular among Brazilians of all ages and classes, dazzling spectacles in air-conditioned theaters far away from parents and bosses must have seemed especially appealing for cash-strapped adolescents traveling between work and their typically crowded family homes.

Developmentalism afforded the inclusion of the growing population of young people into the 1950s economy (sometimes straining the ability of working-class adults to be sole bread winners), but it also helped bring many families out of the working-class and into the expanding middle-class.³⁵ As in the United States, the young middle-class consumer of Brazil became the target not only of business avarice, as shown in Chapter Three, but also of sensational editorials that pondered the existential quandaries of having a large population of children and adolescents who knew nothing of *need*—but had endless *wants*. The spoiled child, often termed *o filinho de Papai* (Daddy’s Little Baby,) spawned a new genre of journalism and literary arts in the 1950s and ‘60s. A 1970 article in a popular weekly magazine suggests how deeply entrenched the idea of the consumer-driven teenager had become. Bemoaning “The Dictatorship of the Children”, the author concluded that parents no longer commanded the home:

The adolescent is a well of contradictions. He devalues the money of the ‘old man’ either because it was earned with another’s sweat (exploitation) or because it was earned with his own sweat (a testament to his mediocrity), at the same time that he devalues the ‘old man’ because he doesn’t spend enough of this money buying the mountain of possessions that are required to show one’s rejection of consumer society. [...] He criticizes the ignorance of his parents but thinks it’s cruel when they make him study... It’s not new that an adolescent is

³⁴ IBOPE / PE/ 010 – 1951, *Pesquisa a comerciantes*, RJ, 1951

³⁵ Discussed in Brian P. Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999) and comparatively in Louise E. Walker and David S. Parker, eds., *Latin America’s Middle Class: Unsettled Questions and New Histories* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013.)

contradictory. It is new that his contradictions have become the supreme law that should rule family life and—why not?—the march of the cosmos. And it's new that, somehow, he gets his way.³⁶

Even experts weighed in on the problem. In the same issue, a child psychologist provided a succinctly emotional summary of such concerns over spoiled children: “There is an industry dedicated entirely to them. There’s just one problem: the industry doesn’t produce love.”³⁷

On balance, the growing association between youth and economic power seemed to be a cause for *concern* for mid-century Brazilian adults. An early-1950s SESI study that noted the unprecedentedly high contribution of teenaged workers to family budgets and their own personal spending, included analysis that predicted “individual and social autonomy, generally characterized by the diminution of authority of the family heads over the dependents who have their own income” as a likely negative outcome of the situation.³⁸ Radio plays, films, and theater pieces explored the development with an eye to its social implications.

The spoiled child tended to appear most frequently in art forms aimed at educated middle-class audiences. The modernist poet and essayist Carlos Drummond de Andrade frequently explored the trope in his *crônicas* in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. In 1961’s “A Escola”, Drummond tells a story of two young brothers who are taken out for the day by their godfather. At a toyshop the godfather instructs the boys to each select a toy, “Any toy you want... It doesn’t matter.” Anguished and desirous the boys spend a

³⁶ *Realidade*, 5:51, June 1970, p. 64.

³⁷ *Ibid*, July 1971, p. 98.

³⁸ Weinstein, 223.

seeming eternity perusing the store, gazing at race cars and toy trains. Eventually the older brother chooses a small trinket, driving the younger to ponder: “It was necessary to choose for forever. And nothing is good for forever, nothing is really worth the bother.” He finally chose the same little trinket as his brother, and the trio left the store. The wanting was a transcendental experience. The having, for a boy who could have anything, was meaningless.³⁹

Captivated by the idea of materialist angst in children, and its metaphorical meaning for contemporary Brazilian society in general, Drummond was ultimately sympathetic with his spoiled child protagonists. To begin with, their faults were products of larger socio-economic forces. Reflecting on the children of the wealthy Copacabana neighborhood, which was rapidly filling with high-rises in the 1950’s, Drummond wrote “I know very well that there are dozens of socioeconomic reasons why we no longer have a culture of having many children in contemporary families. The biggest hearts satisfy themselves with one or two kids that they’re careful to keep out of the house as much as possible, because it’s impractical to be inside.” The new apartments typical of middle-class families were simply too small, and furthermore, kids weren’t *meant* to spend all their time in tiny urban dwellings. “While a certain number of apartment buildings still admit children (after all, it’s still not possible to do away with them entirely), they’re almost unanimous in their prohibitions against keeping pet dogs,” and therein Drummond

³⁹ Carlos Drummond de Andrade, “A Escola,” *Mundo Ilustrado*, 12 Aug 1961, FCRB.

identified the problem with modern, middle-class youth, “Children without animals are generally egoistic, cold, deceitful, cruel, and stupid.”⁴⁰

In “Criança, Vitrine e Desejo” Drummond depicted a child staring through a storefront window at a stuffed Ferdinand the Bull toy. Drummond drew out the tantalizing quality of desire in this emerging consumerism, for parents as well as children: “Possession of the object is suggested and forbidden to us... It’s hardest for the children because they learn about reality through touching... They’re not satisfied by the game of ‘make-believe’, so the child’s contemplation of the window can be a small latent drama, a scene of tears and protests.” Beyond the socio-economic motivations of the spoiled child, Drummond believed that generational differences created unbridgeable gaps of understanding. Through yearning for things, he argued, children slowly begin to understand their place in the world—one that would be very different from their parents’ in part because the objects and mechanics of desire were themselves different from previous generations. “In sum, what do we know of children or of any particular child? Of their reality, of their spirit, of the primitive reality, of their magic? We adults are dead children, and in punishing our children we punish our parents that punished us for reasons that we’ll never learn... Ferdinand, made of rubber and prisoner in a messy window, among books, dolls, and piggy banks, better understands our young friend than many bespectacled doctors.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Carlos Drummond de Andrade, “Nossos Irmãos Menores,” *Correio da Manhã*, Rio de Janeiro, 9 Jan 1954, FCRB.

⁴¹ Carlos Drummond de Andrade, “Criança, Vitrine e Desejo,” *Coletânea*, Rio, V:55, December 1955, FCRB.

Drummond was unusually conscious of the ambiguities of the emerging consumer culture, especially among the middle class. Popular media aimed at the working class typically treated youth economics more prosaically. Though the middle-class gradually began to tune-out of radio from the mid-50s in favor of television, the *listening* audience expanded greatly as radios became more and more affordable for more and more working-class people.⁴² Radioplays still tended towards romances, which had been popular in Brazil since the 1930s, but often in the 1940s and 1950s young lovers weren't just the protagonists, but the quite manipulative holders of sexual and economic power. These stories often involved unexpected inter-generational love triangles, with characters of different ages informed by different values of what constitutes a successful relationship, and with money providing much of the dramatic tension.

In *Rapaz Teimoso*, beautiful eighteen-year-old Amélia is desperately in love with handsome Gilberto, but her father Valério forbids their marriage. Valério, a failure in his myriad business adventures, demands a rich son-in-law, "I cannot consent to him marrying my daughter, because marriage is a mercantile relationship like any other, and everyone needs at least one good capitalist associate in the family." Looking for a more suitable match for his lovely daughter, Valério arranges a marriage between Amélia and their rich old hag of a neighbor's "nervous", health-afflicted nephew. Thinking himself abandoned, grief-stricken Gilberto falls in love with Amélia's middle-aged Aunt Mariana (Valerio's sister and a spinster) after she declares her love for him. The play concludes with the revelation that Gilberto's marriage to Mariana was an act of revenge against

⁴² McCann, Chapter 6.

Valério—to prevent the opportunistic inhibitor of true love from receiving any of Mariana’s inheritance from her wealthy godfather.⁴³

A similar story of a sexually desirable youth extracting monetary advantage from an older lover was the highly popular and often re-aired *Aventura de um rapaz feio* (*Adventures of an Ugly Guy*), produced by Rádio Mayrink Vega in 1946. The Ugly Guy protagonist is Cirano, a thoroughly ugly, thoroughly modern, de Bergerac-type employee at a shoe store. In the words of a fellow employee, “Mr. Cirano is a man of our times. Intelligent, yes, but unbalanced. He has visions of grandeur and the manners of a madman,” but he’s never fired because despite his appearance women customers *love him*. Describing himself, he meanders down paths unusual, to say the least, for a shoe salesman: “I first had Dadaist tendencies. Later I decided to be impressionist, then a pastist, a presentist, and I was almost a futurist one day when I was in a good mood.” Ultimately he found his home as “an opportunist.” Born a washerwoman’s son, Cirano is in the market for a rich old woman to change his circumstances. The grotesquely old and fabulously rich Dona Serafina proposes to him one day in the midst of a shoe fitting, and instead of her husband, Cirano agrees to be her business manager. Within a year he’s the country’s greatest industrialist, “just like in the movies.” Within that year he’s also fallen in love with Elena, Dona Serafina’s niece. Elena is a vain (modern) young woman, and finds her sensibilities offended when the ugly Cirano proposes to her, replying, “In a land where there is no divorce, marriage is no more than a contract and often a death sentence.” Cirano turns instead to Dona Serafina. On the day of the wedding between the

⁴³ BN – Manuscripts – 016,001

young man and the old woman, Elena realizes her folly and declares her love to Cirano. He refuses her, and the tale ends.⁴⁴ As in many of radioplays of the era, a mixture of youth, magnetism, and economic savvy put young characters in positions of power vis-à-vis others, including their more experienced older lovers.

In 1951 a scandal broke out around a play that offered a daring new perspective on youth economic power—and its moral consequences. *Juventude Coca-Cola* is a short piece with virtually no plot. Its script is basically a spectacle of “bad kids,” delinquent teenagers. The six characters, three boys and three girls, use drugs, watch pornos, and have sex parties. They want to travel and see the world. They dance the “*bugue-bugue*” (boogie woogie.) And they drink Coca-Cola. At the play’s end, amidst a drug-fueled stupor, one boy exclaims, “The soft drink that conquered all of Italy! The whole world drinks Coca-Cola. Long live Coke!” The name of the play, and the accompanying symbolic use of Coke, points to a sinister foreign element behind the groups’ delinquency. They have become corrupted, perhaps, by American cultural influence. But one of the play’s opening scenes points to a more domestic rationale for this corruption. As the play begins a teenaged girl wakes up on a couch in her friend’s house—dazed, hungover, gulping down aspirins. She’d stayed out all night without telling her parents and now calls to tell them not to expect her. The audience hears only her side of the conversation, but can easily imagine her parents’ frustration (to say the least.) The girl finally breaks in angrily, “Look, you wanna know something? I’ll tell you! I work like a dog all week long. When you two want money, who do you come to? Me! And you think

⁴⁴ BN – Manuscripts – 052-0018

you have the right to talk to me like that!?” This exchange reveals important information that will be confirmed through hints throughout the play. The audience can deduce that the girl is a factory worker, and apparently her family’s sole source of income. She seeks this life of debauchery to compensate for the oppression of her routinized labor, but also finds herself caught in a web of shifting familial relations and hierarchies shaken and inverted by money. In her family, the bases of authority have been disrupted. Her parents expect fealty and submission from their young female child, while she, perhaps with some good reason, sees herself—as the family’s breadwinner—as the one to whom submission is due. Her parents are, after all, dependent on her. The traditional patriarchy, in which age is as important as gender as a marker of authority, has broken down around this young woman, and in the collapse she and her comrades have lost (or rejected) the long-established norms of good behavior.

When the play was submitted to government censors in advance of its first performance, it was unequivocally rejected. While almost all risqué pieces submitted to censors at the time were simply prohibited for minors under age eighteen, *Juventude Coca-Cola* received the very rare assessment of “Banned.” The censor’s explanation was brief, beginning predictably and concluding with a curiosity: “Banned for being immoral and having no conclusion.” Ultimately, this evaluation ended up being an amazing boon for the writer and producers of the play. Copies of the script were obtained by journalists across the country, and theater critics produced numerous glowing reviews. Invited to write a rebuttal to the censor, the play’s author José Maria Monteiro, wrote that the censor misunderstood the piece, “*Juventude Coca-Cola* is not a light little comedy. It is a

report on the post-war era. It shows the lives of innumerable *rapazes e moças* that drink, smoke, dance, and have fun, hoping to enjoy life to its fullest and destroying themselves in the process. It is with a dramatic tone that this piece should be understood.” Monteiro argued further that while there was indeed some provocative content, it wasn’t anything the audience hadn’t already seen in their own lives, “The piece is realist and its characters exist, there’s no doubt. It is a cry of revolt against the licentious customs that, for a few years now, have existed in any big city in Brazil.” Amidst the uproar and interest in the play, the censors agreed to re-assess the piece. It was approved for adult audiences, and soon began a run in Rio de Janeiro.⁴⁵

In art and popular media, the increasing economic power of youth was treated with both wonder and worry because of its revolutionary potential to change long-established hierarchies in Brazilian society. The developmentalist policies of the 1950s produced not only economic growth, but a social transformation in who benefitted from that growth and how.

The Cultural Power of Youth

The growing economic power of youth in the mid-twentieth century in Brazil became a popular theme in various cultural media and, in the process, also birthed a new teenage culture. Armed with new buying power, what did young Brazilians consume and in what form did they reshape popular culture?

⁴⁵ BN – Manuscripts – 080,0026 Censor’s copy of *Juventude Coca-Cola*

With their disposable income, young Brazilians in the 1950s and 1960s avidly consumed artifacts of a distinctive youth popular culture that was developing concurrently in other parts of the world, especially in the United States, France, and Britain. In film, football, and fashion (three of the most significant categories of youth spending,)⁴⁶ young Brazilians increasingly looked abroad. Though Brazilian music in the 1960s experienced a renaissance of creativity and popularity and in the ensuing decades has been widely celebrated, its actual consumption in the 1960s paled in comparison to foreign hits. The lists of the most sold albums of the 1960s in Brazil are chock full of British and American hits, with the Beatles typically occupying multiple slots in each month's top ten. October 1967's top single, a rare Brazilian number one, spoke to the immense popularity of foreign bands with the title "The Boy Who Loved the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, Just Like Me."⁴⁷ The greatest exception to foreign domination of the music charts was the Elvis-Presley-idolizing heartthrob Roberto Carlos, who captivated teenage girls' hearts with derivative ballads and pop hits like 1962's "Splish Splash."⁴⁸

Though the national economy was increasingly dominated by U.S. capital, the cultural revolution underway with youth was more cosmopolitan than emulative. Rock 'n' Roll entered the Brazilian vocabulary as *iê-iê-iê*, derived ultimately from the English "Yeah!", but more immediately from the French term for rock "*yé-yé*." When young Brazilians purchased albums and called in to radio stations to request singles by foreign bands, they expressed consumption preferences that were shared with millions of young

⁴⁶ IBOPE/PE/036

⁴⁷ "Era um garoto que como eu amava os Beatles e os Rolling Stones" by Os Incríveis.

⁴⁸ AEL IBOPE/OPP PE-PM (MR-360), *Preferências Musicais*

people from all parts of the world. This internationalism also came across in young people's political opinions. In a survey of high school and college students in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 1966, sixty-five percent attested that they believed the world was in no danger of a World War III. When asked if there was a country that threatened world peace, only China received a substantial portion of votes.⁴⁹ (That year China was in the news for beginning to thoroughly cut itself off from international culture with the Cultural Revolution.) And though by the 1970s, North American economic imperialism would be a hot topic among young political activists in Brazil, in 1967 only a fifth of 18 to 34 year olds accused the U.S. of such behavior.⁵⁰

When adult observers looked at Brazilian youth in the 1950s and 1960s, what did they see? Beyond economic empowerment, they also would have seen youth who spoke, dressed, and interacted socially in radically new ways. Adult social critics often focused on the *incomprehensibility* of the new youth culture. To some extent, that incomprehensibility was literal. Hundreds of new slang words rapidly entered the vocabulary of Brazilian youth, some foreign origins and some as artifacts of new ways of perceiving the world. A *chapa* (fellow) acting like a *playboy* might be accused of *esnobação* (snobbery), even if he were actually *duro* (broke), lived in the same *gaiola* (apartment building) as the rest of his *curriola* (posse), and was saving up to buy a *fusca* (domestically-produced Volkswagen.) Glossaries were compiled and published for parents wishing to understand what in the world their children were saying.⁵¹ Some of the

⁴⁹ AEL IBOPE/OPP PE-J2 "Pesquisas junto a estudantes"

PE 068-1966 *Pesquisa de Opinião Pública Junto Aos Estudantes do 2o Ciclo e Universitários do RJ e SP*

⁵⁰ *Realidade* 2:16, July 1967, "Afinal, o que o povo pensa do Tio Sam?," p. 18.

⁵¹ Fernando Pinto, *Os 7 Pecados da Juventude sem Amor* (Petrópolis, RJ: Editora Vozes, 1966)

supposed incomprehensibility of youth was a reflection of new aesthetic values not shared by older people. In his typically poetic style, Carlos Drummond de Andrade explored the theme in 1968's "A nova beleza jovem":

They get on the bus, in the flight of a butterfly, three adolescents that through the lines of their faces would be academically ugly, but that—miracle of the times!—were irresponsibly beautiful... Upon evaluating the three uglyprettys... I wasn't satisfied with a eugenic explanation, more health care than beauty or sense of beauty. I felt there was another reason, something that was revealed to me in perfect clarity: it's fashion!

The girls are described as covered in flowers and brilliant colors with impossibly long hair. Drummond points to the consumeristic origins of these new fashions: "The fabric, the cut, the makers of a thousand artifacts, the plasticized magazines, the industrial arts, in the end they created a new type, or new types, of young beauty."⁵²

With the rise of teenage culture in the United States, teenage rebelliousness and delinquency became common tropes and have been amply explored by American historians.⁵³ Grace Palladino summarized the American stance on teenage delinquency as one rooted in their financial security, "Teenage children had too much money, too much leisure, too much coddling for their own good, and they were never forced to rely on themselves for anything."⁵⁴ In this narrative, *every* American teenager fell into the category of spoiled child, as one commentator complained, "The biggest problem with children these days is that instead of doing what their parents tell them to do, they tell the

⁵² Carlos Drummond de Andrade, "A nova beleza jovem," *Estado de Minas*, 21 Sept 1968, FCRB.

⁵³ The theme receives attention in dozens of books on U.S. American teenage culture and is the central topic of books like Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005) and Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008).

⁵⁴ Palladino, 83.

parents what to do and the parents do it.”⁵⁵ A former rebellious youth who grew up in the industrial town of Gary, Indiana, confessed that economic security *was* consciously accounted for in his teenaged behavior, “I knew when I graduated that the steel mill was there waiting for me, so I was pretty carefree during my teenage years.”⁵⁶

Leerom Medovoi has argued that teenage rebel culture in the U.S. was encouraged by contemporary media, with figures like Holden Caulfield, Elvis, and James Dean—in keeping with the complaints that many conservative activists made against Hollywood’s polluting effect on youth. However, Medovoi contends that such characters were actually patriotic manifestations of the United States’ role in the international arena: “These figures emerged at the dawn of the Cold War era because the ideological production of the United States as leader of the ‘free world’ required figures who could represent America’s emancipatory character, in relation to the Soviet Union, the new nations of the third world, or even its own suburbs.”⁵⁷ Freedom was embodied in the juvenile delinquent. In France, police records show that the incidence of the crime “juvenile delinquency” rose sharply during the Occupation, decreased sharply after the war, and only rose again during the late-1950s—perhaps as the crises of the Fourth Republic and continued French colonialism brought into relief the repression inherent in the democratic system. As in the United States, books and movies with young “delinquent-heroes” garnered both acclaim and criticism as newspapers relished in tabloid-style coverage of savage crimes committed by lawless teens.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Quoted in Palladino, 83.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Palladino, 165.

⁵⁷ Medovoi, 1.

⁵⁸ Jobs, Chapter 4.

In 1950s and '60s Brazil, the idea of rebellious youth was interpreted very differently than in the United States. The discourses tended to be much kinder and more forgiving. The teenage rebel—likely implicitly understood as middle-class—was an entity to be admired for the novelty of its habits and behaviors, perhaps reflecting the country's forward-looking obsession with modernity and the new. The juvenile delinquent—often implicitly working-class—was a psychological oddity to be analyzed, surely reflecting the enduring influence of eugenics and mental hygiene in the country. The imminent educational theorist Lourenço Filho was asked by a reader of his magazine column, “Are there really problem children?” Lourenço Filho responded, “During their first contact with school, or a teacher, all children constitute a problem, that is, a special case to be deciphered in order to ensure their best educational path.”⁵⁹ Though some children and adolescents may present extra problems along this path, he continued, the reason is that they are more emotionally complex, and so less intelligible to adults, than the average young person.⁵⁹ Another magazine article affirmed, “Many psychologists don't accept the term ‘teenage rebellion.’ They argue, ‘Is it rebellion when a plant cracks the sidewalk so that it can grow? Is it rebellion to grow above what the previous generation was capable of?’ The adolescent, in order to live in this world, must change it. To be against the adolescent is to take a position against progress.”⁶⁰ Brazil's distinct trajectory of understanding youth and their role in society was apparently making for a much easier adjustment to the new teenage culture than in many other parts of the world.

⁵⁹ CPDOC – LF pi Lourenço Filho 1964.00.00.1

⁶⁰ “A Adolescente” in *Realidade*, November 1970, pp.12-48

One of the most widely discussed studies of teenage delinquency was undertaken by the journalist Fernando Pinto in 1966. The book, regularly cited and referenced by contemporaries was provocatively titled *The 7 Sins of Youth Without Love*. Pinto interviewed young men and women in Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana neighborhood—in 1966, a center of urban middle-class Brazil—about the values and beliefs held by their friend groups called *turmas*. Why did the teens, who Pinto calls *Juventude Sem Amor* (JSA, Youth Without Love) have a propensity towards such “sins” as hate, heresy, sex, alcoholism, and drugs? Each chapter combined excerpts of conversations with young *cariocas* with the professional opinions of a variety of experts—a judge, a psychologist, a priest, a sociologist, and others—to identify the causes of youth delinquency.

As the name of the book indicates, Pinto's tone—and the analysis of his experts—is basically sympathetic, placing blame more on their hormones, parents, and society at large than on the themselves or their attitudes toward authority. One JSA, Luis Sérgio, encapsulated the angst of his peers, “The youth of today is, first of all, a loner, misunderstood by his family, and devalued by a bitch-of-a-society that wants to screw with him because he likes his hair long. They attack us, but they love Jesus Christ's hair. They're so stupid that they confuse us with The Beatles or those *iê-iê-iê* idiots.”⁶¹ Twenty-two year old Filinto affirmed inter-generational unintelligibility, like Luis Sérgio using an irreligious rhetoric: “Jesus is done with, but it makes sense because he's from the year 1 and we're from 1976... Yeah, 1976, because we're ten years ahead of our parents.” “Does your father know this?,” Pinto inquired, to which Filinto replied, “He

⁶¹ Pinto, 20.

doesn't understand me. He just lives to call me a good-for-nothing and the black sheep of the family."⁶² Though using the more impersonal first-person plural (*we're*) for his well-rehearsed gibe, Filinto tellingly moved to the first-person singular (*me*) for a poignant explanation of his own personal lack of love.

Even for the rather egregious sin of heresy, Pinto describes the JSA's position with some sympathy,

I didn't meet even one JSA that was atheist or materialist with much conviction. However, almost all of them I spoke to demonstrated a strong skepticism of the Church and a certain disdain for the conventional idea of God.... They place the penitence that the Church demands of its faithful on the same plane as police repression, only making them more rebellious towards laws and customs.... I saw some of them replace the sign of the cross with obscene gestures when they passed in front of a catholic temple. I heard from others jocular references to Jesus Christ, who was treated in the conversations with the same lack of ceremony dispensed to rivals. I also heard unpublishable jokes addressed to the Virgin Mary. But this hostility of the JSA was not equally applied to all of the Saints of the Catholic Church. Their mysticism admits Saint George as a 'cool saint.'⁶³

Responding to the lack of faith among youth, one of Pinto's experts, a monk, admitted the possibility that current modes of religious instruction were suited "neither to the intelligence nor to the personality of today's young people," and urged the Church to increase its efforts to understand not just the "the eternal and immutable" but also the "peculiar and temporal."⁶⁴ Other experts, though, emphasized that the assumption of lack of faith was misguided. A priest affirmed, "There are thousands of young people living the victorious life of faith, perfectly integrated in the divine plan of redemption."⁶⁵ The sociologist, a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, responded

⁶² Ibid, 109.

⁶³ Ibid, 105.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 125.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 117.

tartly, “God’s doing just fine, thank you very much, and, I’m certain, is on very good terms with youth.”⁶⁶

While eighty-two percent of high school and college students surveyed in a 1966 study stated that their generation was less religious than their parents’, Pinto’s priest and sociologist were not living a fantasy. In the late 1950’s and early 1960s, a new kind of religious faith was emerging among young Brazilians—or rather, an old faith expressed in new ways. Looking back on the turn of the 1960s, in 1977 the priest Gustavo Corção (disgustedly) described how the obsession with youth permeated even the stolidly conservative Catholic Church, “With the pretext of captivating youth, and to exalt the hopes that they represented to a world that was gaining consciousness of its dilapidation, the ‘youth’ was exalted and praised in every way by the ‘new fathers’, drunken on novelties that for them, and their tedium, and their impiety, would be a rejuvenation for the church... ‘Youth Mass,’ ‘Youth Theater,’ ‘Youth Meetings,’ ‘Youth Power’, etc. Rounded up by the thousands to do everything, to do nothing, the ‘youth’ were protected by the law and praised by the intellectuals and encouraged by the ‘new fathers.’”⁶⁷ A more sympathetic adult observer of this new relationship between the church and youth, Florisval Lúcio Pereira, wrote that this new focus on youth was correcting the older practice in which “adolescents and young people were seen through the ideas of adults” and religion was a “a rigid path where solutions to life’s problems were delivered

⁶⁶ Ibid, 127.

⁶⁷ BN – Manuscripts – 31, 02, 6, no. 29

prefabricated to youth.”⁶⁸ Pereira contended that religious devotees of all ages needed to learn from the goodness that was inherent in contemporary youth, who valued friendship, liberty, and study. “BET EVERYTHING ON THEM—the young people,” Pereira urged, “More than any other, they of this age are promises of the future. They’re the hopes of God. The hopes of the *Pátria*.”⁶⁹ For both Pereira and Corção, this new connection between the Church and youth had revolutionary potential.

Former Catholic youth activist Giovanni Semeraro has described how this revolutionary potential developed. “At the turn of the decade, between 1959 and 1964, a time of fervor in politics and popular culture, [there appeared one of] the most fertile laboratories of creativity where, Gustavo Gutiérrez has often said, the first signs appeared of what would become liberation theology ten years later.”⁷⁰ Groups of middle-class young Brazilians, Semeraro explains, “began to elaborate a new way of thinking, a new vision of the world, of ‘conversion’ directed at the popular sectors, involving activities of popular education, mobilization of the masses, and the construction of a new socio-political conscience.”⁷¹ They saw themselves as part of a global movement, most immediately inspired by the Cuban Revolution, and involving both religious and non-religious youth that was anti-imperialist, anti-war, and anti-discrimination. They were “seeking something deeper than mere economic wellbeing and the banner of ideology.” In Brazil, Kubitschek’s government had proffered some hope of some unity, but after the

⁶⁸ Florisval Lúcio Pereira, *A Juventude Sabe O Que Quer... E Nós?* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Pongetti, 1968), 5.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 8.

⁷⁰ Giovanni Semeraro, *A primavera dos anos 60: a geração do Betinho* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1994), 11.

⁷¹ Ibid, 14.

end of his term in 1960, partisan antipathies were clearly chipping away at the integrity of the country's democracy. The student newspaper of the Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas, a city in the interior of São Paulo state, pointed to the distrust of ideology in this new revolutionary spirit in a 1964 editorial, "We believe that the entire national structure should be reformed. Reformed in order to preserve. Preserve what? The democratic regime. Democratic regime? Of the left? Of the right? No! Of what? The democratic regime the only way it can be! Christian!"⁷²

These young Catholic activists also sought unity across economic classes. The student newspaper of a Catholic high school in Campinas dedicated its first issue in 1963 to the dangers of economic inequality, with a definite youthful perspective:

As is well known, about ten percent of the Brazilian population controls 81 percent of national capital. The Brazilian family, in rural areas, is united but due to the excessive authority of the parents, children lose initiative. In the cities, to the contrary, the family is often disunited because the father works here, the mother over there, and the result is that the children are out in the streets, sometimes in gangs, perhaps committing a great series of ills and making us think, 'What could we expect from children with this form of life?' This is the reality. And now? Will we remain indifferent to these facts, closing ourselves in our egocentrism, or will we fight for a better Brazil?

By the early-1960s, social observers across Brazil complained that economic modernization, consumerism, and political strife were causing people to close themselves off, becoming isolated. In this high school paper, we see a voice for student activism and community-building.

The emergent youth culture of the 1950s and 1960s was diverse in its values, styles, and tastes. After all, such widely varying subcultures as the JSA and the Catholic

⁷² AEL ME/J/1122 *Bisca*, PUC-Campinas, s/n 1964, p.2 "Nota do Editor"

Youth Action were both identified by observers as the new face of youth. But it was united in its valorization of inclusivity, of cosmopolitanism, of what Semeraro calls “the construction of a united world.”⁷³ Cross-class unity was essential to this worldview and wholly new in Brazil, one of the world’s most unequal countries and socially organized for centuries by strict class hierarchies. This elimination of economic divisions was not only hoped for, say by Catholic youth engaged in good works, but real in the social lives of many young Brazilians. Describing the *turmas* of Rio de Janeiro’s Youth without Love, Pinto wrote with clear astonishment and admiration, “An authentic JSA lives almost exclusively in service to their group. For him, this is a community that entails moral promises, from which you sometimes receive protection and where you are accepted independent of your social condition. There is no prejudice in the world of the JSA. Among the members of the same *turma*, you’ll find boys from good families and young men who will never leave poverty, with the middle class predominating. In the *turma*, no one is better or worse for being mulatto or blond.”⁷⁴ The potential for these friendships was not unrelated to the economic empowerment of youth that blossomed in the 1950s. The increase in consumer spending among youth of both the working and middle classes, allowed more and more young people to buy the cultural products that appealed to novelty-hungry youth of all classes. The 1950s Brazilian pop star Marlene highlighted the inclusivity of her fan-clubs and concerts in a 1970s interview, “We didn’t

⁷³ Semeraro, 20.

⁷⁴ Pinto, 24.

just have little housemaids. We had high school students, university students, queers, we had everything.”⁷⁵ As culture was juvenilized, it was also democratized.

By 1970, the economic ascendancy of youth that had characterized the 1950s and early 1960s was a thing of the past. The cultural ascendancy of youth was firmly entrenched as a fact of Brazilian life. In that year the magazine *Realidade* commissioned a survey of adults over age forty-five on their opinions about the youth culture that had emerged over the previous fifteen years. Fifty-one percent of respondents criticized youth for being materialistic, agreeing that “*Moços* only think about spending money.” An even fifty percent agreed that youth are rebellious, though one respondent who disagreed with the statement seemed to think their lack of rebelliousness was not a positive trait, adding, “The real rebels were us who fought in the Revolution of ’32 [for São Paulo secession.]” In almost every other category, these adults who had come of age in the 1920s, ’30s, and ’40s showed that they had very *positive* opinions of youth. Half of the interviewees admitted to liking and listening to youthful music, with Roberto Carlos and the Beatles offered as examples. Fifty-nine percent called the way youth spoke “curious and very joyful” (compared to just thirty-two percent who thought it was “an embarrassment.”) Most of the interviewees said they liked the way the young people dressed, with the miniskirt receiving an astonishing sixty-four percent approval rating from those over age sixty-five. More than half blamed adults for the lack of communication between generations (compared to just twelve percent who blamed youth), and two-thirds believed

⁷⁵ McCann, 210.

the youth of 1970 were happier than the previous generation. And in perhaps the most telling response of all, almost all of respondents, even a majority of those who identified as “very conservative”, said they would like to be twenty again *today*, to be able to enjoy the liberty of 1970.⁷⁶

While youth culture emerged in the United States in an atmosphere of distrust and fear, in Brazil the new revolutionary youth culture was received with fanfare and approval. “The *mocidade* of today,” Fernando Pinto began his study of bad kids in Rio de Janeiro, “is much better than the *mocidade* of my time. I always denounced, as one of the great ills of our national formation, the lack of *mocidade* in the *moços* of my time, their premature aging. Today, we find something like the opposite: a youth that’s utterly immature, and with a more ardent dynamism than in any previous generation.”⁷⁷ Young Brazilians had taken advantage of the economic changes brought by developmentalism, changes not of their own design but wrought by their own labor. They used these economic opportunities to radically alter the cultural life of their country, acquiring new, less tangible, but no less valuable forms of social capital. How would they put this cultural power to use?

⁷⁶ “Os Velhos invejam dos jovens,” *Realidade* 4:48, Mar. 1970, pp. 44-51.

⁷⁷ Pinto, 7.

Chapter 5

“As if it were possible to erase an entire generation from history”

The Fall and the Rise of the Brazilian Student Movement

In March 1964, the students at Colégio Culto à Ciencia, a public high school in the city of Campinas in São Paulo state, were preparing for their class elections. The student newspaper had published a special edition for the occasion, and the editor’s cover article stressed the importance of the event:

The elections are soon: we’re going to fulfill one of our sacred duties as students—THE VOTE. This choice, in a truly democratic regime, should be totally free. From an early age we must instill the necessity of making an honest and conscientious vote, because if we truly are the future and the hope of Brazil, we must learn now to live within a regime where our choices are wise choices, made by someone who knows what they’re doing and the consequences of that act.¹

These teenagers at Colégio Culto à Ciencia, born in the late-1940s, had lived their entire lives in a democracy. They were the first generation of Brazilians for whom that was true. They had been indoctrinated “from an early age” in the norms of democratic civil society, and in their school newspaper showed that they had learned the lessons well. They understood that these school elections were a preparatory exercise for their future roles as democratic citizens. What the students at Colégio Culto à Ciencia did not know is that by the end of the month, democracy in Brazil would die. What they could not know is that by April 1, 1964, a military coup would have installed a dictatorship that would last twenty-one years.

The still-young democracy in Brazil had never been totally stable. As in many new democracies, factionalism had a polarizing effect on ideologies and was only

¹ AEL/ME/J/1238 “Eleições,” *O Culto à Ciencia*, Órgão Oficial do Centro Colegial Culto à Ciencia, Campinas, 1:1 (1964), 1.

exacerbated by the global politics of the Cold War. Though the conciliatory presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek offered hope for the institutionalization of a well-functioning system of checks and balances, this hope quickly faded in the early 1960s. Kubitschek was succeeded by Jânio Quadros. Quadros, a former mayor and governor of São Paulo, combined a populist charisma and style with a squeaky clean background (that included no close association with Getúlio Vargas.) Rising to the presidency in late 1960 with a respectable forty-eight percent of the vote, Quadros soon alienated Congress by ignoring the legislature's center-left majority coalition, filling his cabinet solely with his conservative, anti-Vargas supporters, and beginning to rule by decree, often concerning trivial issues, like banning perfume bombs at Carnaval and bikinis on Rio beaches.² Perhaps the soundest policy of the Quadros presidency was also its ultimate undoing. With the consultation of his foreign minister, Quadros began to move Brazil towards an independent foreign policy, as many other developing nations chose to do in the 1960s and 1970s as a means of self-defense from the world's superpowers. Now, Quadros's conservative supporters in the government, all ardent anti-Communists, began to suspect him. Increasingly paranoid and almost bereft of support, Quadros resigned to a very willing Congress in August 1961.

With that act, Brazil's mid-century democracy entered into crisis. The Constitution clearly stipulated that Quadros should be succeeded by his vice president. In the 1960 election, presidential and vice presidential candidates ran on separate tickets, and though the vaguely conservative Quadros had won the presidency, the winning vice

² Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 197.

presidential candidate was the *bête noir* of Brazilian conservatism, João Goulart. Goulart, popularly known as Jango, was Getúlio Vargas's protégé and last labor minister, a position that had earned him the support of the working-class and the scorn of the right, who saw him as a far-left radical, and suspected him to be a communist. After Quadros's resignation, a coalition of military leaders and politicians entered a stand-off with the frustrated Congress, threatening a coup if Goulart were to assume the presidency. The ultimate resolution of this so-called August Crisis was the establishment of a parliamentary system in which Goulart served as president but with vastly reduced powers.

Under the new parliamentary system, the national government quickly became paralyzed. In January 1963, the Constitutional plebiscite set to confirm the change was voted down by eighty percent of the Brazilian electorate.³ Restored to full power, Goulart pursued an ambitious reform plan to stimulate the economy, aiming to keep growth at high Kubitschek levels (7 percent) and return inflation to lower Dutra levels (10 percent).⁴ His plan required raising taxes and refinancing foreign debt. By the end of the year, there was no sign of progress. Inflation reached an alarming 81 percent in the Rio de Janeiro area and the budget deficit was more than a third of total government expenditures. Rumors of debt defaults spread and conservative leaders, raving about communism, begin to openly call for a coup.⁵

³ Ibid, 221-23.

⁴ Ibid, 236-38

⁵ Ibid, 274-75

In March of 1964 rallies and counter-rallies brought hundreds of thousands out to the streets to protest inflation and what they perceived as the president's pandering to the labor movement. Goulart was under extreme pressure from the both the left—who were agitating for rent control, tax reform, the nationalization of oil refineries, and the vote for illiterates—and from the right—who organized “under the banner of embattled religion” against Goulart's suspected communism.⁶ On March 31 and April 1, 1964, the military seized control of the government throughout country. Goulart, having long suspected the day would come, left the country for exile in Uruguay.

Many Brazilian scholars have tried to identify the larger political forces at work behind the coup, perhaps because in retrospect Goulart's presidency does not seem truly radical enough to have merited the destruction of an entire political system. Caio Navarro de Toledo has argued that the coup was a manifestation of problems *within* the military: “For its internal cohesion, which was essentially *conservative* and *antidemocratic*, the armed forces had to react with violence to the threats to its hierarchical and ideological stability; threats that came from a wing, small but influential, of nationalist officials and, above all, of the rise of an explosive movements of sergeants and sailors.”⁷ The pro-dictatorship scholar Hélio Silva contended in 1978 that “the movement in March was not restricted to a military uprising. It was motivated by agitation by the masses in the face of a program of socialist reforms that infused society with the fear of communism. [...] It was the total mobilization of a society, of both its progressive and conservative forces, in

⁶ Ibid, 298

⁷ Caio Navarro de Toledo, *O Governo Goulart e o Golpe de 64* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1982), 113.

the conquest of new horizons and in defense of its rights and privileges.”⁸ An anti-dictatorship author writing in the same year proposed that the coup was an example of “the dominant classes revolting against the popular will for land reform and economic nationalism.”⁹ Silva also proposed that the coup was necessary because of the inherent failures of Brazilian democracy, pointing out that only Dutra and Kubitschek had finished their presidential terms constitutionally and arguing that “the politico-administrative machine showed itself to be incapable of ruling with efficiency. [...] The elections became only a means of protest rather than political affirmations of a positive nature, insufficient for the organization of Power.”¹⁰

Skidmore notes: “Although it was the military who had intervened to rescue Brazil from ‘corruption’ and ‘communism,’ there were some civilians who believed they were the victors. These were the anti-getulista civilians of neo-liberal views.”¹¹ For them, the coup *rescued* capitalism, democracy, and their own personal political and economic interests from communism and chaos. In the early years after the coup, the rhetoric that the action was a “rescue” was widespread. And soon, the military regime began to insist that it was an “authentic revolution” with both civilian and military support that was “opening Brazil to a new perspective about its future.”¹²

Immediately following the coup, Congress remained intact and reacted to the turn of events cautiously, trying to maintain legality as much as possible—and fearing for their own positions. The military in turn ignored their caution and issued Institutional Act

⁸ Hélió Silva, *1964: Golpe ou Contragolpe?* (Porto Alegre, Brazil: L&PM Editores Ltda, 1978), 22, 34.

⁹ AEL/ME/J/1160 – “Conjuntura Política”, *Abertura*, no. 11, May 1978, 5.

¹⁰ Silva, 22.

¹¹ Skidmore, 304.

¹² Ato Institucional 1 – Preamble.

1 (AI-1), which greatly increased executive powers, allowing the president (now a general) to make constitutional amendments, suspend the constitutional guarantee of job security for civil servants, and, crucially, to revoke the political rights of undesirables. This last stipulation completely restructured the government, as many of its elected members were among those considered undesirable. By June 15, 378 individuals had their rights revoked. “These included three former Presidents—Kubitschek, Quadros, and Goulart—as well as six state governors, 55 members of the federal Congress, and assorted diplomats, labor leaders, military officers, intellectuals, and public officials. The accused were given no right of self-defense.”¹³ The military permitted gubernatorial elections to go forward as planned in 1965, with the military president Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, a self-avowed Constitutionalist, saying, “the Revolution that is restoring democracy in Brazil should not fear elections but, rather, should guarantee them.”¹⁴ But when undesirables won the important governorships of Guanabara and Minas Gerais, the military government responded with impunity. A series of institutional acts over the next two years dissolved all political parties, provided for only indirect presidential elections, suspended habeas corpus, strengthened censorship, outlawed public demonstrations, and empowered the President to rule by decree. The military had consolidated its power, and though retaining the language of “revolution,” no longer made any pretense towards having “rescued” democracy.

¹³ Skidmore, 309.

¹⁴ Quoted in John W.F. Dulles, *Resisting Brazil's Military Regime: An Account of the Battles of Sobral Pinto* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2007), 105.

The Student Movement

1968 and o sufoco

With the leadership of the traditional left unseated, imprisoned, exiled, and otherwise robbed of authority, the most significant challenge to the sweeping repression of the new military dictatorship came from individuals with no elected government positions, no name recognition, and no alliances with sympathetic foreign governments. In the words of Skidmore, “The most significant force on the left was also the newest and least experienced.”¹⁵ Youth entered politics.

As discussed in chapter four, this entrance somewhat preceded the onset of the dictatorship. In the early 1960s, Catholic Youth Action had focused on improving the welfare of the poorest Brazilians as an expression of their religious values. In the years of democratic crisis in 1963 and 1964, young Catholic activists largely allied with Goulart’s leftwing supporters and were joined in this alliance by the country’s largest youth organization, the National Student Union—UNE. Skidmore hyperbolically, and wrongly, portrays Catholic Action and UNE as radical left organizations, thoroughly infiltrated by Communists, that incited the devastating polarization of politics at the end of Goulart’s presidency.¹⁶ In truth, it was the dictatorship and its destruction of the most established voices on the left that brought youth more fully into politics, and indeed, into more radical forms of political action.

In 1967, as it became clear that the military government was unwilling to return the country to democracy as it had originally promised, the annual UNE Congress finally

¹⁵ Skidmore, 279.

¹⁶ Ibid, 279-80.

reached a consensus to position the organization as being in open opposition to the military government and the capitalist forces which they claimed upheld it.¹⁷ Despite this pronouncement, it was not until early 1968 that conflict between students and the government began to escalate. In January, though the banning of political demonstrations was not yet in effect, students were arrested in Recife for protesting against the Vietnam War, a supposedly subversive activity. In February a group of students in Rio de Janeiro were attacked by military police while soliciting donations for the improvement of their university cafeteria. The group reported to their lawyer that “the police, while beating the students, had broken an arm of one of them, had seized the money that had been collected, and had threatened to have the DOPS [*Departamento de Ordem Política e Social*, political police] start an investigation of cases of ‘disobedience.’” The state governor instructed his security secretary to stop harrasing the students, but instead the secretary put out arrest warrants for them.¹⁸

This event provoked outrage among Rio’s students, and on March 28 during a protest rally, police opened fire on the crowd, injuring many and killing eighteen-year-old Edson Luís de Lima Souto. With their numbers swelling and their anger growing, the protesting students brought Edson’s body to the stairs of the state legislature building and even succeeded in having the autopsy suggested by their lawyer performed at that location. Tens of thousands walked in Edson’s funeral procession on March 29 as scuffles broke out between mourners and military police. Two hundred and thirty

¹⁷ AEL/ME/R/1424 “Uma plataforma política para o movimento estudantil,” *Argumento*, UNICAMP, CACH, 2:7, October 1977, 27.

¹⁸ Dulles, 136.

students were arrested and scores wounded at a rally on April 1st, the fourth anniversary of the coup, and less than a week later at Edson's seventh day mass, an overwhelming force of ten thousand military police mounted on horseback arrested another five hundred in attendance.¹⁹

As protests over Edson's death spread to other cities, the civil rights lawyer Sobral Pinto described how public sentiment tended to side with the students, "When the person killed is a civilian student, the armed forces mobilize throughout the country to prevent manifestations demanding punishment of the assassins."²⁰ John W.F. Dulles wrote that by mid-1968, "Students in Brazil became bold in demonstrating, and their leaders made it clear that their aim was overthrow the capitalist structure of society." In July 1968 the popular news and lifestyle magazine *Realidade* included a feature on UNE leaders, titled "They want to overthrow the government" and replete with provocative statements confirming Dulles's point. UNE Vice President Luis Raul Machado was quoted as saying, "Our generals can remain calm. What happened in France [that May] is not going to be repeated in Brazil. It's going to be much worse."²¹ When asked "Is your struggle [against the government] also a generational struggle?" UNE President Luis Travassos responded blithely, "We need to demystify this talk of generational conflict, youth power, and such nonsense. What it is—whether people like it or not—is a class struggle. It's not kids against the old, but of the oppressed against the oppressors. It's the students wanting to struggle *with* the people for their liberation."²² Though Travassos and

¹⁹ Ibid, 137-38.

²⁰ Quoted in Dulles, 138.

²¹ "Eles querem derrubar o governo," *Realidade* 3:28, July 1968, 26.

²² Ibid, 37.

Machado goaded as a united front, UNE was in truth still divided, between the so-called “first position” which called for massive spontaneous revolt, and the “second position”, supported by the Rio and São Paulo local student leaders Vladimir Palmeiras and José Dirceu, which urged for alliance-building and peaceful protests.

The first position, in control of UNE leadership since 1967, gained support as police brutality spiked. Perhaps the most devastating example of student-police conflict of the period was on June 26, 1968, a day remembered as *sexta-feira sangrenta*, Bloody Friday. The journalist Fernando Gabeira described the protest as he saw it:

From that balcony [at the *Jornal do Brasil* offices], I saw a lot of things happen. [...] On Bloody Friday: barricades of students and menial workers united to contain the police. Crashes between the police and some of the workers. A cop’s helmet falls off and they retreat towards the JB doors. From that balcony, I see the kids triumph, running up the Avenue, using the helmet taken from some PM [military police] as an improvised football. Bang-bang-bang from the PMs and the first shots. A few kids fall. People thinking its make-believe. A few get up, but two bodies lie there a little longer than they should. The police approach them and they don’t flee. They have to flee, because if they don’t they won’t have another chance. The police are five meters away and they don’t move. The police are right next to them. They don’t move. The police move the bodies.²³

In all, at a protest rallying around the cry “Down with the Dictatorship!,” 28 died, hundreds were wounded, and a thousand arrested.

In São Paulo, a long-time hub of protests against governments of all kinds, mid-to-late 1968 was equally momentous. On May Day, students joined with workers protesting the government’s recent wage freeze. As the governor Roberto de Abreu Sodré rose to give a speech, he was somehow injured in the head. Gabeira, describing it this time from afar, wrote “The news from São Paulo came to us little by little... they

²³ Fernando Gabeira, *O que é isso, companheiro?* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Codecri, 1979), 71.

smashed Abreu Sodré in the head. We watched it a little perplexed. Here in Rio the workers, most of them, just kept watching football. There in São Paulo they were so radicalized that they smashed in the head of the governor and carried around posters supporting the Vietcong. Were we in the same Brazil?"²⁴ Paulistanos continued to up the ante. By August 1968 students from the department of philosophy had occupied and barricaded large sections of the University of São Paulo, where, for the time being, they jockeyed with police while, as reporters noted, singing Chico Buarque hits and *The Internationale*.²⁵

In October 1968, a turning point occurred for the now explosive student movement, far from the urban cores that had witnessed most of the past year's unrest. As UNE held its thirtieth annual national conference in the rural town of Ibiúna, São Paulo, the government took the offensive. The Congress was invaded and 739 students, including *all* of the UNE leadership, were arrested. Most were held incommunicado for months, several were disappeared, and dozens were only released from prison years later. The government, though having previously censored news reports that mentioned students killed in protests throughout 1968, now made a media circus of their victory. "The police in São Paulo were preparing to put on a show," wrote Gabeira, "an exposition of the arms supposedly confiscated and, of course, the oral contraceptives, which was the article they'd seized the most of. The general idea was to terrorize parents and establish a direct connection between sex and opposition. Something like: look, your daughter starts to get interested in politics and in a few days she'll be taking birth control

²⁴ Ibid, 65.

²⁵ "A faculdade está ocupada," *Realidade* 3:29, August 1968, 48.

pills and taking part in Congresses that are nothing more than orgies.”²⁶ Students in Rio congregated three days later outside the now-closed UNE headquarters at Praia do Flamengo, 132. Gabeira, again an eyewitness and now a very sympathetic one, recalled the day, “A crowd of about 500 gathered there and, of course, the backed up traffic. The high schoolers really managed to make a good show... The people yelled from the streets, ‘UNE lives! We are UNE!’ [...] The crazy thing is, on that Tuesday afternoon on Praia do Flamengo, with the overwhelming majority of the left in jail, things didn’t seem so impossible.”²⁷ But they were. The military continued the offensive, rounding up student leaders throughout the country, and initiating the period known as *o sufoco*, the suffocation.²⁸

By December 1968, the government was routinely imprisoning “political subversives” without trials and without legal representation. Prisoners were murdered, tortured and disappeared. Their families were harassed.²⁹ Christopher Dunn has argued that during the *sufoco* young Brazilians were left with only two real options for political expression: “flipping out,” that is, immersing themselves in a counterculture, as hippies, as tropicalistas, as cultural dissenters of various kinds; or becoming a guerrilla. Alzira Alves de Abreu interviewed dozens of former guerrillas and wrote of the group:

Our research study conducted among survivors of those who took part in Brazil's guerrilla movement shows that political militancy was not in most of their minds before 1968; rather, these young people intended to finish their studies and take up professional lives. They did not intend school or college political activities to turn into full-time militancy. They wanted to become engineers, doctors, teachers,

²⁶ Gabeira, 85-86.

²⁷ Ibid, 86.

²⁸ Christopher Dunn. "Desbunde and Its Discontents: Counterculture and Authoritarian Modernization in Brazil, 1968–1974." *The Americas* 70, no. 3 (2014): 429-458.

²⁹ Archdiocese of São Paulo, *Brasil: nunca mais* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1985).

scientists, diplomats, and so on. But the regime's repressive actions, the absence of any space where ideas could be expressed, and the lack of freedom to act politically against the dominant forces pushed this generation towards a form of politics that involved violent action.³⁰

Dozens of guerrilla groups appeared in both rural and urban areas throughout the country, but were mostly quite small with few formal alliances to other groups. Their activities ranged from pamphleteering (a crime with not inconsiderable risk at this point in the dictatorship) to attacks of military barracks and, perhaps most famously, kidnappings, including of the U.S. Ambassador in September 1969. The military pursued these groups zealously, and with great success. "The active life of an urban guerrilla fighter in Brazil was short: about one year after initiation, ending in arrest, exile or death. Rarely did a guerrilla fighter survive four years of armed struggle."³¹ By the mid-1970s, the guerrilla movement had been almost wholly extirpated, and the general consensus among dissenters to the military regime was that guerrillismo had been not only ineffective, but damaging to their cause. It had broken the student movement's "natural communion with the masses"³² Alves de Abreu found this sentiment born out in her interviews. The guerrillas may have had many middle- and working-class sympathizers, but they really had no *supporters*. Some former guerillas recounted that though their families had been proud of them when they were student leaders, they were shunned once they entered the armed struggle. In short, the young opposition to the dictatorship had the support of the people when they were being shot at police, but lost it once they began doing the shooting.

³⁰ Alzira Alves de Abreu, "Brazil's guerrilla trap," *History Today* 47, no. 12: 35., 1997 *Religion and Philosophy Collection*, EBSCOhost.

³¹ Ibid.

³² "Uma plataforma política para o movimento estudantil", 26.

The Struggle for Democratic Education

In his study of 1960s and '70s counterculture, Christopher Dunn admits, “the overwhelming majority of Brazilian youth who came of age under military rule neither picked up arms against the regime, nor flipped out to pursue an alternative vision of liberation. Most young Brazilians plodded along, hewed to social conventions, tried to take advantage of opportunities offered by an expanding economy, and avoided trouble with authorities.”³³ It was out of this latter group, a rather average set of *good kids*, that the next wave of student leaders would emerge. In the early 1970s, high school and university students began to see their interests, not as democratic citizens or as radical revolutionaries, but as *students* being threatened by the policies of the military government.

Though the dictatorship dedicated much of its focus in its early years to rooting out opposition to its rule, economic reform was certainly an essential aspect of this “revolution.” The earliest focus of the regime’s economic policy was on “the need to satisfy the international financial authorities and principal foreign creditors,” for after all, rumors of a debt default had been a primary motivation behind conservatives’ calls for a coup in 1963 and 1964. Austerity measures to achieve the regime’s goal first affected the working class, such as those *paulistanos* protesting a 1968 wage freeze that “smashed” their governor in the head. But the austerity measure that effectively remobilized students in 1972 and 1973 was a government proposal for *ensino pago*, literally paid instruction. Throughout the democratic period, as provided for the 1946

³³ Dunn.

Constitution, primary, secondary, and even university education had been largely funded by the state, but beginning in 1968 the military government began to consider revoking this policy. The first step was the increase in the annual fees at some public universities.

Annual fees at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 1965-1972³⁴

1965	Cr\$10
1966	Cr\$10
1967	Cr\$10
1968	Cr\$40
1969	Cr\$120
1970	Cr\$160
1971	Cr\$160
1972	Cr\$240

By 1972, significant increases in annual fees had occurred at almost every federal university, as well as at secondary schools in some states, like Mato Grosso. The government now pursued the possibility of moving beyond annual student fees, to full-blown tuition. Students would pay a sliding scale depending on their family's tax rate. A pamphlet produced by students at the University of São Paulo complained, "We *already*

³⁴ AEL/ ME/F/3.677 "Ensino Pago," Conselho de Centros Acadêmicos, USP, Oct. 1972, 3; Interpreting these values is very difficult because of the extremely high rates of inflation throughout the period (around 30%), but also because the currency was devalued in 1967. In light of that devaluation, it's safe to say that the increase in annual fees at UFMG was actually even more stark than it appears in this table.

pay for public education, so it *should* be free. We'll still pay the same taxes **and** have to pay for services from the state. Like toll roads, now it's education."³⁵

The government defended the proposal in its now almost typically paranoid way. The head of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), Jarbas Passarinho, pronounced in an interview that opposition to *ensino pago* was “a sad alliance between leftist radicals and the rich. [...] As incredible as it seems, the two are in cahoots, and I'd like to fight them. The rich are selfish and the communists, who in this movement are faking solidarity with poor students, are actually trying to impede them from receiving the benefits [of the plan.]”³⁶ In reality the opposition included the overwhelming majority of university students in the country. A plebiscite at the University of São Paulo found that 95 percent of students there were against the plan.³⁷ While the MEC contended that the reforms would democratize education in Brazil (though certainly never in those terms), odontology students at Universidade Lins countered in their student newspaper, “In a country like ours, the student, instead of paying to study, should be paid to do so. This would be the democratic solution: truly opening the schools [at] all levels to the Brazilians that tomorrow will make Brazil.”³⁸

The MEC never abandoned the plan for *ensino pago*, but it was again and again deferred in the face of significant student and public opposition. In mounting something like a protest against the reform, though of a very different sort than 1968 had seen, students tested the waters of how loudly they could talk back to a military regime and on

³⁵ Ibid, 2.

³⁶ “Ministro critica quem é contra a educação paga,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, 21 November 1972.

³⁷ “Na USP, 95% são contra a cobrança,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, 21 November 1972.

³⁸ AEL/ME/J/1162 “Paga em vez de cobra,” *Andante* - Diretoria Acadêmica Clemente Evans Hubbard, Faculdade de Odontologia, Universidade Lins, 1:1, October 1979, 12.

what issues. By focusing on educational issues, students regained some authority—and sympathy--that had been lost during the *sufoco* and ensuing guerrilla movements. The urban middle class universally valued education, and the regime—whether instrumentally or sincerely—seemed to as well. Education was not only a means of individual mobility for the middle class, but also agreed upon as the most important way to overcome underdevelopment.

The government's second great effort in reforming the educational system was an increased emphasis on technical education. "During this time, the military regime invested heavily in high education, especially in law, economics, science, engineering, medicine, business administration, and other areas oriented toward capitalist production and consumption."³⁹ These reforms aimed at increasing Brazilian "know-how," a loanword from English, and the buzzword of the scheme. Students questioned the regime's motives. The technicalization of the Brazilian university was born out of a 1965 accord between the MEC and USAID that formed a commission composed of five U.S. American and five Brazilian educational experts who would plan a new system of higher education for the country.⁴⁰ Why, wondered a student newspaper in Alagoas, was the commission not composed exclusively of Brazilians, surely the most familiar with the faults of the current system? After all, in 1963 Brazil had "Anísio Teixeira, Celso Furtado, Josué de Castro, Oscar Niemeyer [etc, etc] counted among the world's best educators. [...]" So why? "Because," said the student journalists, "after 1964 most of them were exiled and all were forbidden to teach." The first government commission in

³⁹ Dunn, 430.

⁴⁰ Discussed in "Uma plataforma política para o movimento estudantil", 3; and 'A faculdade está ocupada'

1967 had four Americans and two Brazilians of no note. Their proposal to the government consisted primarily of increasing technical education and *ensino pago*. “The reform was really meant to destroy the ‘underdeveloped’ Brazilian model of a federal entity, maintained by public money, and free to students and replace it with the U.S. model based on ‘the wisdom of capitalism.’”⁴¹

Student opposition to the university reforms that combined *ensino pago* with technicalization argued that these schemes would actually increase underdevelopment and ossify economic inequality in the country. One student publication pessimistically foretold a three-tier hierarquization of the educated. High school graduates who could not afford university would form “an abundant specialized labor force of technicians.” Those whose family savings would support only a year or two of university would pursue degrees with a short duration: “In these degree programs, where there’s no time for deeper theoretical education, they’ll graduate technicians without the ability for technological creativity but with the goal of applying imported ‘know-how.’ This is perfectly acceptable to the interests of big industries, that are already majority foreign and bring with them the know-how developed in their own countries.” The richest students, “the most gifted,” would spend as long as they wish in university, including graduate studies “and will have the function of managing businesses. They will have access to the best professions and the best positions”⁴² Another student paper contended that the reforms were intended to reshape students into drones that would serve the interests of

⁴¹ AEL/ME/J/0535 “Reforma Universitária: Conheça o segredo da ‘desgraça’,” *Boca do Estudante*, DCE and D.A.S. of UFAL (Alagoas), no. 2, December 1978, 2

⁴² “Ensino Pago,” 5.

capitalism. “The huge majority of students will never be The Boss. They’ll join the masses of salaried men in government and business, subject to unemployment and exploitation.”⁴³

Even students who seemed to be direct beneficiaries of the technicalization reforms came to distrust the government and see their personal interests threatened by University Reform. Students at the State University of São Paulo’s Department of Technology (FATEC), a department that was *created* by the University Reform, raised an uproar when MEC developed a one-year post-secondary degree for “technologists.” FATEC students worried that their bachelor degrees as “technologists” would be devalued, or even confused with “technicians” who had completed only a high school degree.⁴⁴ FATEC’s student newspaper called upon classmates to recognize, especially in light of this new one-year degree, that the reform that created their department was nothing more than a plan to benefit multinational corporations with “know-how”-educated students. “For this reason, people, it’s the responsibility of us, the ‘used and long-suffering’ to fight against this university reform, not just to resolve our personal problems, but the problem of a mistaken educational policy that will create terrible conditions for millions.”⁴⁵

For high school students, the most significant and damaging reform in education was the standardized adoption of the *vestibular* university entrance exam. “At age 18, 19, or 20, the kids roll the decisive die that determines their life’s social status,” wrote a

⁴³ “Lugar e função do Movimento Estudantil,” *Argumento* 1:3, June 1976, 41.

⁴⁴ “Estudantes da FATEC reivindicam,” *Folha da São Paulo*, 21 May 1978.

⁴⁵ “Política Educacional que gerou nosso curso,” in *Abertura*, no. 11.

magazine feature on the topic, “For these thousands of sons of the middle class, passing the vestibular means a special education, the access to a profession that, in the future, will *keep* them in the middle and could even make them rich.” The problem was that taking the *vestibular*, and even passing the vestibular, did not guarantee—as it was meant to—a place in a public university. In 1968, two hundred thousand students took the vestibular, and though a hundred thousand passed, only eighty thousand were offered seats in a public university’s incoming class.⁴⁶ The lack of spaces in public schools had long characterized every tier of education in Brazil. Primary schools proliferated in the 1930s, but in secondary education it was up to private schools to pick up the slack. As late as 1958, 64 percent of all secondary schools were private, but between 1958 and 1967 the number of graduates from high school rocketed from 52,000 to 128,000, with newly-established public *colégios* accounting for most of the growth.⁴⁷ “How can we explain the existence of the vestibular?” asked a high school student newspaper in Bahia, “Lack of degree programs? Excess of applicants?” Both, in their estimation, but also a lack of preparedness among high school graduates that could itself stem from poor teaching quality “because teachers are tired of making no money.” The *vestibular* represented for these students a plethora of problems “and to fix it, the country will have to be in a good financial and political situation. Society also has its share of the blame, because as we all know it’s much more fun to have a new football stadium than a new university.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ “Vamos matar 120 mil esperanças,” *Realidade*, 3:34 January 1969, 14-36.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ AEL/ME/J/0826 “Vestibular, por que?” *aliás* no. 1, 1979, Bahiense/Gávea, p. 11

Despite the pressures of the *vestibular*, the university student population was growing extraordinarily quickly during the 1960s and '70s. This growth had several causes, including the rise in the number of high school graduates, the expansion of the middle class in the late 1950s, and also the rapid economic development of the early-1970s' "Brazilian Miracle," rooted in loans from international lending institutions.⁴⁹

Number of university students in Brazil, 1960-1975⁵⁰

1960	13,202
1965	155,781
1970	425,478
1975	940,000

As the student population grew, so did discontent with the state of universities, especially as public spending on education plummeted as the economy worsened after 1975. In 1966, education received 12.5% of federal spending, and in 1970 MEC Minister Passarinho could well argue that only the US, the USSR, and Japan spent more than Brazil on education as a percentage of GDP.⁵¹ But 1978 it had fallen to a mere 4 percent, and by 1979 only 2.5%, while the armed forces received 34 percent.⁵²

When a 1976 survey of university students in Recife, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Curitiba, and Porto Alegre (in short, almost every region of the country) asked "In your opinion, is post-secondary education in Brazil of a quality sufficient for the

⁴⁹ See Jeffrey A. Frieden, "The Brazilian Borrowing Experience: From Miracle to Debacle and Back," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1987), 95-131.

⁵⁰ "Uma plataforma política para o movimento estudantil," 24.

⁵¹ "Professor Passarinho," *Realidade*, 4:48 March 1970, 34-43.

⁵² "Autarquização," *Boca do Estudante*, no. 4, November 1979, 3.

present and future needs of the country?” Eighty-six percent of fourth-year students said no. More than 60 percent of respondents also attested to their belief that current conditions of development in Brazil permitted employment for only some (as opposed to all or most) university graduates. The conditions that inspired such pessimism about both their national and individual futures were starkly evident at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), the school that a congressional commission identified as having the worst conditions in the country.⁵³ According to geology students there, the university reforms and lack of resources were making the university degrees they’d worked so hard to be able to obtain, worthless: “The level of insutrction in the Geosciences arrived at such a point that the majority of companies have made restrictions against hiring geologists from UFBA, closing yet another job market. Our job market is already restricted by the presence of foreign companies in the sector [that bring in their own foreign specialists.] ... All in the name of lack of Brazilian know-how.”⁵⁴ And so UFBA went on strike.

Between 1975 and 1978 almost every department at UFBA went on strike. In October 1975, when students protested for improvements to the cafeteria, the rector sent in military troops.⁵⁵ He sent them in again when agronomy students went on strike over a new curriculum that would cause the degree to take two years longer.⁵⁶ The medical

⁵³ “Vergonha Baiana,” *Tribuna da Bahia*, 7 July 1978.

⁵⁴ AEL/ME/J/0871, “Geologia e Geografia em greve,” *Beba*, Boletim dos Estudantes de Bahia – DCE, November April 1978, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Then-rector Augusto Mascarenhas has been described as “very committed to the norms of the regime” by José Eduardo Ferraz Clemente, “Perseguições, espionagem e resistência: o Instituto de Física da Universidade Federal da Bahia durante a ditadura militar (1964 a 1979),” *Revista da SBHC*, v. 4, n. 2 (2006), 134.

⁵⁶ “Os cassetes em lugar da palmatória,” *Beba*, November 1977, 1.

school struck over a lack of cadavers in anatomy class.⁵⁷ They were gradually joined by department after department and by university after university throughout Brazil. A student newspaper in Pará described the extent of the unrest:

In São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Brasília, Piauí, Sergipe, Santa Catarina, Bahia, in all of these places our university student colleagues are in an intense struggle, fighting for our rights. The movement—kept under tight control for so many years—has intensified in light of the grave disagreements between students and the university administrations imposed by the government. Demonstrations, strikes; the students have finally returned to the streets, making public the protests that have been choked for so long. Basically, these protests are against the problems that affect every university student, like funding cuts and poor educational quality.”⁵⁸

This emergent student movement still focused on issues that are directly relevant to students, but soon their ambitions would grow much greater.

The Student Movement and the Renaissance of Politics in Brazil

“And so we arrive at 1977,” pronounced a student newspaper recounting the recent reinvigoration of protest against the military regime and its policies, “a banner year for the Student Movement, when after 8 years the students return to the streets.”⁵⁹ Two years of strikes and increasing defiance of the regime had made the student movement impossible to ignore. One journalist poetically described the turn of events this way: “Adolescence. Lots of young people, going through high school, gap years, college, vestibulars. Lots of peach fuzz. A generation born under boots. Television, the World Cup, Daddy’s Volkswagen, brother at the factory, office boys. And they’re coming back

⁵⁷ “Greves, passeatas e o congresso estudantil,” *Beba*, July 1978, 1.

⁵⁸ AEL/ME/J/1164 “A Luta Estudantil,” *Alternativa*, UFPA student newspaper (Pará), 1:2 May 1977, 1.

⁵⁹ AEL/ME/J/0395 “DCE: uma história,” *Jornal do DCE Unicamp*, June 1978, 7.

to show us that the youth in a country where fifty percent of the population is less than twenty years old are losing their virginity—forced on them by a bunch of seventy year old soldiers.”⁶⁰ The seventy year old soldiers, in turn, ramped up propaganda to discredit the students, reviving the line that the students were either themselves “subversives” or being manipulated by “old subversives.” The Student Movement at this point, with its strong emphasis on educational issues, was a sufficiently safe topic to receive uncensored coverage in the mainstream media, and many journalists rose to students’ defense. “The students are not intending, when all is said and done, to be subversive,” wrote one Bahian commentator, “What they hope for—and to get it they had to create this crisis [of strikes]—is for something to be done to save their university.”⁶¹

Even the archbishop of São Paulo, Evaristo Arns, defended the students, in an article that was caricatured by the priest and supporter of the dictatorship Gustavo Corção as “[affirming] the legitimacy of the student movement, guaranteeing that the young students aren’t influenced, or even teleprompted, by old subversives.” Corção for his part scorned the movement, saying that “if the students know how a country of a hundred million and some-odd inhabitants should be governed and are capable of correcting all the errors of its current leaders, then CLOSE THE UNIVERSITIES!” He urged the ecclesiastical community to recognize that young people “and their souls” were still being subverted and perverted by leftist intellectuals. The “real torture,” he argued

⁶⁰ AEL/CPDB/J/634 Henrique Carneiro, “Secundaristas Pedem Passagem,” *Ponto de Partida: Um Jornal Para A Juventude* 1:0, June/July 1979.

⁶¹ “Vergonha Baiana.”

(incredibly crassly) was the spiritual torment of youth in a world that “doubts the authority of their fathers, their pastors, the Catholic Church, and God.”⁶²

The MEC, for their part, heightened surveillance of any who might emerge as “leaders” of the new student movement, including the producers of student newspapers, which rapidly proliferated at the nation’s high schools and universities. A March 1974 MEC bulletin offered a guide for identifying subversive student newspapers. “Student newspapers are point of vulnerability for communist ideological infiltration, which in both subtle and direct ways provokes polemics, discontent and negative behavior. The newspapers represent the progressive intoxication of university students, and predispose them to subversive participation in student agitation.” The pamphlet pointed out several “red flags” for identifying subversives, which included mentioning unemployment, the high cost of living, reduced federal spending on education, *ensino pago*, the MEC/USAID accord, the vestibular, and the “military dictatorship.”⁶³ By these standards, *every* student newspaper was subversive, and the government had a lot to worry about.

The quest for a greater voice in educational policy remobilized students, demonstrated that they *could* mobilize, and tested the limits of the dictatorship’s control on political expression. In the late 1970s, students added a new issue to their agenda: democracy. The possibility of such a radical step forward in the student movement was in no small part afforded by a change in leadership in the military in 1974. Under public

⁶² Biblioteca Nacional, Manuscripts, 31,02,002 no. 058 (also 31,2,5 no. 017) – Gustavo Corção, “Pobres moços!” (1977)

⁶³ A highly edited and editorialized version of the bulletin (originally produced by MEC in 1974 and attested to in “Proveitoso para brasileiros de escolar,” *Folha de São Paulo*, 17 de fevereiro de 1974”) appeared in AEL/ME/J/0858 “O Boletim do MEC- ‘COMO ELES AGEM,’ *O Atrito*, Centro Acadêmico de Física, UniCamp, 3:8 March 1974

pressure that was exacerbated by the downturn in the economy, the new military president, Ernesto Geisel, called for a “slow, gradual, and safe” political opening known as *a Abertura*, that reduced the stringency of censorship and allowed for greatly ideological diversity among congressional candidates. For students, the entrance into a fight for democracy was itself gradual. “The most important first step is fighting for the freedom of expression and assembly for *all*,” wrote a Campinas student paper in October 1977.⁶⁴ Of comparable importance for many students was the struggle for amnesty for political prisoners and those who had had their political rights revoked. This cause was intimately related to students because two considerable cohorts who would be affected by amnesty included the thousands of university professors who had lost their jobs as well as the student leadership of the 1968 era, many of whom remained in exile or even imprisoned ten years later.⁶⁵

In 1979, student newspapers around the country rang out the same call, “UNE’s back!” In early May every sort of homespun reproduction method disseminated through the country copies of a newspaper advertising an “UNE Reconstruction Congress” and calling upon students to organize into “Committees for the Defense of UNE” to ensure that the Congress actually happened. “We will be making it very clear to the Dictatorship that the UNE that we all love is a symbol of unity among all students and against the Dictatorship and its agents. We are building an UNE that will be our greatest instrument for demanding from the Dictatorship that we are given dignified conditions of education,

⁶⁴ “Uma plataforma política para o movimento estudantil,” 45.

⁶⁵ See Eunice Ribeiro Durham, “Uma Reforma que destruiu o sonho,” *Folha de São Paulo*, 21 September 1979, and AEL/ME/J/0409 *Anistia*, órgão oficial do Comitê Brasileiro pela Anistia, April, 1978.

and that studying is a possibility for everyone that wants it.” In its reconstruction, UNE was reborn as fundamentally anti-dictatorship, an issue that the student movement had only skirted around until the late-1970s. “In the past year, deputies of the MDB proposed that congress authorize a ‘Legal UNE’, created from the top down by the ‘Parliament’ of the dictatorship. More recently the Pro-UNE Commission took the surprising step of inviting to an ‘UNE’ congress none other than the dictator Figueiredo⁶⁶ (in person!), his state governors and ministries... This isn’t the UNE we want, created by decree and founded by representatives of the dictatorship. NO! We want the dictatorship OUT of UNE,”⁶⁷ and perhaps by implication out of power.

On May 29 and 30, students met in Salvador and UNE was reborn. Opposition newspapers reported that though the meeting was no secret, the government simply pretended it was not happening and that they had no idea beforehand that it would happen.⁶⁸ By November, elections were concluded and a new directorate was in place with a platform of better conditions in schools, which must be free and public, students united with the people (*o povo*) in the struggle for democracy, amnesty, and free and fair elections for the national legislature.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ João Baptista de Oliveira Figueiredo, Geisel’s successor.

⁶⁷ AEL/ME/J/0862, yr. 1 no 5 May 1979 issue of “Agora UNE”

⁶⁸ “UNE de Volta”, *Anistia*, May/June 1979, p. 2.

⁶⁹ “Eleições na UNE,” in *Boca do Estudante*, no. 4, November 1979, p. 2.



“UNE: Full, General, and Unrestricted Amnesty”⁷⁰

In the new newspaper for local UNE leaders, the organization sought to model proper democratic processes. Everything from expenses to deliberations to external official correspondance was upfront, openly shared, and open to debate.⁷¹ For its first issue, the new UNE magazine *Nossa Voz* thanked the students who had never given up on the organization: “More than ten years ago—ten long years—they destroyed our organization. ‘They cut out a verse, and we wrote another.’ [...] UNE has always existed, in every badly made poster, in every strike, in every demonstration, the National Student Union was born and born again.”⁷²

Though the reconstruction of UNE had called for students to unite under a single banner, the Student Movement’s entrance into politics *per se* had brought divisions within the movement into relief. The June 1978 student government elections at the University of São Paulo had brought into power the *Liberdade e Luta* faction (Liberty and Struggle), a group that the USP medical student newspaper called “in our opinion... not the most representative of the majority of students, having always aligned themselves

⁷⁰ *Anistia*, May/June 1979, p. 2.

⁷¹ AEL/ME/J/0813 *Boletim informativo da UNE*

⁷² AEL/ME/J/0536 “Nossa Voz,” *Nossa Voz*, no. 1 (1980), p.2

with ‘vanguard’ attitudes and proposals.” Reflecting this concern, turnout was low (10,006 voters) and divided. Liberdade e Luta won with only 2,260 of those votes.⁷³ In the November 1979 UNE elections there were five separate tickets for the directorate. The student paper at Universidade Mackenzie in Sao Paulo, a private and confessional institution founded in the mid-19th century by American Presbyterians and famous as the most conservative major university in the country, applauded the diversity of platforms and the possibility of “new leaders ready to keep the student movement away from political alliances that would only benefit a minority.” The tickets ranged in their proposals from *Maioria* (Majority) which supported nothing more radical than a Constitutional Assembly at the end of the dictatorship, to *Novação* (NewAction) which defended “the formation of a government of workers and of a ‘socialist current’” (much to the befuddlement of Universidade Mackenzie editors.)⁷⁴ Of particular concern to many student activists was the extent to which the Student Movement should ally itself with the MDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement), the official opposition party endorsed by the dictatorship. “The MDB is not and never will be an alternative for the exploited,” urged a Campinas student paper.⁷⁵ Though support varied, the MDB’s leader considered *themselves* supporters of the Student Movement, and the ultimately victorious UNE ticket in 1979, *Multirão* (roughly, the Movement) supported linkages both with the MDB and with the newly formed Worker’s Party, the PT, discussed in more depth below.⁷⁶

⁷³ ME/J/0465 “Editorial,” *Bisturi*, Centro Acadêmico Oswaldo Cruz, 13:1, June 1978, 2.

⁷⁴ AEL/ME/J/1182 “5 Chapas para UNE,” *Análise*, student paper of Universidade Mackenzie, V:24, September 1979, 5.

⁷⁵ “Uma plataforma politica para o movimento estudantil,” 38.

⁷⁶ “5 Chapas para UNE.”

Though the period of *abertura* had allowed many new opportunities for student mobilization and opposition, student activism was not without risks. The government still had claws. Perhaps the most astonishing example of the government's continued violence even during the *abertura* was the regime's 1976 assassination of former President Juscelino Kubitschek, revealed only in 2013. As students became less timid after 1977, the government stepped up repressive efforts that students had largely escaped in the early 1970s. In March 1977, the student union of the Federal University of Pernambuco was invaded and shut down by military police just before Carnaval.⁷⁷ In August, military police violently dispersed striking students in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília.⁷⁸ In May 1978, striking students at the Federal University of Bahia "were massacred by troops of the military police who, armed with electrified prods, dogs, gas bombs, machine guns, and rifles brutally beat students, with a final tally of more than fifty wounded" Far from cowed, students reacted by declaring a rare general strike at the university.⁷⁹ When amnesty was finally achieved in 1979, the repression of the student movement greatly decreased, but as late as 1980 six student leaders of the Industrial Engineering school in São Bernardo dos Campos were expelled for three years for unspecified "subversive" behavior.⁸⁰

The students' struggle, first against the dictatorship's educational policies, and eventually against the dictatorship itself, had been making headlines in the major national papers for almost a decade when the country's focus fell upon a new, more numerous--

⁷⁷ AEL/ME/J/0629 *Arfresco* Mackenzie, No. 5, March 1977, p. 10

⁷⁸ AEL/ME/J/1164 "A Repressão mostra as garras," *Alternativa*, UFPa (Pará), 1:3, August 1977, p. 2

⁷⁹ *Beba*, no. 10 Jul 1978, p. 2

⁸⁰ "Punições," *Nossa Voz*, No. 1, p. 3

and to some more terrifying--uprising against the government. In May 1978, automotive workers went on strike in São Paulo, and in 1979 and 1980 hundreds of thousands of industrial workers in São Paulo's ABC district (named for the suburban towns of Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo, and São Caetano do Sul) conducted massive work stoppages, with so many participants that meetings had to be held in local soccer stadiums. For many elite and middle-class observers of this new mass movement, the workers were a source of fear. São Paulo Governor Paulo Maluf called the movement "a case for the police."⁸¹ Why such hostility? In the 1960s, the workers' movement had been largely under the influence of the country's two communist parties. Beyond worries of a communist resurgence, the return of worker militancy recalled the years of Vargas-style laborism, another decidedly bad memory for conservatives. In reality, this new workers' movement was decidedly distinct from the one that the government had crushed in the late 1960s. Its leadership publicly distanced itself from old Communists, but also (and this might have added to the suspicion) from any other established party.⁸² Their spokesperson, Lula, a young metalworker in an automotive factory, confessed to being "apolitical," saying that the movement preferred to "prepare the working class to know how to choose."⁸³

Workers had been effectively silenced since 1968/1969, but now they were able to make the transition into militancy more quickly than students had, though the example

⁸¹ In *Veja*, no. 553, 11 April 1979, 7.

⁸² John D. French and Alexandre Fortes, "Another World Is Possible: The Rise of the Brazilian Workers' Party and the Prospects for Lula's Government," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 2:3, 2005.

⁸³ Moacir Gadotti and Otaviano Pereira, *Pra Que PT: Origem, Projeto e Consolidação do Partido dos Trabalhadores* (São Paulo: Cortez, 1989), 20.

set by the student movement over preceding years may have opened a path for them. They were struggling both *as workers* against the government's economic policies that privileged foreign investment at the expense of the domestic labor force, and immediately *as democrats* for the end of the dictatorship. Students, perhaps acting with some degree of elitist paternalism, but also seeing a commonality of interests and purpose with a remobilized urban working class, sought to both symbolically and practically merge the two movements. It was not a natural or easy alliance. Statistically speaking, university students were virtually one hundred percent middle-class, and only about forty percent could even be described as lower-middle-class (the most numerous category within the middle class.)⁸⁴ Passing the vestibular typically required at least one year of targeted preparatory study in a *cursinho* (little course), all of which were private and expensive. Many middle-class students themselves had financial difficulties in becoming university students, and about two-thirds worked part-time and were expected to contribute to family expenses.⁸⁵ "Rare are the children of workers who finish middle school," wrote one journalist, "and rarer still those who ever attempt the vestibular."⁸⁶ And yet, despite the economic and situational barriers between workers and students, students from around the country were inspired by the workers' struggle.

Even before the 1978 strikes, students had recognized workers as potential allies who would strengthen the force and legitimacy of the opposition. It was obvious that the poor and working class had been profoundly harmed by the military regime. Between

⁸⁴ "A Palavra dos Estudantes: Eles querem construir," *Realidade*, 4:42, September 1969, 24.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ "Vamos matar 120 mil esperanças", 14.

1960 and 1970, the rich had gotten much richer and the poor had gotten much poorer. The top quintile of the population controlled 54.4 percent of GNP in 1960, and 64.1 percent in 1970. In 1970, one percent of the population earned more than the bottom fifty percent.⁸⁷ Between 1965 and 1975, GNP increased 56 percent but minimum wage decreased 55 percent.⁸⁸ A public high school newspaper calculated in 1979 that the national monthly minimum salary would not even cover a single students' lunches and buses to and from school for a month, much less support the average five-person family.⁸⁹ "The heart of the problem," wrote a Mackenzie University student, "is that our stomachs don't hurt... We, the students, are not the most exploited, the most compromised, the most betrayed."⁹⁰ In order to grow as a movement, wrote an UNICAMP student in 1976, students must organize to "support the workers' struggles, support anti-imperialist struggles, and struggle against repression."⁹¹

The practicalities of uniting the two major camps of the opposition to the regime in the late 1970s was a difficult problem to solve. One student newspaper asked if there was even a place for the student movement now that the workers had joined the fray, concluding, "we no longer need to fight the political struggles *in place of* workers, but need to find new ways of uniting the opposition."⁹² Pioneering leaders on both side organized meetings for discussion of common interests and plans, and student leaders

⁸⁷ AEL M.E./F/3.676 "Eu Ouvi os Clamores do Meu Povo" pamphlet, Editora Beneditina Ltda, Salvador, 6 May 1973, 18.

⁸⁸ AEL/ME/F/04002 – "Objetivos do MDB in 1975" by Sen. Franco Montoro, Brasília 1975, 7.

⁸⁹ AEL/ME/J/0826 *aliás* no. 1, 1979, Bahiense/Gávea, 3-4.

⁹⁰ AEL/ME/J/0629 "E os estudantes? Que podem fazer?" *Arfresco* Mackenzie, No. 5, March 1977, 6.

⁹¹ AEL/ME/R/1424 "Um balanço sobre o movimento estudantil" *Argumento*, UNICAMP, CACH, 1:2, April 1976, 41-42.

⁹² AEL/ME/J/0835 "Movimento Estudantil," *Atuação*, CACH Unicamp, 1978/1979, 2.

particularly tried to reach out to *young* workers. When the workers formed their own political party in 1979, the Worker's Party (PT), many students joined and UNE elections now included pro-PT tickets. The two camps wrote pamphlets and newspaper for each other, like the PT's, *PT à Juventude, Passo a Passo*. And, most noticeably to the general public, they organized coordinated strikes: in 1980, when PT workers struck for an unprecedented 41 days, so did an incredible one million students!⁹³



As the alliance between students and workers developed, both sides promoted programs and discourses that emphasized their shared interests. **3rd National Congress of Young Workers, 1983.**
Arquivo Edgar Leuenroth.

Beyond logistics, both students and workers developed discourses that symbolically united them. Some students emphasized that upon graduation they, too, would be ‘workers’: “The same policies that alienated the worker from governmental decisions created the educational reform. They look to alienate the student of today (a worker in training) from national politics... This situation is important because it

⁹³ AEL/ME/J/0813 *Boletim informativo da UNE*, no. 2, January 1981, 3.

‘manufactures’ a cheap labor force without the conditions or knowledge to fight for its rights. The only beneficiaries are the big companies, the multinationals.”⁹⁴ Both movements promoted a rhetoric of shared victimhood, that they were the two groups that had not only suffered most under the dictatorship, but had actually been targeted by its repression. UNE’s 1984 “Carta de Recife” manifesto emphasized students’ victimhood, while tying it to workers’ problems:

The system installed in 1964 placed itself, from its first moment, against youth. Our leaders were persecuted, imprisoned, exiled, caged, and denied the right of participation in political life, obliged to witness the demise of their unions and even the destruction, by force, of the seat of the National Student Union. The disequilibria of economic growth, the unequal distribution of income, and the disorder of inflation carried our country into a recession, increased unemployment and promoted the reduction of real wages, increasing the suffering of workers. It was against all youth, from the North to the South, from the most privileged to the neediest, that they acted, to push us to the side over all these years, as if it were possible to erase an entire generation from history.⁹⁵

Even the PT, primarily answerable to their own working-class constituents, adopted the rhetoric of youth victimhood, though from a more cross-class perspective:

In Brazil, millions and millions of young people are submitted to a situation of extreme exploitation, experiencing every type of economic, social, and political discrimination. It’s not only up to youth to correct this problem, but workers must also unite so that youth can fight for a more just society and a better future. Throughout the world, the owners--of factories, banks, streets, gardens, media—control the destinies of humanity. The results are wars, misery, hunger, unemployment, environmental degradation [...] The military regime that oppresses us serves the interests of these men: the bosses. The Youth of this country, instead of benefiting from measures to improve their physical and intellectual wellbeing, suffer various forms of exploitation and discrimination: working the same hours at the same tasks, we receive lower salaries than adults; long work days limit the dedication necessary for our studies; the growth of *ensino pago* restricts our access to schools; required military service contributes to unemployment for young people turning seventeen in addition to interrupting

⁹⁴ “Editorial,” Abertura, no. 11, Ma 1978, 1.

⁹⁵ CPDOC – TN pi S. Ass. 0000.00.00/4, rolo 17, fot 934 a 941, “Carta de Recife” s.d.

studies for a year. For minors under 18, it's only hard work, without the right to syndical and political organization.⁹⁶

For both groups, full democracy with direct presidential elections was the solution to the abuses that youth had experienced. With the vote for youth, change seemed sure to be swift and certain. "We're not just the future of this country," the "Carta de Recife" concluded, "but the guarantee of its present."

In the late 1960s, the repressive force of the Brazilian military dictatorship destroyed the national student union and dealt a crushing blow to nascent political activism among the country's youth. But students were gradually able to reorganize and remobilize. The first step, in the early 1970s, was a slow build up in peaceful dissent to an educational reform program that involved the increased technicalization of education and sharp increases in annual student fees. Students saw their interests as students threatened, and protested the reform, not as democrats or revolutionaries, but as students. Students quickly reconsolidated public approval, and were able to gradually push the limits of what the dictatorship would tolerate. The strategy was a sound one, as investment in and support of education was an important aspect of the military government's development agenda and one of their few sources of legitimacy.

By the late 1970s, the student movement was sufficiently emboldened to add a new item to their agenda: democracy. Now this position was subversive indeed, but the possibility was there because of changes within the leadership of the military. The

⁹⁶ AEL/DA/B/0391 "Boletim no. 2: PT À Juventude, Passo a Passo", 1980, 3-5.

economy began to collapse after 1974 and public support for the dictatorship plummeted. The government responded with a political opening that, perhaps most importantly, reduced the stringency of censorship. The students' quest for democracy made its greatest stride forward when in 1979, the Student Movement re-formed UNE and allied with the Worker's Movement, now under the leadership of the newly-formed PT. In doing so, student leaders put into practice the egalitarian democratic worldview that at least since the early 1960s had been a defining cultural and political characteristic of Brazilian youth.

In the early 1980s, resistance to the regime steadily grew more and more massive. The workers' movement spread beyond São Paulo, and showed that it could effectively rally millions, with national strikes every year that the dictatorship continued. Democracy seemed increasingly certain, especially as middle-class adults increasingly joined the opposition. The alliance with students, who had almost always claimed middle-class adult support (whether in protesting student fees or, as shown in Chapter Four, wearing miniskirts and listening to the Beatles), had improved the workers' image, making them seem *safer*. In 1985, the year the United Nations pronounced as the International Year of Youth, Brazil's congress elected a civilian president and made plans for a new Constitution. Democracy was reborn in Brazil.

Conclusion

During Brazil's Old Republic, the breakdown of the traditional barriers between the public and private spheres facilitated interventions by the government and reformist elites into the Brazilian family. Driven by positivist and eugenicist ideologies, modernizing reformers came to focus on children and adolescents as the most moldable segment of the population, and the one that could produce the greatest return on investment. The widespread adoption at this time of "youth" as a social category in Brazil, occurred with the connotation that youth were manipulable for adult goals.

Republicans laid the groundwork for widescale state intervention into the lives of young Brazilians by expanding educational infrastructure and developing progress-oriented educational policy, and the bureaucracies of the Getúlio Vargas dictatorship intensified such efforts. The establishment of the *Juventude Brasileira* national youth organization aimed for a more totalized domination of the lives and minds of young Brazilians. Not only at school could the development-oriented state attempt to direct the futures of the young, but also, with JB, during leisure time. And, if the indoctrinating goals of *Juventude Brasileira* could be achieved, the basic political identities of future generations could be made to conform to the *estadonovista* values of nationalism, patriarchal piety, and obedience to the state. Yet, resistance arose from both adults, who found the fascistic agenda of JB distasteful, and from youth—especially high school and university students—who sought to organize themselves according to their own values. The *União Nacional de Estudantes*, founded in the same year as *Juventude Brasileira*, and affiliated with the same branch of the national government, was a grassroots, student-

led, pro-democracy organization that by 1943 was effectively in open rebellion against the Vargas regime. The salvation of youth had been a rhetorical strategy of legitimation of the Vargas regime, but youth seeking their own salvation from tyranny ultimately were a decisive blow against the dictatorship.

By the mid-century, and especially with the advent of a democratic political regime in 1945, the position of youth in the public sphere began to change dramatically. Demographic shifts—importantly, high birthrates and an overrepresentation of children, teenagers, and young adults among the literate population—combined with a more representative government promoted an environment in which adults no longer just tried to control and direct youth, but to *convince* them. In youth periodicals, businessmen, industrialists, and, yes still, the government, sought to entertain the youth of Brazil into subscribing to a plurality of worldviews. Now in a markedly more heterogeneous political and economic environment, adults who participated in debates over internationalism and nationalism, laissez-faire capitalism and state-guided developmentalism to some extent sought the approval and the future support of young consumers.

By the late 1950s, national efforts at developmentalism that had begun under the Vargas regime and pinnacled under the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek had fundamentally altered the nature of the Brazilian economy. Both the urban working and middle classes were rapidly expanding. Young Brazilians economically benefited, if unevenly, from the boom times, both as workers and as consumers, and the culture of the late 1950s and 1960s strongly associated buying power with youthfulness. In this way, as

the focus of advertising campaigns and a constant presence in all kinds of media, Brazilian youth gained cultural cachet. The new youth culture cut across class lines (as had *suplementos* readership in the 1940s), and 1960s commentators noticed that kids both rich and poor listened to the same music, wore the same clothes, and to an unprecedented degree identified with each other.

As in many other parts of the world, the youth culture of the 1960s and '70s coincided with a pronounced political awareness among adolescents and young adults. Distinctively in Brazil, most adults approved of and even *admired* the youth for their new mannerisms, their openness, and their passion. Youth at this time set the standard for what was cool, what was progressive, and even, as dictatorship returned to the country after the 1964 military coup, what was *right*. Students had been the most politically organized segment of the young population since the establishment of UNE during the *Estado Novo*, and during the years of the military regime took the lead in the national opposition, especially as the dictatorship depopulated the country of its more established left-wing adversaries. Though in 1968 and 1969 extreme repression almost squashed the movement entirely, in the early 1970s students re-formed ranks, exploiting public goodwill and confronting the dictatorship for undermining their future. By the late 1970s, students united with urban industrials to form a powerfully numerous bloc against the regime, one that would ultimately be successful in forcing a return to democracy in the 1980s.

How was this amazing transformation in the role of youth in twentieth-century Brazilian society possible? I've argued that the oligarchic Republican government of the

turn of the century attempted to assert the control of the state over the nation's children and adolescents, and that in doing so created a system of education that maintained fundamental economic and racial inequalities. Yet, for all of the bias and inequity that these policies sustained, they created a new environment in which the political empowerment of youth could someday be possible. The breakdown of the patriarchal family, with the end of slavery, the end of the Empire, and state-led intervention into family life, brought youth into the public sphere. The “traditional Brazilian family” described by Freyre, Buarque de Holanda, and Borges, allowed little room for the young to act independently from their older, male patriarchs. Young family members, *especially* young women, were subject to expectations of obedience, discipline, and even isolation. The Republican government attempted to transfer the power of controlling youth from the paterfamilias to the state, but did so in a way that agglomerated youth—by putting them in schools together. It was a slow and fitful process, but one that steadily continued for the rest of the century.

In this largescale entrance into the public sphere, sectors of the young Brazilian population slowly began to see themselves as a category, a class, and a community, with shared and distinctive interests. This seems to have happened first in schools, such as with UNE's political organizing in the early 1940s, where they appealed to the government and the public according to the language of the rights of students and the rights of youth. Perhaps in the 1950s, working-class youth—now much more likely to work among other adolescents and young adults, but also more likely to be urban and

literate and so consume similar media as the students—began to enter the fold of the *youth class*.

By seeing themselves as part of a distinct class or category—youth—young Brazilians became part of an identity that cut across the barriers of economic class, race, religion, regions, or political parties that have for so long fractured the Brazilian people. An individual is young for only so long, and it's important to keep in mind that I'm speaking of successive generations of youth. But each one, responding to their political, economic, and cultural environments, successively extended the empowerment of youth. Philosopher Charles Taylor has termed “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” as a *social imaginary*.¹ I am essentially arguing that over many years in the twentieth century, Brazilians of all ages developed a social imaginary of youth that had the potential to mature, persuade, and remain vibrant over the course of generations. There were certain expectations of youth behavior and values that, though they changed gradually over time, were able to be passed on even as specific individuals left the fold of the youth class.

How did that youth culture, or social imaginary of youth, spread? I believe more work remains to be done to answer this question, but this dissertation does point to some ways. In schools, in comic books, in factory workshops, in *turma* friend groups, in popular music, in student unions, both young people and adults developed discourses of

¹ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

legitimate and appropriate behavior and beliefs for youth. Many of these sites of culture-sharing were formed as a one-way street, where adults intended to condition youth with a certain set of norms. But young Brazilians in the twentieth century still found ways to be to active, political, culture-creating beings—to create their own Land of the Future.

Reflections: Brazilian Youth in the Twenty-First Century

In 2012, when I was in Brazil completing the bulk of the primary research for this dissertation, I couldn't help but notice a disconnect between the twentieth-century youth I was studying, and the twenty-first-century youth around me. Especially as each day's trip to the archive made the narrative of chapter five form more clearly in my mind, I began to more acutely notice the political apathy of the young people I met. In the 1970s and early 1980s, young Brazilians had taken to the streets by the millions to protest, well, just about everything. They saw a sick society and used their energy, passion, and sheer force of numbers to change it. But in 2012 the kids were quiet.

Young Brazilians I met worked. They went to school, the *shopping*, the park, the beach. They watched TV, played video games, wasted time online, stared at their phones. But with very few exceptions, they didn't get involved in and weren't interested in politics. When the apparent apathy was strained by a prying *gringa* researcher, most expressed only distaste for politics. It was corrupt, it was ineffective, and it really didn't matter which party won what because they were all the same. The most politically active teens and twenty-somethings I met were members of their school's DCE (*Diretoria Central de Estudantes*, Central Directorate of Students), the same bodies that in the late

1930s unified to create UNE and in the 1970s produced many of the newspapers of the Student Movement. While these young activists had party affiliations and clear ideas about what *needed* to change in Brazil, they were deeply pessimistic that it *would* change.

In the thirty years since young students and workers spearheaded the return to democracy, what had changed for Brazilian youth that could account for this mass depoliticization? Two of the twentieth-century's biggest impediments to youth politics have been ameliorated: illiteracy among young Brazilians is today virtually nonexistent and extreme poverty has fallen sharply since 2003 (to just 8.5 percent).² The 1988 Constitution set the voting age at sixteen, among the world's lowest, allowing even many teenagers new possibilities for political engagement.³ Perhaps the mobilizations during the military dictatorship were simply a historical oddity that could never be reproduced without the elevated stakes of a dictatorship in need of toppling. Yet in August and September 1992 young activists known as the *cara-pintadas* (painted faces) had taken to the streets in numbers that dwarfed the Student Movement to demand the impeachment of corrupt president Fernando Collor de Mello.⁴

In the early 2010s, Brazilian bloggers often pondered the same question that I faced.⁵ Some student activists pointed to the exclusion of youth from the political process as the cause of the widespread apparent apathy. According to an essay by Catherine Fátima de Alves, a member of the National Youth Council (CONJUVÉ), voting by

² "Queda do índice do analfabetismo adulto é residual," *Folha de S. Paulo*, May 16, 2011; Ministério da Fazenda, *Economia Brasileira em Perspectiva*, 16th ed, Aug. 2012.

³ *Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988*, Título II, Capítulo IV, Artigo 14.

⁴ "Saiba mais sobre os cara-pintadas," *Folha de S. Paulo*, Apr. 30, 2008.

⁵ And some years before, José Murilo de Carvalho did as well in "The Edenic Motif in the Brazilian Social Imaginary," *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* n.spel, 2000.

sixteen and seventeen year olds fell by 6.8 percent in the 2000s. Why the falling interest? Perhaps, Alves argues, because of the extreme under-representation of youth in government. Though 16 to 29 year olds comprised 30 percent of the Brazilian electorate in 2010, only three percent of federal deputies were in that age bracket. The return to democracy, and even the lowering of the voting age, did not bring young Brazilians the voice in politics that their antecedents had fought for.⁶

On his blog *Brasil Recente*, historian Carlos Fico posed the question “why are the youth today not politically active like they were in 1968?” Fico wrote that he hears this question frequently in his classes, and “curiously, it’s asked by young people who consider themselves politically apathetic.” Street demonstrations were the most visible manifestation of the old student activism, but “are the youth today politically apathetic just because they’re not fighting the police in the streets?” For Fico, writing in April 2012, it was unclear. He pointed to the idea that perhaps social media was taking the place of the street demonstration, but argued that “the social networks can serve as aids and organizers, but public acts are still important.”⁷

In mid-2013, I was forced, along with the many others who had been contemplating the question of political apathy, to reevaluate the situation. From June 6 to July 11, 2013, millions of Brazilians took to the streets to protest an array of perceived injustices. On June 20th alone, almost 2 million demonstrators protested in 438 Brazilian

⁶ Catherina Fátima Alves, “Juventude: apatia ou exclusão política?,” shared on the Assessoria PJ Google Group, Aug. 10, 2010, https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/assessoria_pj/47z7IjIseU0

⁷ Carlos Fico, “Apatia da juventude?,” *Brasil Recente*, Apr. 22, 2012, <http://www.brasilrecente.com/2012/04/apatia-da-juventude.html>

cities.⁸ Unrest over a twenty centavo increase in bus fares in São Paulo grew to encompass dissatisfactions with issues ranging from government ineffectiveness and corruption, increases in the price of tomatoes, and homophobia.⁹ Though the protests sporadically turned violent, they slowly tapered out in July as the PT-led government reduced bus fares and promised reforms included a new constituent assembly.¹⁰ Though the streets emptied out, “the mobilizations of June-July 2013 were, unquestionably,” wrote Alfredo Saad Filho, “the most important social movement in Brazil in the last thirty years.”¹¹

As at many other key moments in Brazilian political history, young people were at the center of Brazil’s “June Days.”¹² André Singer has shown that though the movement involved diverse class and age-group interests, the protesters were predominately well-educated, middle-class youth between ages 15 and 25 and likely to identify as either “leftist” or “centrist” on the political spectrum.¹³ Arguing from a Marxist perspective, Saad contends that the middle-class presence in the protests was simply evidence of status anxiety and fears that an economic downturn would undermine middle-class privilege.¹⁴ My research into the history of youth in Brazil may point to a different explanation. Over the course of the twentieth century, young people (and, as I

⁸ “Quase 2 milhões de brasileiros participaram de manifestações em 438 cidades,” *Correio Braziliense*, June 21, 2013.

⁹ “Brazil’s uprising points to rise of leaderless networks,” *New Scientist*, June 29, 2013, p. 9; “Após protestos contra ‘cura gay’, PSDB divulga nota para se descolar do projeto,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, June 26, 2013.

¹⁰ Alfredo Saad Filho, “Mass Protests under ‘Left’ Neoliberalism: Brazil, June-July 2013,” *Critical Sociology* 2013 39:657.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² André Singer, “Rebellion in Brazil: Social and Political Complexion of the June Events,” *New Left Review* 85, Jan-Feb. 2014.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Saad, 664.

have shown, especially middle-class young people) began to see themselves as belonging to a group that cut across class lines. Democracy and egalitarianism became markers of the values that this group—Youth—shared, and these were essentially the values being fought for last June. The 2013 protests may show that the twentieth-century social imaginary of Brazilian Youth survives into the twenty-first century.

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