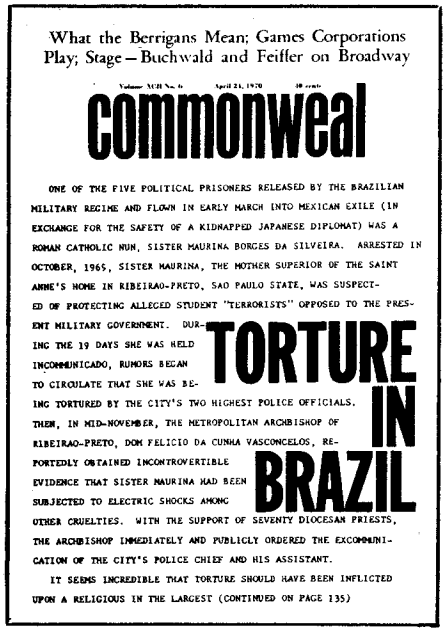

What the Berrigans Mean; Games Corporations Play; Stage—Buchwald and Feiffer on Broadway

commonweal

ONE OF THE FIVE POLITICAL PRISONERS RELEASED BY THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY REGIME AND FLOWN IN EARLY MARCH INTO MEXICAN EXILE (IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SAFETY OF A KIDNAPPED JAPANESE DIPLOMAT) WAS A ROMAN CATHOLIC NUN, SISTER MAURINA BORGES DA SILVEIRA. ARRESTED IN OCTOBER, 1965, SISTER MAURINA, THE MOTHER SUPERIOR OF THE SAINT ANNE'S HOME IN RIBEIRAO-PRETO, SAO PAULO STATE, WAS SUSPECTED OF PROTECTING ALLEGED STUDENT "TERRORISTS" OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT. DURING THE 19 DAYS SHE WAS HELD INCOMMUNICADO, RUMORS BEGAN TO CIRCULATE THAT SHE WAS BEING TORTURED BY THE CITY'S TWO HIGHEST POLICE OFFICIALS. THEN, IN MID-NOVEMBER, THE METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF RIBEIRAO-PRETO, DOM FELICIO DA CUNHA VASCONCELOS, REPORTEDLY OBTAINED INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE THAT SISTER MAURINA HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO ELECTRIC SHOCKS AMONG OTHER CRUELTIES. WITH THE SUPPORT OF SEVENTY DIOCESAN PRIESTS, THE ARCHBISHOP IMMEDIATELY AND PUBLICLY ORDERED THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF THE CITY'S POLICE CHIEF AND HIS ASSISTANT.

TORTURE IN BRAZIL

IT SEEMS INCREDIBLE THAT TORTURE SHOULD HAVE BEEN INFLICTED UPON A RELIGIOUS IN THE LARGEST (CONTINUED ON PAGE 135)

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

'Torture in Brazil'

Baltimore, Md.

To the Editors: Ralph della Cava, in his article on "Torture in Brazil" [April 24], charges me with being the "architect" of an alleged U.S. Government policy of complicity with torture and fascist militarization in Brazil. There is nothing in the historical record or in my own attitudes to justify this charge.

Mr. della Cava himself indicates (page 136) that most observers date the frequent use of torture as an instrument of repression in Brazil from December, 1968. My assignment as Ambassador to Brazil ended in early 1966, and my participation as Assistant Secretary of State in official American policy-making toward Latin America ended in June, 1967.

The only subsequent occasion when my advice was sought by the U.S. Government was in December, 1968, when the outgoing Johnson Administration was considering its reaction to the Fifth Institutional Act promulgated by then Brazilian President Costa e Silva. I considered that Act an unnecessary and arbitrary reversal of the Brazilian Government's announced intention to restore full constitutional processes. I recommended that the outgoing U.S. Administration not carry out aid allocations or other actions which could be construed as an endorsement of the Fifth Institutional Act or of arbitrary Brazilian measures taken under its color. Since late 1968, I have not been asked to advise on policy toward Latin America in general or Brazil in particular.

During the period before mid-1967, no cases of torture were brought to my attention. I would have condemned them if they had been. In the spring of 1969, I joined publicly with other academic specialists on Latin America in a telegram to Costa e Silva, protesting against arbitrary actions against professors, students, and others.

Reverting to the events of April 1964, the published hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (February, 1966) set forth at length why I welcomed the ouster of Goulart. It was basically because all the evidence pointed to his intention to replace the 1946 Constitution by a populist dictatorship in the mold of Vargas in Brazil in the 1930's or Peron in Argentina in the 1940's. My influence was exerted before the 1964 coup toward strengthening the constitutional framework and toward preventing anti-Americanism from becoming an issue in the Brazilian domestic political crisis. After the coup it was exerted, with some apparent success in the early stages, toward the restoration of traditional constitutional liberties and practices.

The telegram sent on April 2 by President Johnson on my recommendation was not to the "new regime," but to the civilian Ranieri Mazzilli, Speaker of the lower House and next in line as interim President under the 1946 Constitution. Mazzilli had been sworn in by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court after Goulart's flight from Brasilia and the formal declaration of a vacancy in the Presidency by the President of the Senate. The message was designed to emphasize the importance of the Brazilian Congress as the embodiment of constitutional legitimacy.

It was a full week later, on April 9, that the power of the "hardliners" was demonstrated through the promulgation by the three military ministers of the first so-called "Institutional Act." That measure claimed a legitimate revolutionary right to alter the Constitution and assumed arbitrary powers for a two-month period for the cancellation of political rights of individuals, including members of Congress.

I considered this measure a monstrous departure from basic democratic principle, and gave some thought to a symbolic withdrawal to Washington. I decided against such action (a) because by then it was clear that Castello Branco would soon be elected by Congress to fill out the rest of the original Quadros presidential term (this action being consistent with the 1946 Constitution), and he was known to be a moderate and constitutionalist, and (b) because there was no indication that a symbolic withdrawal would constructively influence the course of events. During the next few weeks, I urged the Justice Minister to establish some kind of equitable procedure for individual cases under the Institutional Act and urged on President Castello Branco the absolute minimum use of its arbitrary authority.

In fact, the Act was applied only against a few hundred individuals during its original sixty-day term. Thereafter, from June, 1964 until October, 1965, the press was entirely free, the Congress was functioning without rubber-stamping governmental proposals, preparations were under way for genuine popular elections of governors in eleven states and for many local officials, and the general atmosphere was not one of repression. Most of the

purges referred to by Mr. della Cava occurred much later, after I had left Brazil.

Finally, Mr. della Cava attributes to me *in quotation marks* a phrase which I do not recognize at all. Perhaps it is a garbled version of my speech to the Brazilian National War College on May 5, 1964. I mentioned four developments during the previous year encouraging to the cause of freedom in the world: the Sino-Soviet dispute; large-scale Soviet wheat purchases; the successful presidential elections in Venezuela; the Brazilian revolution. I said that the Brazilian revolution was probably the most important of these four—an event which "may well take its place alongside the initiation of the Marshall Plan, the ending of the Berlin blockade, the defeat of Communist aggression in Korea, and the solution of the Cuban-missile base crisis as one of the critical points of inflection in mid-twentieth century world history."

Subsequent history has obviously not borne out that statement in any positive sense. From the negative point of view, I then believed (and still believe) that had Goulart succeeded in becoming a populist dictator, he would have been pushed aside promptly by one of his more able and more radical allies, as General Naguib had been displaced in Egypt by Colonel Nasser. There were several candidates who openly spoke of themselves as would-be "Fidel Castros" of Brazil. Given the size and location of Brazil, such a course of events—evidently hypothetical, but not implausible—might have made all of South America an area of left-wing totalitarian regimes.

Since moving to Baltimore in mid-1967, I have not followed events in Brazil closely. As I have written elsewhere, I consider my greatest failure as Ambassador my inability in 1965 and 1966 to persuade President Castello Branco to undertake the building of a new kind of political infra-structure, for which he had an unrivaled opportunity. The recent depressing cycle of growing urban terrorism and arbitrary

(Continued on page 398)

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TAKING FR. BERRIGAN SERIOUSLY

A quarter of a century has passed since the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To save American lives. On the anniversaries of those two shameful days American planes will most likely be dropping bombs on Asians. Again, to save American lives.

Twenty-five years ago, *Commonweal* wrote:

"For our war, for our purposes, to save American lives we have reached the point where we say that anything goes. That is what the Germans said at the beginning of the war."

What can we write today?

America has learned to live with the bomb, and at most to worry, only occasionally, if we are spending too much on its care and feeding. Will America learn to live with its Asian wars, its garrisons semi-permanently posted around the edges of the empire? There will be some limits to the enterprise, of course: "costs" must be kept to such-and-such number of American lives and an unspecified number of Oriental human beings; the President can only invade neutral countries for up to 60 days without consulting Congress; puppet governments interested in bombing raids on neighboring territories must apply to the Pentagon at least two weeks in advance; all massacres should be reported promptly. After that, no questions answered.

There are a sizable number of Americans who are not resigned to this destiny for the country they love. They are the troublemakers who continue to spread the rumor that there is a war being waged by the United States in Southeast Asia and that this war is horrible, futile, and unjust.

These foolhardy souls are loosely associated in what is called the "peace movement," though *movements* might be a more accurate term, since aims and methods vary widely. Between now and November, the peace movement will be the subject of much speculation and the object of much advice. The fire lit by the Cambodian invasion smolders and promises to flare up with the opening of the school year and the Congressional elections. The direction of the movement remains undetermined, however, at the same time that the combination of Mr. Agnew and the hard hats has provoked fears of "backlash."

Some advice is obvious, e.g., defiling the American flag or offending people's sexual proprieties is not the best opening gambit for persuading

creeds and the societies, even the very civilizations that produced them. They cannot be destroyed altogether because they represent the substance of faith and the only reality. They are what we find again when the ruins are cleared away."

EXCHANGE

(Continued from page 379)

repression is completely out of keeping with the magnificent Brazilian tradition of respect for human dignity and of non-violence even in political crisis. I can only hope for an early restoration of that tradition and its spread elsewhere in Latin America, not excluding Cuba.

LINCOLN GORDON
President,
The Johns Hopkins University

REPLY

1. Dr. Gordon assures us that he would have condemned torture had he only known about it. "During the period before mid-1967," he writes, "no cases of torture were brought to my attention."

In the six months immediately following the military coup of 1 April 1964, the public record alone fully documented about two dozen cases of torture. Among the victims were a Roman Catholic priest, university student leaders, peasant and trade-union militants. Some were Marxists, others Communists; many were practicing Roman Catholics.

Rio de Janeiro's opposition newspapers, the *Correio de Manha* and *Última Hora,* began to denounce torture and other military acts of terrorism as early as one week after the military coup. So, too, did the pro-government daily, *Jornal do Brasil,* after one of its reporters was beaten in Pernambuco state.

Neither Communists nor Marxists led the press crusade against torture. Among the dozen intellectuals and writers who did were: Alceu Amoroso Lima, Brazilian Catholicism's "Jacques Maritain," and Márcio Moreira Alves, journalist and congressman, whose articles about torture appeared repeatedly during 1964.

By September 1964, the public outcry against torture proved such a scandal to the regime that President-General H. Castello Branco had to dispatch his highest military aide to Pernambuco to conduct an official investigation of mounting charges of torture. Of course, the aide's report was a whitewash. But the public wasn't fooled. In early December, a leading (conservative) political pundit publicly urged that the International Red Cross impartially examine new charges stemming from the regime's recent deposition of the governor and other elected officials of Goiás State.

It is inconceivable that these public and official reports did not reach the ambassador or his staff. On what basis then *did* the Rio Embassy formulate U.S. policy in respect to torture, to say nothing of the decisions that led to monumental increases in U.S. aid to Brazil in 1964, 1965 and 1966?

2. Dr. Gordon now regrets his failure to halt the systematic reversal since 1964 of "the magnificent Brazilian tradition of respect for human dignity and of non-violence. . ."

Let us ask, however, what steps the ambassador actually took to sustain that "magnificent tradition" during his stewardship.

A) On 9 April 1964, the ruling military junta decreed the first Institutional Act (IA1) which deprived about 150 persons of their political rights for ten years (rights to vote, run for office and hold office) and revoked the mandates (cassacáo) of elected officials. These were not just "any" 150 citizens, but included two former Presidents, leading intellectuals (such as the noted economist, Celso Furtado, whom Yale subsequently hired), and about 50 congressmen, half of whom (according to Dr. Gordon's February 1966 testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee) were neither Communists, nor reformers, but admittedly "dubious cases."

In his letter, Dr. Gordon now qualifies IA1 as a "monstrous departure from basic democratic principle." Yet less than a month after its decree—on 5 May 1964—Dr. Gordon described the military coup (before the Brazilian National War College) as one of the "four developments during the previous year encouraging the cause of freedom in the world."* More pertinent, however, is that his public utterance—of momentous importance to the legitimation of the military takeover—contained *not a single word of criticism.*

B) In his letter, Dr. Gordon fails to clarify that the abrogation of political rights and electoral mandates of additional citizens continued under Castello Branco as late as four months after the empowering provision of IA1 *had already expired*, while other equally unconstitutional provisions of IA1 remained in force for 90 days, 6 months and 8 months. Thus, the impression Dr. Gordon has conveyed of a return to "normalcy" during the period from June 1964 until October 1965 is patently incorrect.

Moreover, by abruptly ending his review of events in October 1965 and then referring (in the next sentence) to the purges after December 1968, Dr. Gordon may have inadvertently suggested to some readers that his remaining months as ambassador were uneventful. The contrary is true.

In October 1965, the military's handpicked candidates were resoundingly defeated in four important gubernatorial races. In retaliation, the regime decreed the second Institutional Act. IA2 not only renewed the arbitrary power to abrogate political rights and electoral mandates, but also abolished *all existing political parties.*

Four months later, Dr. Gordon so spiritedly defended the accomplishments of the regime before the U.S. Senate, that Senator Wayne Morse openly reproached Dr. Gordon for "window-dressing" the deteriorating political crisis.

C) From early 1966 until mid-1967, Dr. Gordon held the responsible post of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. During this period, the regime abrogated, in six separate purges, the political rights and electoral mandates of another 149; a government party was established whose members were required (by the decree of 19 July 1966) to vote for government proposals or face expulsion and loss of mandate; indirect elections, applied earlier to the presidency, were now also made obligatory at the state level.

What steps were taken to enhance Brazil's "magnificent tradition of respect for human dignity" during this period? Combined U.S. military and economic aid more than doubled from $152.3 million in 1963 to $367.6 in 1966.

3. Some final remarks:

The first concerns Dr. Gordon's pledge that he "would have" condemned torture prior to mid-year 1967 (had he known about it) and the possible impression he creates that he just may have done so two years later. But the protest of American academicians in 1969 was directed chiefly against the arbitrary "retirement" of Brazilian university professors. It certainly did not refer to torture which, frankly speaking, Dr. Gordon has not yet condemned straightforwardly.

There is no space to discuss the question of Goulart's *intentions* and Brazil's situation in 1964. But, even if we accept unquestioningly Dr. Gordon's view of it, we can have no doubt about his own choice in the matter: in order to avoid a left-wing dictatorship, he urged (*and continued to urge*) moral and material support of a right-wing dictatorship. When that regime followed the course of repression and terror right-wing regimes are wont to follow, Dr. Gordon expresses shock; regrets his helplessness before the trend of events; assigns culpability to the failures of a deceased leader of the Brazilian military; and disclaims all personal responsibility for the regrettable outcome. If, for a moment, Brazil were Cuba and the American ambassador's role there were played by a Russian, foreign policy-makers of Dr. Gordon's persuasion would probably have spared not a word of outrage, indignation and condemnation of complicity. Dr. Gordon's letter should be read as a model of what ails U.S. foreign policy. RALPH DELLA CAVA

*The full text of the remark I attributed to Dr. Gordon is as follows: "Of the military coup's significance Lincoln Gordon, U.S. ambassador to Brazil, says 'Future historians may well record the Brazilian revolution as the single most decisive victory for freedom in the mid-20th century.' "

It was apparently made in a private interview to the respected Senior Editor of the Reader's Digest, Clarence W. Hall, who quoted it in his article in that magazine, entitled "The Country That Saved Itself" (November 1964), pp. 135-158, see p. 137.

Obviously, the spirit of this remark and that of Dr. Gordon's speech before the War College are identical.