

- 3 Wesson and Fleischer, "The Authoritarian-Democratic Background," p. 19.
- 4 Oliveira S. Ferreira, "Uma Caracterização do Sistema," *O Estado de São Paulo* (17 and 24 October 1965), cited by Flechtner, *Brazil since 1964*, p. 9.
- 5 Philippe C. Schmitter, *Interest Conflict and Political Change in Brazil* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1971), p. 378.
- 6 Flechtner, *Brazil since 1964*, p. xii.
- 7 Cited in Wesson and Fleischer, "The Authoritarian-Democratic Background," p. 25.
- 8 Wesson and Fleischer, "The Authoritarian-Democratic Background," p. 27.
- 9 See the Archdiocese of São Paulo, *Torture in Brazil, 1964–1979*, 2d ed., translated by Jaime Wright (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). Based on the project, "Brazil, Never Again," more than 2,700 pages of testimony documenting close to 300 forms of torture employed during the military dictatorship.

Rehearsal for the Coup

Araken Tavora

When left-leaning Vice President João Goulart rose to the presidency after the abrupt resignation of Janio Quadros in 1961, the political atmosphere became more polarized than ever. Goulart, the heir to his mentor Getúlio Vargas's Labor Party, attempted to dislodge from power the archconservatives in the armed forces, as well as in state and local governments. In turn, Goulart's opponents, led by the fiery governor of Guanabara, Carlos Lacerda—a communist as a youth, but a convert to the anticommunist cause by the late 1950s—maneuvered to block Goulart's controversial (but legal) moves. Newspapers screamed charges and countercharges in their headlines; strikes broke out almost daily. This story of the growing crisis is told by a twenty-eight-year reporter for *Manchete* magazine and Lacerda's *Tribuna da Imprensa*, Araken Tavora.

The first formal warning came on June 5, 1962: in a letter to War Minister General Segadas Viana, the commander of the Fourth Military Region covering the State of Minas Gerais, General Rafael Souza Aguiar denounced increasing communist infiltration among the troops under his command. But no one listened to him. The war minister declared that the army was not involved in politics. Yet, at the same time, leftist General Osívino Ferreira Alves, Goulart-appointed commander of the First Army, was trying to persuade trade unions to force Congress to name Foreign Minister San Tiago Dantas as the new prime minister. Congress, however, did not yield to the pressure: an old labor politician and former schoolteacher, José Brochado da Rocha, was elected.

In the first half of July, another political crisis developed. In a cabinet shuffle, new military ministers were appointed: for the War Ministry the choice fell on a seasoned general known for his democratic convictions. The name: Nelson de Mello, an army brigadier general who after his return from World War II had played an important role in the military

coup that ousted dictator Getúlio Vargas in 1945, and who was to play the same part in the revolution that was to oust João Goulart. [To counter de Mello's choice] Goulart appointed a leftist admiral, Araújo Susano, as navy minister. Similarly, in the air force, Reinaldo de Carvalho, a lieutenant general loosely identified with Goulart, was appointed. Susano's appointment only increased the crisis, and eleven admirals immediately resigned. Uneasiness grew in the air force, too. For his turn, War Minister Nelson de Mello asked the businessmen of Brazil to get together and join in the fight against the growing communist threat.

These events brought the political tension throughout the country to a new peak. Then, the intention of Goulart's government became known: a coup was being carefully planned. Goulart intended to call up the armed forces to "restore peace," to take over the State of Guanabara, arrest conservative Carlos Lacerda, and then establish himself as dictator. Goulart's cabinet met twice to discuss military intervention in Guanabara, both times in the face of strong resistance on the part of the war minister. General de Mello finally prevailed, and the crisis cooled down.

The Brazilian trade unions then started a nationwide campaign to force Congress to abolish the parliamentary regime and give back full power to João Goulart, who claimed to be fettered by parliamentarism, a system, said he, "that had been imposed on the country by a group of dissatisfied military men and reactionaries." The situation deteriorated rapidly during August, becoming worse by mid-September when the Military Club, whose members are all army officers, refused to pay homage to João Goulart. The navy plunged into a new crisis precipitated by the appointment of leftist Admiral Cândido Aragão as commander in chief of the marines, and the dismissal of some admirals and naval officers. In the army, uneasiness also grew as some notorious leftist officers were promoted by the president, and the war minister's opposition to João Goulart was brought out into the open. On September 14, the cabinet fell when the president tried to oust War Minister Nelson de Mello, whose democratic convictions constituted a barrier to his dictatorial aims.

From then on, the army chiefs became convinced that President Goulart's true objectives were to clear the way for communism and dictatorship. His tactics included the elimination of all democrats from key positions in the administration and the stimulation of subversion. Based on

these convictions, six army generals, including Nelson de Mello, Uíhãa Cintra, Alves Bastros, Mourão Filho, and Dario Coelho, as well as Admiral Sylvio Heck and Air Force General Grum Moss, led by General of the Army Oswaldo Corderio de Farias, began to plan an armed coup to oust President João Goulart and save Brazil from what was now clearly taking shape—an immense communist conspiracy supported by the federal government.

While the communists increased their control of key posts in the administration, and other subversive organizations (such as the illegal General Command of Workers, which united all communist-ruled trade unions in the country to carry out politically inspired strikes) were created to spur unrest, the planners of the revolution redoubled their activity within the armed forces. Goulart's opponents found new receptivity for their ideas in the country's most responsible circles, and in the army, navy, and air force, since the majority of the military personnel was becoming increasingly convinced that if the president were not stopped in time, Brazil would inevitably fall into the hands of communism.

The U.S. blockade of Cuba in October 1962 was to show the extent of communist infiltration in the armed forces. Alleging the need for a change in key posts of the ground forces, the government removed democratic officers from command of the most important and well-equipped units throughout the country, and substituted for them notorious leftist officers.

In December, the new minister of war, General of the Army Amaury Krueel, revealed that a coup against democracy was being prepared in Brazil. Politically inspired strikes were declared in the country's most important centers as a communist response to the war minister's warning. In the State of Guanabara, tension mounted daily. There were indications that the federal government was about to take over the state, and Guanabara's Governor Carlos Lacerda announced that he would only leave the palace as a dead man.

The crisis cooled when War Minister General Amaury Krueel sent a message to the governor: "Put all the agitators in jail and you may count on my full support."

The return to a presidential form of government after a plebiscite on January 6, 1963, led automatically to the fall of the cabinet. When the new cabinet was formed, the former military ministers kept their posts, as did all the leftist officers who had previously been appointed to

key military posts. As a result, the unrest in the navy ranks increased. General Osirio Alves and Admiral Cândido Aragão were bitterly criticized for knowingly permitting lack of discipline and communist infiltration in the troops.

The heaviest opposition to Goulart came from Guanabara and São Paulo, whose governors were again threatened with federal intervention. The movement to depose Goulart gathered force as more political and military figures reluctantly agreed that revolution was the only solution. And in Congress, even the Social Democratic Party, the traditional ally of Goulart's Labor Party, began visibly to divorce itself from the government.

The president then started a new move: the country needed structural reforms. Some basic reforms, especially land and tax reforms, were announced. But the measures—many of them unconstitutional—through which such reforms would be put into effect were clearly designed to appeal to the ignorant masses rather than to accomplish anything. At that time, there was a visible deterioration in Brazil's economic and financial situation. The cost of living increased more than 70 percent, while the rate of inflation neared 6 percent monthly. The country faced innumerable and serious problems, of which rising inflation and poverty were the main issues.

The Military Regime

Antonio Pedro Tota

The political-military coup d'état of March 1964 was the result of several previous attempts. This time, the conspirators triumphed because they received important help from the urban middle classes and large portions of the business sector. The coup implanted a military government that consolidated itself in power. In December 1968, because of what amounted to a coup within the military government itself, a new authoritarian state was born, taking control of all aspects of Brazilian life by means of the repression of democratic freedoms and the neutralization of potential opposition. Antonio Pedro Tota, a professor of history at São Paulo's Catholic University and author of a popular textbook on Brazilian history, offers an analysis from the perspective of one who lived through the military period.

With the ouster of João Goulart, the presidency was taken over by the then-president of the Chamber of Deputies, Ranieri Mazzilli. In reality, power was exercised by the Supreme Revolutionary Command, composed of officers from the three military branches: General Arthur da Costa e Silva, Admiral Augusto Rademaker, and Brigadier General Francisco de Mello. These military men were responsible for the Additional Act #1 (AI-1) that canceled direct elections of the presidency, substituting, in its place, indirect elections. It was on the basis of AI-1 that the National Congress elected Marshal Castello Branco, one of the most important military leaders involved in the movement that overthrew Goulart. The military men who took power belonged to at least two distinct factions, which jockeyed for leadership of the movement. The first were the Castelistas, the so-called Sorbonne group, influenced by General Golbery do Couto e Silva, and dedicated to combating through repression communism, the Brazilian Labor Party, and the Left. They also favored modernizing the national economy. The second were the