TOP BRASS AND STATE POWER IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRAZILIAN POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND CULTURE

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THE TRIBUTE OF BLOOD: ARMY, HONOR, RACE, AND NATION IN BRAZIL, 1864–1945. By Peter M. Beattie. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001. Pp. 390, $18.95 paper.)
CULTURE WARS IN BRAZIL: THE FIRST VARGAS REGIME, 1930–1945. By Daryle Williams. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001. Pp. 346, $19.95 paper.)
BRAZILIAN PARTY POLITICS AND THE COUP OF 1964. By Ollie A. Johnson III. (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2001. Pp. 176, $55.00 cloth.)
BRAZIL IN THE 1990S: AN ECONOMY IN TRANSITION. By Renato Baumann, ed. (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave, 2002. Pp. 314. $75.00 cloth.)
BRAZIL'S SECOND CHANCE: EN ROUTE TOWARD THE FIRST WORLD. By Lincoln Gordon. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001. Pp. 242, $28.95 cloth.)
COMO ELES AGIAM, OS SUBTERRÂNEOS DA DITADURA MILITAR: ESPIONAGEM E POLÍCIA POLÍTICA. By Carlos Fico. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 2001. Pp. 269, R$33.00 paper.)

The recent presidential electoral victory of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, a former metalworker and labor leader, symbolically marks the end of a long chapter in Brazilian, and arguably Latin American, history and portends the beginning of a new one. Forty-two years ago the unexpected renunciation of Jânio Quadros, when he was only nine months into his term as president, unleashed an institutional crisis, an attempted military coup d'etat, and the ascension to the nation's highest political office of Vice President João Goulart, Getúlio Vargas's heir to the populist Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro. In the subsequent two and a half years, inflation soared, relations with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations soured over issues of Cold War anti-communism, and the Brazil-

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ian military, with a green light from Washington, shoved Goulart aside and took power. On 1 April 1964 the armed forces began twenty-one years of authoritarian rule and became the first in a series of military governments that swept across the Southern Cone: Argentina (1966), Peru (1968), Bolivia (1971), Uruguay (1973), Chile (1973), and Argentina (1976).

In the late 1970s a rejuvenated labor movement, concentrated in the industrial belt surrounding São Paulo, carried out a series of strikes led by Lula that challenged the military's regressive wage policies toward the poor and working classes. With the economy tumbling because of international oil prices and a burgeoning foreign debt, the Brazilian generals negotiated an exit strategy that granted amnesty to torturers and guaranteed a conservative transition to democratic rule. As Timothy J. Power has documented in *The Political Right in Postauthoritarian Brazil* (2000), the elites that dominated the political system during the military's years in power managed to maintain control in the decade and a half after General João Figueiredo unceremoniously left Brasília's presidential Palácio do Planalto by the back door in 1985. During the 1990s former Marxist sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso stabilized the economy while accelerating the denationalization of state-owned industries and intensifying Brazil's insertion in the world economy within the framework of neo-liberal policies that other heads of state also implemented throughout the continent. Whether the election of a working-class leader to the presidency will tip the balance of power toward Brazil's underclasses remains to be seen. Over the years, the majority sector in the leadership of Lula's left-leaning Workers' Party has moderated its political program and made overtures to entrepreneurs, evangelicals, and politicians across the center-left spectrum. Nevertheless, Lula's victory brings to the forefront a series of historical, economic, political, and cultural questions about the relationship of the Brazilian state to the nation's economy, culture, and political system. Most observers do not expect the military to intervene in the political process in the near future, as they have done so many times over the course of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, a comprehensive analysis of the construction of the state and the role of the armed forces in a democratic society remains an important subject for scholarly reflection.

Peter M. Beattie's *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864–1945* offers bold and innovative interpretations about the modernization process of the Brazilian army and its relationship to notions of race and nation-building. In the late nineteenth century, the imperial government constantly fretted about how to maintain a competent fighting force, especially during and after the Paraguayan War (1864–70). In a nation soiled by slavery, impressment dragged reluctant free men into the army. Although for some among the poorest of the poor, the military provided clothes, food, and a sense of modest upward mobility, most Brazilians dreaded induction. Beattie carefully charts the shift in policy and perception that reconfigured the public image of the military, especially after the emergence of a republic in 1889 and the subsequent campaign for universal conscription in the early twentieth century. In the process, the portrayal of the barracks shifted from that of a place of immodesty and impropriety to the poor man's home away from home. Politically, the disgruntled young officers' movement of the 1920s and 1930s that combined nationalism with democratic demands for regime reforms set the stage for Getúlio Vargas's overthrow of the Old Republic. It also echoed the 1889 military coup d'etat against the monarchy led by a cluster of generals and Republicans dissatisfied with a moribund system of governance. Strengthened by its international stature as participants in the Italian military front on the Allies' side during World War II, the armed forces continued as the ultimate power broker in the second half of the twentieth century. One of the many strengths of Beattie's book is the way he demonstrates how elite politicians and high-ranking officers re-imaged the military to present it as the "neutral" professional moderating force that represented the good of the nation as a whole. The generals who seized power in 1964 wholeheartedly embraced this conflation of the armed forces with the nation and rather than relinquishing power to civilian rule, divinely appointed themselves as the final political arbiters for over two decades.

The Tribute of Blood represents the best in how a new generation of historians of Brazil has linked the methods of social history to questions of power, politics, race, and the state. Daryle William's *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930–1945* examines some of these same issues in a carefully crafted and minutely documented history of the relationship between cultural production and the state during Vargas's first fifteen-year reign as president and dictator. In part, Vargas constructed his power base by strengthening the role of the state in economic and cultural affairs. In the midst of the worldwide Great Depression, the nationalist sentiment that he manipulated encouraged the state's takeover or control of key industries and sectors of the economy, an objective that he largely realized during his second term in office from 1950 to 1954. Vargas's ideologues also reshaped the concept of what it was to be a part of the Brazilian nation.

The search for "authentic" *brasilidade* at times pitted artists and intellectuals against the state bureaucrats who controlled the purse strings and offered their stamp of approval on some forms of cultural production while vetoing others. Although Vargas had final decision-making power in his position at the pinnacle of the strengthened state, Williams documents how the minister of education made day-to-day decisions about government patronage that could make or break an artist, writer, or musician. Cultural managers catalogued and codified an official history of the nation that enshrined certain people and places, while shoving others aside. Vargas did not invent government support for cultural production, but the dramatic growth of the state's intervention in all aspect of Brazilians' lives in the 1930s and 1940s led to a qualitative leap in official sponsorship for the arts. As part of this complex process, purveyors of cultural "correctness" pointed both to the future and the past to measure what was "authentically" Brazilian. Modernist architecture and colonial baroque churches, for example, simultaneously became symbols of the best in Brazilian applied and fine arts. They also represented the dual nature of an "emerging giant" that could draw from the rich cultural heritage of its colonial past while forging ahead into the industrialized modern world. The construction of Brasilia as the capital of the future in the late 1950s became a national metaphor for this vision that the Brazilian government had promoted during the 1930s and early 1940s.

Especially compelling in William's work is the analysis of the elite cultural arbiters' shifting attitudes toward race and their interpretation of the Brazilian past as manifestations of the "cultural war" between the traditional and modernizing currents. For the modernists, embracing a conception of the nation as the physical and cultural melding of its African, Indian, and European forbearers contradicted previously popular eugenics ideas that ultimately presented a pessimistic view of the prospects for the country's future. After all, so the defenders of eugenics had argued, how could Brazil catch up with Europe if it is still largely populated by "inferior" peoples of African and mixed-racial backgrounds? Yet portrayals of slavery such as the famous Debret watercolors of early nineteenth-century life in colonial and imperial Rio de Janeiro that were displayed in a 1940 Fine Arts Museum exhibition caused an ambiguous reaction among upper- and middle-class cultural consumers. Debret's graphic depictions of the brutality of slavery documented a system of exploitation that those who celebrated the racial democracy of the colonial era could not easily relegate to a benign past. The Brazilian government faced similar dilemmas in the battles between the traditionalists and the modernists in deciding how to represent Brazil abroad during the 1939 New York World's Fair. Government officials ultimately chose artists to decorate the Brazilian Pavilion that captured the images and quotidian life of "weathered mestizo fisherman, powerful black washerwomen, and brawny cowboys" (215). Although artistic representations that praised the indigenous and African roots of the Brazilian people and culture graced the crowd-pleasing architecturally innovative Brazilian Pavilion in New York, the tensions between traditional nineteenth-century, European-influenced academic paintings and modernists played out differently at the 1940 Exposição do Mundo Português. Brazilian artwork for this international celebration of eight hundred years of the Portuguese nation and its worldwide "civilizing mission" emphasized Brazil's Lusitanian heritage and downplayed the nation's other ethnic, racial, and national influences.

Cultural Wars in Brazil meticulously surveys the vast array of government-sponsored cultural production under Vargas and its lasting legacies. The Ministry of Education and Health offered resources and legitimating approval that at times did not even require political accords with the Vargas regime, as numerous openly pro-Communist Party artists and intellectuals received backing from the state. The tradition of censorship and state veto power over forms of cultural expression continued during the twenty-one years of the military regime (1964–85), and the state bureaucracy remained an essential arbiter of cultural expression through financing, official sanctioning, and the distribution of otherwise scarce resources. Williams's work offers other researchers a clear theoretical framework and an excellent model of how to uncover the documentation necessary to analyze the key debates surrounding the relationship of cultural production to the state over the last hundred years.

Ever since the publication of Thomas E. Skidmore's classic political study, *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 1967), historians and political scientists have studied the period leading up to João Goulart's tumultuous two-and-a-half year presidency to assess why his populist government collapsed and how the military assumed power. Scholars have argued that Goulart's difficulty in forging an on-going majority coalition in Congress weakened his ability to govern and implement the Basic Reforms that caused so much alarm among the economic and political elite, as well as the top brass in the armed forces. In *Brazilian Party Politics and the Coup of 1964,* Ollie Andrew Johnson III contributes to this discussion by asserting that all three major political parties—the right-wing União Democrática Nacional (UDN), the centrist Partido Social Democrático (PSD), and the left-wing populist Partido Trabalhista Brasileira (PTB)—were engaging in a political realignment that would have moved the Congress as a whole to the left. This realignment manifested itself in three important ways. First, during the period from 1945 to 1964, the UDN stagnated and the PSD's growth waned as the PTB gained popular electoral support. Secondly, internal progressive wings within all three parties strengthened a leftist nationalist agenda. Finally, a supra-party nationalist alliance offered the possibility of building a broad-based coalition required to implement social and economic reforms that included agrarian reform and serious restrictions on foreign capital investment. Had the military allowed the political system to continue playing by the established rules of the game, such a left coalition, Johnson argues, would have eventually won a solid majority in Congress and carried out Goulart's reform agenda. Thus, the main objective of the 1964 military coup d'etat was to abort these measures.

Rather than placing blame squarely on Goulart for not having more aggressively defended his rule, Johnson points the finger at nonleftist civilian politicians who allowed the military to come to power and relinquished democratic control of the government to authoritarian and arbitrary rule of law. Furthermore, Johnson argues that the classical portrayal of Goulart as an erratic politician overwhelmed by political events obscures his rational and calculated approach to politics. Ultimately, he insists that the Brazilian progressives "could have actively, and perhaps violently, defended the civilian regime in 1964" (6). However, the author does not answer the question as to why they chose not to do so. Was it merely because Goulart failed to offer leadership, fearing that an inevitable bloodbath would result from a civil war? Or was there something more profoundly lacking in Brazil at the time, namely widespread popular support for the viewpoint that the implementation of Basic Reforms would require an armed defense of the regime against the right? The crumbling of Goulart's support within sectors of the military that might have stood up to the right-wing's offensive, the president's decision to withdraw without a fight, and the overly optimistic assessment of the left-wing's hold on power all contributed to a paralysis of Goulart's reform forces in the immediate aftermath of the March 31 coup d'etat. One has to wonder how deep the popular sentiment for Goulart actually had been. Why was the left so unprepared to resist the coup even without Goulart's leadership? Johnson, in analyzing the political and party processes between 1945 and 1964, skirts these questions. That said, his analysis of long-term party and ideological realignment remains an important contribution to the scholarly pursuit of untangling the complicated political dynamics surrounding the 1964 military takeover.

Lincoln Gordon, U.S. ambassador to Brazil from 1961 to 1966 and then assistant secretary for inter-American affairs from 1966 to 1968, offers another interpretation of the 1964 military coup in *Brazil's Second Chance: En Route toward the First World.* Although this work is primarily an economic treatise based on an optimistic assessment of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's policies and the potential for Brazil to become a world-class economic and political powerhouse, one cannot avoid examining his assessment of the events surrounding the generals' rise to power.

Immediately after the armed forces seized control of the state in 1964, a widespread assumption developed in Brazil and in some quarters abroad that the Johnson administration was covertly involved in supporting the military overthrow of Goulart. Michael R. Beschloss's edited compilation of the Johnson tapes *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963–1964* (Simon and Schuster, 1997) publishes a conversation of 3 April 1964 between Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Mann and the president about the recent military coup in Brazil that reinforces this perception. In referring to the successful coup d'etat, Mann comments to the president, "I think that's the most important thing that's happened in the hemisphere in three years." To which Johnson responds, "I hope they give us *some* credit, instead of hell" (306). During the 1966 Senate confirmation hearings for his appointment as the new Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Gordon adamantly refused to take any credit for U.S. involvement in the planning of the military coup d'etat. In 1977 Phyllis Parker, a graduate student at the University of Texas working on recently declassified documents at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, broke the story that Washington had prepared a contingency plan to back the coup-makers should their military offensive against the Goulart government flounder. In *Brazil's Second Chance* Gordon once again claims innocence and rebuts the arguments put forth in Parker's book *Brazil and the Quiet Intervention, 1964* (University of Texas Press, 1979) and subsequently in Ruth Leacock's *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961–69* (Kent State University Press, 1990).

Tucked in the middle of Gordon's extensive analysis of Brazil's future potential is a twelve-page section entitled "Addendum: The United States and the 1964 Coup d'Etat," which responds to his critics who have alleged that the U.S. government manipulated economic and aid policies to destabilize Goulart, joined with Brazilian plotters in detailed coup planning, and participated directly in the 31 March 1964 overthrow of Goulart. In his account of events, Gordon readily admits, "as acknowledged publicly many years ago, I also supported the proposal to provide some financial assistance through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to congressional candidates friendly to the United States" (62–63). However, Gordon emphatically states, "Contrary to many public allegations, the U.S. government did not then seek to weaken the Goulart regime by putting it under economic pressure." To back this assertion, he cites a 21 August 1963 memo that in part called for "rapid action on aid projects where they can be turned to our political advantage" (63). One wonders how funneling money to oppositional candidates and approving certain aid projects that favored U.S. objectives constitutes non-intervention in Brazilian political affairs. Gordon evidently sees no problem in his policies toward the coup makers as he published in entirety an exchange of telegrams with the State Department that in which the U.S. government unabashedly offered gas, oil, and arms to the anti-Goulart forces (64–65). His argument turns on whether or not the Brazilian military was aware of U.S. preparations to back the coup-makers should they need any assistance. Assuming Brazil's top brass was not aware of Gordon's efforts on behalf of the coup makers, one still wonders how Gordon's addendum becomes a defense for benign policies by Washington. In the late 1960s and early 1970s when the issue of the torture of political prisoners took on international dimensions, representatives of the U.S. government cynically insisted that anything other than quiet, behind-the-scenes pressure would be inappropriate and an interference in Brazilian internal affairs. To his credit, Gordon later signed a petition circulated by U.S. academics that denounced the excesses of the military regime after the enactment of Institutional Act Number 5 in December 1968. This, however, seems to be small penance for someone who worked so hard, as he carefully documents in his book, to give a mantle of legitimacy to the regime after it had come to power.

Gordon argues that President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's economic stabilization policies of the 1990s and the deepening integration of Brazil into the world economy poise the country to assume a greater role in the world economy and in international affairs. The underlying supposition is that the nation missed the chance to become an equal player with Europe and the United States as an industrializing democracy in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Although Brazil made economic gains under the military, which Gordon insists one must disassociate from any excesses in the violation of human rights, the country's economy stagnated during the "lost decade" of the 1980s with a burgeoning foreign debt and runaway inflation. Published a year before the 2002 presidential elections, the book is also an appeal for continuity. Gordon points to price stability and confidence in democratic institutions as the bedrock upon which a new prosperity can be build. He recognizes that there is a continued concentration of poverty in the Northeast, but offers official government data to show a slight income gain for the poorest sectors of society. All in all, Gordon is optimistic, giving Brazil a fifty-fifty chance of making a breakthrough, if only "volatile" public opinion avoids "charismatic individual candidates of dubious qualifications for the presidency" à la Fernando Collor and "better qualified names" take over the reigns of government to continue "serious reform efforts in education, health care and market practices" (228). One wonders what Gordon's current assessment of Brazil now is, given the turn in the political fortunes of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's anointed successor and the new political agenda of a left-leaning government.

Like *Brazil's Second Chance*, Renato Baumann's edited collection, *Brazil in the 1990s: An Economy in Transition*, examines Fernando Henrique Cardoso's reform policies. The volume, the product of a study by the

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), brought together leading Brazilian economists to analyze and evaluate the social and economic changes brought about by low inflation rates, broader access to imported goods, and reduced state interference in the economy. However, the compilation's overall conclusions are more cautionary than those of Gordon: "despite some positive results, the general context remains clearly unsatisfactory, especially with regard to Brazil's social indicators and its capacity to compete in an international market operating with new ground rules" (ix). Although the collection of articles written by economists and social scientists focuses on an analysis of macroeconomic trends and structural reforms, the findings of this aggregate study perhaps explain how a working-class leader without a secondary school education could defeat a former Senator and Cabinet Minister with a Ph.D. in economics from Cornell University in the 2002 elections. In part, the presidential race became a referendum for the last eight years of government policies, and the volume's conclusions mirror the everyday knowledge of the person on the street: "stabilization in the nineties has provided undeniable gains for lower-income groups by diminishing the volatility of their earnings. However, gains have been even greater for groups with higher income and/or better qualifications" (xii). In short, there has been "no improvement in the structure of income distribution" (xii). The long-term results of the dismantling of the state as constructed by Vargas and an emphasis on neo-liberal economic reforms that encourage stiff competition on the international market still remain open-ended questions. This collection of articles, rich in charts, tables, and statistical analysis, will provide those interested in the details of economic policy under Fernando Henrique Cardoso's eight-year administration ample data to assess the successes and failures of his attempts to restructure the Brazilian economy.

While social scientists in recent years have focused on understanding the implications of Brazil's economic transformations of the last decade, historians have taken advantage of the access to the once-closed archives of the military dictatorship to decipher the inner functioning of the institutions of repression of the 1960s and 1970s. One such study, *Como eles agiam, os subterrâneos da ditadura militar: espionagem e polícia politíca*, is the result of painstaking research by Carlos Fico, an expert on the Brazilian military regime. Relying on the archives of the Divisão de Segurança e Informações (DSI) of the Ministry of Justice that are currently in the National Archive in Rio de Janeiro, the author examines the three institutions created after 1964 to combat "subversion": the Sistema Nacional de Informaçoes, the government's mechanism for spying on the population; the Sistema de Segurança Interna, responsible for arbitrary arrests, torture, and executions; and the Comissão

Geral de Investigaçoes, mandated to carry out summary investigations of those charged with corruption. The title of the book, roughly translated as "how they operate," was inspired by a 1974 DSI document of the Ministry of Education and Culture leaked to the press that purported to explain how the international communist movement operated in Brazil. Written in an exaggerated and distorted language, the document motivated Fico to examine the discourse and ideology of the military regime. An earlier volume, *Reinventando o otimismo; ditadura, propaganda e imaginário social no Brazil* (Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1997), is a masterful analysis of the mechanisms employed by the governments of Generals Médici (1969–74) and Geisel (1974–79) to conflate the dictatorship with nationalism and the greatness of Brazil. In *Como eles agiam* Carlos Fico uses the documents of the dictatorship to turn the tables and explain "how *they* operated." As the author warns his reader in the introduction, the volume contains no shocking revelations about prominent personalities, and privacy restrictions obliged Fico to conceal the identity of those mentioned in the documents. Nevertheless *Como eles agiam* lays out the systematic means by which the military constructed a network of surveillance and control designed to identify, detain, and if necessary destroy opponents of the regime. Moreover, this documentation, along with the files of the Delegacias de Ordem e Política Social (DOPS) deposited in state archives and available to researchers, is probably only a small portion of the information collected by the multiple security agencies that proliferated under the generals' rule. Most of that material may never be available for review by historians, which makes a careful reading of the existent documentation all the more important. The records analyzed in this work stand on their own and provide a chilling portrayal of how the military ran its twenty-one-year long operation.

Como eles agiam in many ways is a guidebook for scholars trying to penetrate the military's repressive apparatus. The author takes the reader through the political process that led to the formation of the Serviço Nacional de Informações (SNI) immediately after the generals came to power in 1964 and the consolidation of legislation thereafter, especially the National Security Law in 1967 that codified what the regime considered to be internal threats to its security. These legal instruments provided the cloak of legitimacy over a complex system that sought to monitor those within the government, as well as its opponents, both those who challenged the regime through legal means and those who resorted to armed struggle in an attempt to topple the dictatorship. Fico offers a detailed description of the multiple structures designed to control the population and gives the reader a glimpse into the surrealistic mentality of a bureaucracy that engaged in violence and torture against opponents while stamping their paperwork in red ink with the slogan: "the Revolution of 64 is irreversible and will consolidate democracy in Brazil." The author's close reading of the documents also reveals how at times subversive charges against citizens had little to do with leftist ideology but rather became a means to take petty revenge on partisan rivals in local political disputes. Moreover, the much touted early objective of the "Revolution of 1964," namely to weed out graft and corruption allegedly pervasive during the Goulart government, faded into the background as the special commissions designated to make summary judgments failed to gather sufficient documentation of "illicit enrichment" to pull together convincing cases. This x-ray of the extensive apparatus of political surveillance and repression by the military regimes reveals how far the generals had taken the Brazilian state in a path away from democracy. The slow-motion transition to civilian rule engineered by the generals in the late 1970s and early 1980s avoided truth commissions and public reconciliation. Instead, scholars and human rights activists have had to untangle the layers of obfuscation shrouding the past by using those documents in the public domain in order to make complete sense of the system that squashed democracy for twenty-one years.

The military that relinquished its control over the state in the 1980s has given no indication that it intends to reassert itself as a moderating power among conflicting sectors of civil society. Unlike the uncertain political times of the early 1960s, leading entrepreneurs are predicting that a victory of the left in the presidential race will not disrupt the overall policies, directions, and economic agenda set forth over the last decade. The Workers Party has not threatened to renege on its financial obligations to the International Monetary Fund in spite of the fact that debt service payments remit significant sums to international lending institutions. Yet twentieth-century Brazilian political history has always been full of surprises, and many unpredictable turn of events are likely in the not so distant future.