

TORTURE IN BRAZIL

American public opinion, the Christian churches, and the academic community have a special responsibility to protest.

Ralph della Cava

(Continued from front cover) Catholic country in the world, under a regime which forcibly seized power six years ago this month for the expressed purpose of returning a "corrupt" and "Red-menaced" nation to the "Christian and democratic traditions of the West." However, widespread and systematic use of torture by all levels of the government is the single and most significant new development in the worsening internal political crisis of Brazil. Indeed, torture has become today the handmaiden of oppression in the desperate effort of the Brazilian military to extinguish the remaining vestiges of opposition to their almost total control of the polity and society.

For several months now unimpeachable documentary evidence regarding numerous cases of torture has been available in Western Europe. In November, 1969, the Brussels-based International Association of Democratic Jurists issued a report, entitled *Brazil '69: Torture and Repression*. Although the publication was largely devoted to an analysis of how the new, loosely defined National Security Law (decreed in Sept., 1969) transforms almost any act of opposition to the present government into a crime against Brazil's "national security," it also reproduced several important documents and letters containing the names of about a hundred students, professionals and clergymen and a brief description of the tortures inflicted upon each.

Further reports of torture have been issued from Algiers by the "Brazilian Information Front," a clandestine group of Brazilian Marxists and Christians. If the anonymous character of these documents poses a problem

of credibility for some readers, unassailable authenticity is the hall mark of the most widely publicized dossier on torture that was submitted to the Holy Father at the end of 1969 and endorsed for its reliability by sixty of Europe's prominent intellectuals and religious leaders. Given credence throughout France, Belgium and Italy, the dossier was published in the December issue of the Paris monthly, *Croissance des Jeunes Nations*. Entitled "Livre Noir: Terreur et Torture au Brésil," the dossier contains eleven separate documents. Two concern the cold-blooded murder in May, 1969, of Fr. Antonio Henrique Pereira Neto, a Northeastern priest working among university students, by army-condoned, right-wing terrorists; another is the public protest issued last July by 38 priests from Belo Horizonte against "the physical and moral outrages" continuously committed against imprisoned priests and laymen since December, 1968; other documents recount the tortures inflicted upon students, peasant leaders and a Belgian missionary priest summarily deported last August.

Three documents bear the signature of Recife's celebrated Archbishop, Dom Helder Câmara. In Rome last January 26, the outspoken prelate was received attentively at the Vatican's portals by Pope Paul VI who exclaimed in public to the Brazilian: "We have read the documentation you have sent Us concerning torture in Brazil. Thus, everything you told Us was true! The Church must know how to make its own the ire of the poor and non-violent, the revolt against injustice. The Church will tolerate no longer the commission of atrocities and tortures in a country that calls itself Christian."

Despite the Pope's indignation (transmitted in a dispatch from Maurice Cardinal Roy, head of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, to Brazilian authori-

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ties who banned its publication), "the situation in Brazil today is considerably more serious than that observed in Greece last year." That opinion, made public at a Paris press conference on March 6th last by a spokesman from the International Federation of the Rights of Man and three other international legal and civil rights entities, is included in the third and most recent report on the Brazilian crisis (see *Le Monde*, March 8-9, 1970). The report is the result of a week-long mission conducted in Brazil by two French lawyers. Torture, they write, "has become systematic and universal." They suggest moreover, that avowals of the Minister of Justice to investigate any case of torture brought to his attention have been made hollow by the recent decree (issued February 11, 1970) governing "the censorship of licentious publications." The decree, purportedly aimed at curbing pornography, has effectively intimidated the remaining critical press from engaging in a new campaign against torture. Military authorities had silenced a previous campaign carried on in early December, 1969, by, among other means, arresting and jailing outspoken journalists.

II. Torturers & Tortured

From these three public sources now available, it is possible at this moment to take preliminary stock of some of the more important factors bearing on the employment of torture.

First of all, it is important to ask just when and how torture became widely employed as an instrument of repression. Most observers are inclined to date this phenomenon from about December, 1968. That month, "hard-line" officers within the Brazilian army pulled off a successful "coup within a coup." The late President, Army marshal Arthur Costa e Silva, was forced to close down the Federal Congress, while the executive branch was again empowered to deprive at will any political opponent of his political rights for ten years.

The victory of the "hard-liners," advocates since the 1964 coup of abolishing *all* democratic pretenses and handing the country over to outright military rule, went far deeper, however, than most observers then perceived. Today, it is clear that their victory has severely curtailed the influence of the few remaining moderates and "soft-liners" within the armed services. Moreover, the succession of arbitrary laws enacted with impunity after the December 13, 1968 shutting-down of Congress along with the decree of a new constitution in October, 1969, has granted the military rulers virtually unlimited power. For these reasons, most former restraints on the use of torture have all but completely disappeared.

Some may wish to trace the sanctioning of torture to the existence and proliferation of sporadic rightist terrorism prior to December, 1968. Indeed, groups of

local and national scope, such as the Communist-Hunting Command, the Death Squadron, and Operation Bandeirante, came into existence over the past three years with, it is widely believed, the complicity of "hard-line" military authorities. Membership in these vigilante groups continues to draw heavily upon local police officials (the two torturers of Sister Maurina, for example, are members of Operation Bandeirante) and upon civilian elements who share a kind of "populist" resentment against middle-class politicians whether "liberal" or "radical." But, the emergence of the rightist terrorist groups was not spontaneous. Indeed, they seem to have swung into action as surrogates for the "hard-line" officers precisely at that moment in mid-year, 1968, when popular aspirations had found greater public expression under the liberalizing policies of deposed President Costa e Silva. Now that the "hard-line" itself is victorious, the right-wing terrorists will probably be restrained (although their organizations not completely dismantled), while the purge of all opposition forces can now proceed with the sanction of the "law" *within* the very barracks and encampments of the armed forces.

A second consideration concerns the victims of torture. There is no exact number, but it would probably not be an exaggeration to state that more than 500 persons were tortured during 1969. (This estimate is most likely low since following the release of kidnapped U.S. Ambassador C. Burke Elbrick last September, over 5000 persons—2000 in Rio alone—had been rounded up and held prisoners for varying lengths of time.) Among the tortured are men and women, whose average age—which the French investigating mission calculated this March from among the more than 10,000 persons still imprisoned—is 22 years!

Obviously, university students and, in recent months, significant numbers of high school students are the chief victims. Most are of affluent, middle-class backgrounds and as a group they comprise the one social category whose democratic efforts to secure civil liberties and promote a free public debate on national issues have been repeatedly met with utter violence. Since the 1964 coup, the army has forcibly prevented students from reconstituting the National Union of Students. During the first half of 1968, thousands of students were jailed after spontaneous street marches to 'end the dictatorship' in several cities proved to have the overwhelming support of the populace. Police repression was so severe in June 1968 that the month is today remembered as "Bloody June." Finally, in April, 1969, almost a hundred professors at the universities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the last remaining public defenders of the students, were forced into "voluntary retirement." In a word, the regime has boxed students into the one option left to them: namely, to regroup as a clandestine movement.

The very prospect that young people may have no

recourse but to spend the rest of their lives under a Brazilian variant of "Salazarist democracy" has also compelled some students to join one of a half-dozen guerrilla groups. These arose in response to government repression and rightist terrorism which, in turn, have convinced the guerrillas that "institutionalized violence," imposed by the military, can only be met by armed struggle. Even so, the sensational kidnappings of a U.S. and Japanese diplomat (in September, 1969, and March, 1970, respectively), the most successful guerrilla activities to date, did not have counter-violence as a chief aim. To the contrary, the guerrillas' main goals were first to free their brethren from imprisonment and the brutality of the torturer's chamber and, second, to force the regime to publicize in a rigidly censored press information about political torture and prisoners for a public that can only conjecture about the worsening national condition.

With the student movement and universities in shambles, it is no wonder that reprisals against students have been merciless. The brutal death last November of the 23-year-old São Paulo medical student, Chael Charles Schreier, was attributed to severe internal hemorrhaging clearly the consequence of violent beatings inflicted during the few hours he was held in custody by the Army Police at the *Vila Militar* in Rio de Janeiro. The death of Schreier, a member of the guerrilla *Vanguarda Armada Revolucionária-Grupo Palmares* and a Jew, has convinced Brazilians of the army's direct role as torturer, while it also suggested in some circles the possible revival of anti-Semitism within the Brazilian armed forces.

Clergymen, mostly Roman Catholics, have been the second largest target of oppression and torture. Those who have exercised an apostolate in university student circles and are thus usually more progressive—and suspect—were ready targets from the outset. Next in line were those priests and nuns who—whether they concurred or not with aims sought by some student guerrillas—felt compelled by Christian charity and justice to offer sanctuary and protection from arrest and

imprisonment. Finally there were those churchmen, especially those of the Dominican and Jesuit orders, who as Brazilian intellectuals were considered to be hostile to the authoritarianism of the military rulers.

In moving against the clergy, the military has made no distinction between foreigners and nationals. During 1969, suspected Belgian, French, and American missionaries were arrested, some tortured, almost all deported. Nationals may even be less fortunate than their foreign confreres whose anguished cries have at last been heard on the other side of the Atlantic.

Neither has the military distinguished between low and high clergy. In late 1968 and early 1969, a typical assault on Dom Helder's archdiocesan residence consisted of machine-gun bursts and hostile graffiti. Since the latter part of 1969, the assaults have become more direct and menacing, precisely because they are "legal." A case in point involves Dom Waldyr Calheiros, the 46-year-old bishop of Volta Redonda, Brazil's steelmill city; he and eleven of his priests issued a letter in July, 1969, accusing a local army unit of torturing a trade union leader of the diocese. The army held a hearing, denied the charge and condemned Dom Waldyr as an agitator! On December 4, 1969, a military court indicted the bishop and fifteen of his priests on the charge of subversion. Their trial is now pending.

The Roman Catholic church, of course, is the last remaining corporate structure capable of defying the government. Like the military, it is organized on a nationwide level, enjoys some degree of esprit de corps and, since Vatican Council II, is accustomed to speaking via its National Council of Bishops to the nation on national issues. Its ideological cleavages are profound, but inasmuch as the positions of the more liberal spokesmen have been legitimated by Vatican Council II and the 1968 Medellin Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council, the views of the more conservative and pro-military ecclesiastics have been generally subdued.

For some of these reasons, it is likely that the military will exercise caution in its efforts to silence the liberal

Following are excerpts from a document of the "Brazilian Information Front." The original cites torturers by name.

The prisoners . . . were sent to Guanabara (First Company of the Army—Military Police) on August 18, 1969. . . . After being beaten they were thrown into two tiled cells . . . 2 x 2 meters in area where they remained naked for 74 days without the minimum conditions of hygiene. . . .

The first two nights after their arrival, the prisoners were not allowed to sleep, were made to stand for 96 hours and from time to time were squirted all over with a hose of cold water. On two occasions bombs of tear gas were thrown into their cell and they nearly died of suffocation. . . .

In September, 1969, *Murilo Pinto da Silva* was tortured at the PE with electric shocks, beaten with a wooden rod, punched and kicked for four hours without interruption.

Pedro Paulo Bretas—hung by the *pau de arara*, beaten with a rod, given electric shocks, had his fingers squeezed for two days and two nights by small iron bars 20 cm. in length.

Angelo Pezzuti da Silva—given electric shocks and beaten with a wooden rod. At a certain point he was unable to bear the torture any longer and flung himself against the window-pane in the room; he cut himself in several places and fainted. He was

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wing of the church. Not a few officers who view with favor the existence of a substantial conservative majority among Brazil's 250 bishops argue it is still possible to woo the church to their own side. At the very least they would shy away from directly attacking the institutional character of the church for fear of losing conservative episcopal support. Furthermore, Brazil's diplomatic ties to the Vatican and the common interest of each in such issues as the continuation of Catholic religious education in Brazil's public schools, and the legal proscription against divorce in Brazil, may well outweigh the strong personal friendship between Paul VI and liberal champion, Dom Helder Câmara. Progressive prelates and "hard-line" officers alike are looking forward to the Pope's pending visit to Brasília in May 1970 for the Eighth National Eucharistic Congress. How this visit will enter into the three-way power-play of generals, bishops and the papacy, is still a matter for speculation.

A third category comprises the intellectuals—the publishers, writers and professors, the lawyers and journalists who had managed to escape the punitive waves of 1964 and 1966-67 when the military "legally" deprived many citizens of their political rights for ten years or forced many others into exile. Now, however, some leading publishers such as Enio Silveira, director of Brazil's major publishing house, *Editôra Civilização Brasileira*, have been brought to the brink of bankruptcy by government confiscation of "subversive" literature after it reaches the bookstores. Leading writers such as Antonio Callado and university professors by the hundreds live under constant threat of investigation, military trials, firings and physical outrage. Terror silences even those who have dared to remain at home.

Journalists and lawyers, however, have recently begun to bear the brunt of repression. Publicists and defenders of torture victims, they have themselves become victims. It is true that three journalists charged with crimes against national security for publicizing cases of torture were acquitted at the end of March. But, harassment from legal procedures will serve to reduce the number

of ready advocates among the Brazilian fourth estate. The plight of lawyers has been a matter of international record since November, 1969.

Workers and peasants would rightly be expected to comprise the last category of victims. Except for some instances, this has not been the case. The reasons are quite obvious. Peasant organizations, confined primarily to the Northeast, had been led by middle- and upper-class politicians. Their exile or imprisonment (after the army seized power in 1964) resulted in the immediate collapse of scattered and none too numerous rural affiliates. Some genuine peasant leaders who survived (primarily among the less political, Catholic-sponsored Rural Syndicates) were either unobtrusively assassinated, politically neutralized or patriarchially coopted into the already existing system.

Similarly for workers, repression began six years ago and with a vengeance unknown in the rural areas. For union officials audacious enough to have advocated labor radicalism during the Goulart presidency, arrest, imprisonment, torture, execution and exile came on the heels of the 1964 military coup. Moreover, military "interventors" were appointed as overseers in over 2000 of the country's most powerful industrial unions, while the American Institute of Free Labor Development (an A F of L operation financed partly by America's largest corporation with Latin American holdings) and representatives of the ORIT (a pro-American regional trade union confederation in Latin America) virtually took over the indoctrination of the Brazilian rank and file. This control of labor by the army and foreigners as well as recent legislation banning strikes may explain why the defense of labor's rights has frequently fallen to the churchmen in many of Brazil's largest industrial centers such as Santo André (automobiles) and Volta Redonda (steel). But, as the case of Dom Waldyr indicates, there are dire consequences for workers and their defenders who choose to speak out.

Any attempt to calculate just how many torture victims there have been will depend on how the observer defines torture. Father Jean Talpe of the diocese of

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taken to the Military Hospital at the vila where he received stitches on his back and arm. His admittance to the hospital was noted on the register there.

Afonso Celso Lara Leite—given electric shocks, punches and *telephones* during several hours by Sgt. A, who continued to administer the electric shocks even after the interrogation was over in order to observe the interesting contractions which the

shocks produced on Afonso Celso's body.

Julio Antonio Betancourt de Almeida—was hung from the *pau de arara*, given electric shocks, *telephones*, beaten with a rod and had a truncheon forced up his anus.

On October 8, a class was held at the PE for a group of about 100 members of the three armed forces, the majority with the rank of sergeant, to give instructions on interrogations. Before starting, Mauricio was given

electric shocks to see if the apparatus was working well, as Corpl. M. said.

. . . While slides [were projected] to explain the type of torture, its characteristics and effects, [six officials] tortured the prisoners in front of the members of the class, as a live demonstration of the various methods of tortures employed. Mauricio was given electric shocks. . . . Zézinho was hung from the *pau de arara*. . . . Nilo Sérgio was made to hold weights with his arms stretched out. . . .

Bruges, Belgium, who lived four years in Brazil and in January, 1969, was arrested, jailed for six months, tortured and deported, indirectly suggested this issue in an interview he gave upon his release last August to the Belgian Catholic Press Service:

A friend of mine, a professor at the university, was hung naked head down and in this position was worked over for hours with clubs and electric shocks to the most sensitive parts of the body. A young lady whom he didn't know was forced to witness this 'spectacle' and shortly thereafter, in his presence, was dealt with in exactly the same shameful way.

What if the young lady had not been stripped, hung and beaten but been made only to observe the fate of the professor as has indeed been the lot of countless relatives and friends of actual victims? Who, it might be asked, has been tortured? Where the safety of friends and loved ones is suddenly made to hang in the balance, has not the torturing of one victim served to strike terror into the hearts of the others? Where society rather than a single onlooker is made to witness the regime's brutality, is it not then the purpose of the torturer to enslave society in fear?

III. Instrument of National Policy

From all available evidence, torture in Brazil is today an instrument of national policy whose purpose is not to seek information about "subversives," but to bring to heel all and any opposition to the present rule of the armed forces. First of all, the techniques of torture are no longer limited to beatings, pistol whippings, clubbings and the spontaneous violences of individual police anger and sadism. They are increasingly more sophisticated and complicated and, as such, require both considerable personnel and organization for their implementation. Here is a brief description, based on a variety of documents from all parts of Brazil, of the three most common tortures:

1. *pau de arara* (parrot's perch): the victim is handcuffed and his arms placed over his legs which are bent up close to the chest. A long pole is inserted in the cavity formed between his knee and arms. The pole is raised horizontally above the ground and thus the victim, usually naked, hangs head down. In this position, he can be beaten, clubbed, subjected to electric shocks or "hydraulics" (water poured down his nostrils) and other cruelties.

2. *mesa de operação* (the operating table): the victim is strapped to an iron table equipped with a gadget that stretches the body; a surgical probe is used to scrape the ribs.

3. *choques elétricos* (electric shocks): the victim is usually forced to strip before wires are attached to the most sensitive parts of the body and even

inserted into the orifices. Electric current is discharged from an apparatus that is most usually described as a manually-cranked, box-like generator, not unlike a field telephone.

Second, identical tortures are employed in different parts of the country, though the greatest similarity is found in the famous southeastern triangle of Guanabara (Rio de Janeiro), São Paulo and Minas Gerais, the most developed states in Brazil and centers of greatest criticism against the regime.

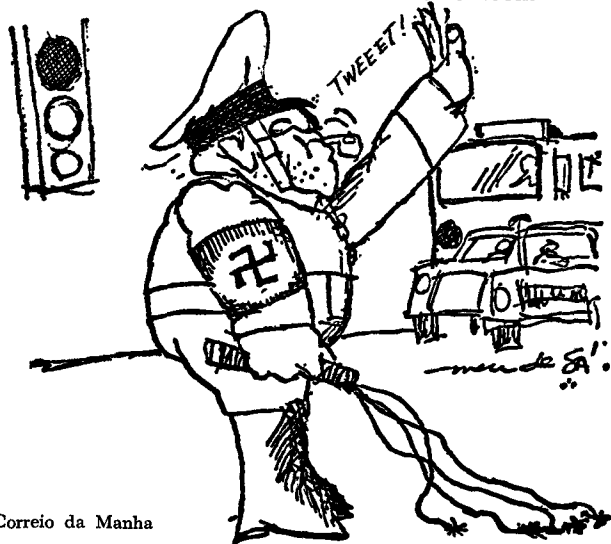
Third, the three branches of the armed services (army, navy and air force) appear to have played an increasingly larger role coordinating and supervising the torturing of political prisoners. Those tasks usually fell and continue partly to fall upon local and state police agents especially trained in "criminal investigation" and "intelligence work." These indeed still appear to be the actual torturers. However, innumerable documents confirm that several dozen officers from the three branches of the armed forces (but especially the army) are directly in charge of torture activities in such important sites as the Linhares Penitentiary in Belo Horizonte, the Ilha das Flores prison and the Vila Militar, both in Rio de Janeiro.

Moreover, there is evidence that the three services have jointly conducted formal courses in "interrogation" for their junior officers. In one such class held on October 8, 1969, at the State Police headquarters in Belo Horizonte, an army lieutenant showed slides of torturings and lectured the assembly about each type of torture, its characteristics and its effects. Moments before, ten male political prisoners had been marched into the classroom and forced to strip. One by one, they were tortured by corporals and privates in a "live" demonstration before the almost 100 officer-students in attendance.

What are the prospects that the present government will put an end to the use of torture and terror as an instrument of state policy (to say nothing of restoring elections, political parties, freedom of the press, speech, assembly and 'habeas corpus')? When General Emílio G. Médici, a compromise candidate and the third general to rule Brazil since 1964, assumed power in October, 1969, ten months after the internal coup against Costa e Silva, he made a number of promises, chief among them that by the end of his administration in 1974, he intended "to leave democracy definitely installed in our country, as well as fixed bases for our social and economic development."

Less than six months had passed when Médici's "democratic vision" was, under the relentless pressure of "hard-line" officers, cast aside by the proclamation of the "revolutionary state." On March 10, 1970, the general took to the air waves and explained to his fellow Brazilians that the "revolutionary state" signified the decision of the military dictatorship, now in posses-

"Brazil will adopt German methods of traffic control."—News item



Correio da Manhã

sion of unlimited discretionary powers, to continue in office for "as long as it takes" to remake Brazil according to its own lights.

It does not appear that torture and terror will end soon. The methods and techniques of torture, as shown earlier, have already been "rationalized" and legitimated into the military structure. Moreover, the newly proclaimed "revolutionary state," resting firmly on such arbitrary legal instruments as the Constitution of 1969 and the censorship laws of February, 1970, allows the victims of torture almost no recourse before the law (unlike Greece where victims seem recently to have obtained judicial redress).

Finally, there is a more cogent argument why terror will likely remain the order of the day and why Brazil may embark upon the path already traveled by Spain and Portugal, Italy and Germany in another era. It is simply that those who are now in power have accomplished their ascent by the unbridled use of violence against civilians and dissident fellow officers alike. The regime is thus obliged to defend its monopoly of power by continued violence; in doing so, it has created the conditions by which counter-violence may eventually become the only effective recourse available to the oppressed. In sum, unless "soft-line" officers can somehow come to exert in the future a more liberalizing influence on policy than they have since December, 1968, the present regime's political course can only lead to increasingly violent antagonisms within Brazilian society.

In view of the wide-scale tortures and the increasingly fascist militarization of Brazil, what explains the official silence of the United States government? Had any of the incidents alluded to here occurred in Castro's Cuba or some Eastern European nation, Washington would have long ago condemned the outrage. Its silence is a resounding reaffirmation of its policy of complicity in regard to Brazil.

Lincoln Gordon, now president of Johns Hopkins University, was the architect of that policy. As U.S. ambassador at the time of the military coup of 1964, Professor Gordon persuaded the Johnson Administration to recognize the new regime "within 24 hours, even though the regime's policies were largely unknown." Then, as the military junta proceeded to purge the universities, the student movement, the trade unions, the press, congress and government ministries as well as deny three ex-presidents and hundreds of other citizens their political rights for ten years, Dr. Gordon did not once raise his voice in protest. It was his view that the military coup might well be considered "... the single most decisive victory for freedom in the mid-20th century." Thereupon, massive quantities of U.S. aid, loans and investments were bestowed upon the victors.

The Gordon precedent appeared so well established that Governor Nelson Rockefeller returned from his tour of Brazil in June, 1969 (one month after the assassination of Father Henrique Neto) without condemning a single act of violence perpetrated over the previous five years by the military regime. In fact, he was so favorably impressed with the generals, he recommended that commercial arms sales be increased to all Latin American countries and that unqualified support be given to programs aimed at curbing "internal subversion."

IV. The U.S. and Public Opinion

In view of recent events in Brazil, the Rockefeller recommendation raises the question whether the U.S. Government has not been directly involved in Brazil's internal affairs and whether it is not now engaged in the Brazilian armed forces' "counter-insurgency" activities? Until three weeks ago, these questions had not come to the attention of the American public. But a *Washington Post* editorial against "Oppression in Brazil" on February 28 has resulted in significant disclosures. At first, the Brazilian ambassador in the capital deplored the *Post's* suggestion that "the United States should abandon its continued and close relations with Brazil," while Dean Acheson argued in a separate letter that a nation's internal policies, even if dictatorial, did not make her "any less a true and loyal ally."

Acheson's March 3 letter, in which he also urged the U.S. to continue to support such "allies, neighbors and friends [as] Greece, Haiti, Brazil, Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia . . .," was followed ten days later by one of the most revealing indictments of U. S. policy in Brazil. Its author is Richard S. Winslow, Jr., a Foreign Service Reserve Officer with the Agency for International Development whose expenditures in Brazil for "economic development" rose from \$15.1 million in 1964 (the year of the coup) to an estimated \$187 million in

1970. Winslow, however, suggests that AID funds may not be going for "economic development," but "to increase the efficiency of [Brazil's] oppressive police force . . .":

" . . . during fiscal year 1970, the State Department's Agency for International Development is spending \$451,000 on its 'public safety' program in Brazil; \$292,000 is now paying for 13 U.S. police specialists residing in Brazil and helping to train thousands of Brazilian police in 'criminal investigations,' 'counter-insurgency,' and the use of the most modern police equipment. AID boasts that in fiscal year 1968, 16,000 Brazilian police were trained under this program, with the number increasing each successive year. Another \$129,000 is being spent this year to bring 58 police officials to the United States for an average of four months training in the latest police techniques."

Of the many implications contained in Winslow's letter, the most obvious is that Washington's silence is a matter of fundamental policy. Its refusal to condemn torture, terror and repression does not stem, as Acheson would have us believe, from the necessity to tolerate the "peccadillos" of a "true and loyal ally." Rather, such a rebuke would be *ipso facto* a self-condemnation of Washington's Brazil policy.

Since governments are clearly not in the business of condemning themselves, what of public opinion? The Europeans (and recently the Chileans) have raised a public hue and cry. But the Americans have not. The Brazilian tragedy has not touched their conscience. Yet public opinion will have an effect not in Paris, Rome or Santiago—capitals to which the Brazilian regime pays scant heed—but in Washington.

Accordingly, it might be well here to delineate areas of immediate concern to three sectors of American public opinion whose interests are linked to Brazil's destiny; namely, the press, the churches and the academic community.

The American press should break its editorial silence about torture in Brazil. The Brazilian regime tends to be more sensitive to the *New York Times'* criticisms than to *Le Monde's*. The American press should also give more attention to the arrest and imprisonment of journalists and to the imposition, since February, of

censorship. Finally, the implications in Winslow's letter to the *Post* should be relentlessly pursued: were any of the 16,000 Brazilian police agents trained by AID in "counter-insurgency" in 1968 responsible for the massive repression of 1969? Have any of the 13 U.S. "police specialists" now residing in Brazil taken part in torturing Brazilian political prisoners? Lastly, is there any real danger that over-all U.S. policies in Brazil might involve the nation in a Latin American "Indochina"?

A greater moral duty belongs to the Christian churches, Brazil being at once the largest Catholic nation in the world and the largest Protestant nation in Latin America. Moreover, countless numbers of laymen and clergy, primarily but not exclusively Catholic, have been victimized, and in several cases, murdered. Surprisingly, the Brazilian Catholic church, once a mainstay of the status quo, has emerged for a variety of reasons as the only national institution that remains capable of defending the principles of freedom, justice and social change in the face of government repression. Yet, neither the U.S. Catholic Conference nor the National Council of Churches has really called its flock's attention to the crisis facing the Brazilian churches (and, in an ecumenical spirit, to the potential rise of anti-Semitism towards Brazil's 150,000 Jews). Today, it is urgent that the Considines and Cushings, the MacKays and Rembaos call once again for a crusade of "40,000 missionaries." Send them forth not to evangelize Brazil, but rather to make known in Washington their dissent from the government's policy of complicity.

Finally, the academic community, including students but above all teachers and scholars of Latin America, must throw off its narrowly professional timidity in approaching the Brazilian tragedy. The scholarly community acted with honor when it spoke up in April 1969 against the firing of almost a hundred Brazilian professors and more recently on behalf of a well-known historian. But, as scholars of Brazil, the academic community knows full well that labor, student, religious and many other sectors of society have been purged, often most severely, for *six consecutive years*. The April, 1970, meeting of the nation-wide, interdisciplinary Latin American Studies Association in Washington affords those who genuinely *know* the facts of the Brazilian tragedy a chance to call them to the attention of the nation at large.

Just a decade ago, the Brazilian people were buoyant with hope and optimism about their future. Now, in the tightening grip of tyranny, the nation is being mercilessly divided into two camps. Shall Brazil be plunged into a full-scale civil war? It is highly unlikely in the immediate future; indeed, may she be spared such a fate. But, if it should come to that, where will American public opinion stand? Where will Washington? Can we look forward to a new Vietnam on an incalculably larger scale? The answers may soon be forthcoming.

In February 1970, a group of writers, scholars, religious leaders and other friends of Brazil met in New York City and founded the American Committee for Information on Brazil. The Committee has just published a documentary dossier about the present crisis, entitled *Terror in Brazil*. Free copies are available from: American Committee for Information on Brazil, Post Office Box 1091, New York, N.Y. 10027.