

## “DEFICIENT EDUCATION,” “ACADEMIC QUESTIONS,” AND STUDENT MOVEMENTS: *Universities and the Politics of the Everyday in Brazil’s Military Dictatorship, 1969–1979*

As the globally eventful year of 1968 drew to a close, Brazilian university students living in what was then a four-year-old dictatorship faced two new challenges that would profoundly alter student politics and resistance on campuses in the coming decade. The more infamous was Ato Institucional 5 (Institutional Act No. 5, or AI-5), which Brazil’s military regime decreed on December 13, 1968 (a Friday). History and historiography have rightfully acknowledged AI-5 as ushering in the most repressive and authoritarian phase of Brazil’s military dictatorship, with the regime closing the national congress and dramatically escalating state-sponsored violence and political silencing in ways that exponentially intensified earlier forms of repression and censorship.<sup>1</sup>

Less acknowledged, but just as important for higher education and students, was the regime’s Reforma Universitária, issued just two weeks before AI-5. The first major university policy in over 30 years, the Reforma set the stage for the dramatic transformation of Brazil’s higher education system—its infrastructure, pedagogy, institutional design, and philosophy.<sup>2</sup> The Reforma rapidly expanded higher education, especially via private universities; centralized administrative control

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1. For traditional narratives on the military regime generally and AI-5 specifically, see Maria Helena Moreira Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 80–100; Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964–1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 79–84; Elio Gaspari, *A ditadura envergonhada* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002), 333–344; Ronaldo Costa Couto, *História indiscreta da ditadura e da abertura – Brasil: 1964–1985*, 4th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 2003), 85–107; and Hélio Contreiras, *AI-5: a opressão no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 2005).

2. Ministério do Planejamento e Coordenação Geral, Ministério da Fazenda, e Ministério da Educação e Cultura, *Reforma Universitária: expansão do ensino superior e aumento de recursos para a educação. Relatório da Subcomissão Especial do Grupo de Trabalho da Reforma Universitária* Lucas (Guanabara: Fundação IBGE, 1968).

of universities; consolidated overlapping units; and created the department system. Increasingly, it shifted the responsibility for paying for education away from the state and onto students, via fees and other price hikes. It also brought a new emphasis on training white-collar professionals in the applied sciences, among other things. Thus, as 1969 began, Brazilian universities—and the students who attended them and who had served as the face of both Brazil's growing middle class and its opposition to the military dictatorship in 1968—now faced new circumstances in which universities were a major target of state efforts to censor and control political and social mobilization and contestation.

However, to understand universities in the repressive period from 1969 to 1974, and the years of the top-down and limited political liberalization of President Ernesto Geisel (1974–79), only through the lens of repression is to neglect the complexities of leftist reorganization and student mobilization in Brazil's "long 1960s."<sup>3</sup> Recent scholarship on the social movements of 1960s Latin America has tapped into the multifarious ways students mobilized in contestatory politics, through political mobilization and protest, through guerrilla movements against authoritarian regimes, or through cultural, and countercultural, expressions. While these works have made major contributions to understanding ideological struggle, cultural mobilization, and the debates over the nation-state in Latin America, they have tended to neglect how everyday issues also became focuses of contestatory politics under non-democratic regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. The few works that have embraced the politics of everyday life in Latin American military regimes generally focus more on non-student actors.<sup>4</sup>

Yet repression and the proscription of more overt political organization and protest in Brazil led to neither an end of leftist organizing nor broader student mobilization. Rather, Brazil's post-1968 context reveals the ways in which student mobilization and political activism persisted in times of repression. Scholarship on student politics in Brazil has portrayed the 1970s as a

3. As Eric Zolov points out, Arthur Marwick first coined the term "long 1960s" as an analytical tool to consider the history of a decade that had become deeply embedded in the collective memories of societies in the West and beyond. See Eric Zolov, "Latin America in the Global Sixties," *The Americas* 70:3 (January 2014): 349–362. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker observe that the term is easily adaptable to various parts of the world in ways that allow for local specificity and flexibility in understanding broader social, cultural, and political transformations. A number of these are often identified as definitive of the 1960s, yet they often preceded (and/or succeeded) the decade of 1960–69. See Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, "The Socialist 1960s in Global Perspective," in *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1–21.

4. For middle-class politics and everyday responses to the rising authoritarianism of late 1960s and 1970s Argentina, see Sebastián Carassai, *The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence, and Memory in the Seventies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). For Mexican middle-class politics in the aftermath of the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre, see Louise E. Walker, *Waking from the Dream: Mexico's Middle Classes after 1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

comparatively depoliticized moment on campuses, attributing it to two main factors. First, many student radicals who had played a key part in organizing demonstrations left campuses as they joined armed movements or went into exile after AI-5. Second, the regime’s repression had virtually extinguished the União Nacional dos Estudantes (UNE) and its state and municipal branches by 1972.<sup>5</sup> However, an understanding of student activism that hinges on national movements fixates on a narrowly political scale. While this scholarly approach has illuminated the key historical role of Latin American students, it has overlooked the ways in which quotidian issues also shaped activism and organization among students of various political stripes.<sup>6</sup> The result has been a rather unrefined portrayal of university students as political rabble-rousers whose activity on campuses diminished in the 1970s after the politically effervescent 1960s, only to return at the end of the decade alongside other new social movements such as the New Unionism of the late 1970s and early 1980s (precursor to the Partido dos Trabalhadores, or Workers Party).<sup>7</sup>

Student politics did not simply disappear in the face of repression. In the aftermath of AI-5 and the Reforma Universitária, students found new political and social methods and discourses to confront the new era on campuses. This reorganization and mobilization actually began earlier, when leftist students sought to recruit members to the clandestine factions on the left as the post-1968 repression decimated armed and unarmed leftist organizations alike.<sup>8</sup> As the decade progressed, these efforts succeeded as students responded to conditions they faced on campuses and in society, even if they did not officially join leftist movements. As the long-term effects of the Reforma Universitária became apparent, its shortcomings served as a cornerstone for new forms of student activism centered on everyday educational issues such as fees, funding, and university food. Students used these issues to challenge the military regime’s policies and, by extension, the regime itself.

5. See for example Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, and Gaspari, *A ditadura escancarada*. This silence is not due to neglect, but to a tendency in these works to focus on national organizations like UNE at the expense of more local forms of mobilization.

6. Louise E. Walker’s *Waking from the Dream* addresses quotidian student politics in Mexico briefly, though it is subsumed there within a broader analysis of Mexico’s middle class more generally, without a particular emphasis on university students or campuses. See Walker, *Waking from the Dream*, 31–33, 161–162.

7. For more on the rise of New Unionism, see Margaret E. Keck, “The New Unionism in the Brazilian Tradition,” in *Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation*, Alfred Stepan, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 252–296. This unionism attracted many former student leaders. Professors and ex-student leaders from the 1960s and 1970s played a key role in the creation of the Partido dos Trabalhadores, or Workers’ Party. See Marieta Maria de Moraes Ferreira and Alexandre Fortes, “Memórias do PT: as vozes de seus construtores,” in *Ditadura e democracia na América Latina*, Carlos Fico et al., eds. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2008), 275–303.

8. For an explanation of the importance of pluralizing “left,” see Victoria Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, especially 79–80.

Thus, from 1969 to the late 1970s, student opposition to military policies and to the regime itself did not disappear. The absence of an institutionalized student organization like the UNE did not mean the end of students' contestation of the military's policies. As the national student movements broke down in the wake of 1968, leftist students on individual campuses throughout Brazil challenged military rule by reorganizing, using educational issues to draw students in. Although, as the decade progressed, their success in recruiting students to the various leftist groups was limited, their emphasis on political struggle through reforms within the educational system and, increasingly, within Brazilian society more generally played a major role in students reconstituting UNE in 1979. The result of AI-5 and the Reforma, then, was not so much the disappearance of student activism as it was the reconstitution of activism through adaptive local struggles that focused on the everyday issues students faced on campuses. These struggles re-centered universities as physical and discursive sites of contestation that drew on everyday issues on campuses, politicizing seemingly apolitical issues like fees, funding, admission rates, and even food into tools to criticize the military regime. These issues ultimately provided students with an important discursive arena through which they resisted authoritarianism while maintaining a role as social and political subjects in a repressive regime.

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: 1969–1974

Educational issues would become a key part of student mobilization as student movements reconstituted themselves throughout the 1970s, but at the beginning of the decade there was much groundwork to be done. Certain issues had played a role in the mobilizations of the 1960s, but the crackdown on student movements on campuses, combined with the implementation of the 1968 Reforma, meant that students needed to rebuild student organizations that had suffered repression, even as the educational context on campuses was shifting.<sup>9</sup> This crackdown forced leftist students to find new ways to mobilize in the new repressive climate. They would consciously turn to educational issues in an effort to establish and strengthen student organizations on campuses and to recruit new student members to the various leftist movements, including the Soviet-oriented Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB), the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PC do B), Ação Popular (AP; soon to be Ação Popular Marxista-Leninista, or APML), and the Ação Libertadora Nacional (ALN).

9. Snider, "A More Systemic Fight for Reform."

However, the results of these efforts to recruit were mixed. By the end of the decade, the student movement had reconstituted itself, most visible in UNE’s return to prominence in 1979. This effort was due in no small part to growing mobilization around the educational issues that resulted from the Reforma Universitária, and to the efforts of leftist leaders to mobilize students around education. While these groups would dominate executive positions in the newly reconstituted UNE, the masses—both among UNE representatives and among the university population nationwide—often avoided direct affiliation with these political groups. While some students joined radical groups, many more joined the organizations that were mobilizing around student issues, mainly because they represented student interests, and not because of any particular ideological affinity. If it was leftist students in the 1970s who laid the foundation for student mobilization, it was the everyday educational issues around which a broader mass of students would mobilize.

Despite the tiny proportion of leftist students on campuses, they played a vital role in reconstituting student organizations in the repressive period between 1969 and 1974. Many 1960s leaders had joined clandestine armed movements, but others disagreed with the armed struggle and worked instead on maintaining activism on campuses in an effort to build on the seeming promise of the 1968 mobilizations.<sup>10</sup> Yet, as one student leader of the late 1960s and early 1970s commented, “Sometimes one or two years separate one generation from another.”<sup>11</sup> Such was the case for the generation of leftist leaders on campus in the wake of AI-5 and the February 1969 institution of Decree 477, which prohibited political activity on campuses and provided the setting for police to occupy classrooms to monitor students.<sup>12</sup> Whereas leaders of student movements in 1968, both at the national and state levels and on individual campuses, had been at the forefront of demonstrations featuring tens of thousands of students, leaders in 1969 and the early 1970s led meetings of dozens. Adriano Diogo, a geology student at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) who in his own words was “influenced” by the then underground ALN and who was a key figure in the new post-AI-5 context, recalled a UNE meeting in Botucatu in 1969 with just 30 students present, a far cry from

10. Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 167–214.

11. Transcript of interview with Geraldo Siqueira Filho, conducted by Angélica Müller, December 1, 2004, Arquivo Projeto Memória Movimento Estudantil [hereafter PMME].

12. Decree-Law 477 came in February 1969. Though redundant of AI-5 in many of its repressive prescriptions, it stood out on campuses for its specific targeting of university student populations. Students charged with “political activity” faced expulsion and the revocation of any scholarships for five years, and could not re-enroll in any university, public or private, for three years. The text of the law was revoked in 1979. It is still available at [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/decreto-lei/1965-1988/De10477.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto-lei/1965-1988/De10477.htm), accessed June 14, 2018. For more on the surveillance of campuses in this period, see Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, *As universidades e o regime militar* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Jorge Zahar, 2014), 193–241.

1,000 plus who had attended and were arrested at UNE's National Congress in Ibiúna in 1968. Diogo reflected with irony that, with such reduced numbers, "We claimed, 'UNE is us,' and it really was."<sup>13</sup>

Some students entered 1969 expecting a new year of successes in challenging the military dictatorship.<sup>14</sup> However, it quickly became clear that the effort to reorganize in the aftermath of AI-5 faced new repressive obstacles, including the presence of plainclothes police on campuses. On many campuses, government-appointed university officials, or even the police themselves, shut down college-level Centros Acadêmicos or Diretórios Acadêmicos, university-level Diretorios Centrais dos Estudantes, units of the União Estadual de Estudantes, and UNE. In response, some students attempted to create alternative institutions that could appear to be independent of the proscribed or heavily monitored Centros Acadêmicos or Diretorios Centrais dos Estudantes. By 1970, students at the Universidade Estadual de Guanabara, later renamed Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro, had already created a Conselho de Representantes, and by 1972, students at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro had followed suit.<sup>15</sup> These conselhos were formed by people from leftist parties like the Partido Comunista Brasileiro, Ação Popular, and the Partido Comunista do Brasil, all of which were attempting to reconstitute a student movement that could recruit new members to the various clandestine lefts more easily.<sup>16</sup> Such processes replicated themselves in São Paulo and elsewhere, illustrating the ways in which leftist leaders continued their efforts to mobilize on campuses through new organizations that would draw students into their orbit and challenge military rule.<sup>17</sup>

Another tactic these leaders relied on was the use of cultural events. With Decree 477 proscribing traditional political organization on campuses, the cultural arena and other less politicized campus events became new venues for spreading anti-dictatorship messages and creating a sense of community across the broader student body. Throughout the decade, these nascent organizations, and other kinds of student groups like cinema clubs and participation in campus athletic events, provided new institutional mechanisms to bring students

13. Transcript of interview with Adriano Diogo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 11, 2004, PMME.

14. Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 167–214.

15. Transcript of interview with Comba Porta, conducted by Carla Siqueira and Tatiana Di Sabbato, November 3, 2004, PMME; *Libertas-Caderno Especial dos Calouros – 1972*, Arquivo Público do Estado do Rio de Janeiro [hereafter, APERJ], Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6.

16. Transcript of interview with Comba Porta, conducted by Carla Siqueira and Tatiana Di Sabbato, November 3, 2004, PMME.

17. Transcript of interview with Adriano Diogo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 11, 2004, PMME.

together and rebuild student organization from the ground up.<sup>18</sup> A law school in Rio de Janeiro hosted a week of juridical debates, planned by students from PCB, whose real goal was to bring students together to discuss the legal setting of post-AI-5 Brazil, while UFRJ’s medical school hosted a week of scientific debates that engaged the social impact of scientific questions in 1972.<sup>19</sup> Term opening week events that welcomed new students served as another opportunity to allow community building, quotidian enough to fly under the radar of the military’s repressive apparatus, yet still effective in bringing attention to the ongoing activities on campus.<sup>20</sup> And in 1973, students succeeded in hosting a show by musician Gilberto Gil that brought over a thousand students together, not only to enjoy the show but to raise awareness of the plight of the dozens of USP students who had been arrested. One of those, Alexandre Vannucchi Leme, died under torture.<sup>21</sup>

These students also published newspapers, with articles by anonymous writers, that avoided overt political ideology but still informed students college- and university-wide of the issues they faced. One student newspaper at UFRJ informed incoming students in 1972 of the struggles their forebears had undertaken in 1971 and offered *dicas* (advice) on what to expect as students. These *dicas* focused especially on educational issues, ranging from which professors to be aware of to which courses lacked basic materials for laboratories and research.<sup>22</sup> Leftist students on campus at USP followed a similar tactic.<sup>23</sup> Such anonymous publications drew on the one arena still available to student leaders—education—to criticize the government in a way that could draw more students in. By highlighting the failures of higher education and the university reform, these efforts began laying a discursive foundation for student struggles on campuses for the remainder of the decade.

18. See for example *Libertas-Caderno Especial dos Calouros – 1972*, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6; and PMME transcripts of interviews with Adriano Diogo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 11, 2004; Aldo Rebelo, conducted by Angélica Müller, Ana Paula Goulart, and Paulo Markun, December 4, 2004; Amancio de Carvalho, conducted by Carla Siqueira, May 30, 2005; Comba Porto, conducted by Carla Siqueira and Tatiana Di Sabbato, November 3, 2004; and Renildo Calheiros, conducted by Angélica Müller and Ana Paula Goulart, December 7, 2004.

19. Transcript of interview with Comba Porto, conducted by Carla Siqueira and Tatiana Di Sabbato, November 3, 2004, PMME.

20. *Libertas-Caderno Especial dos Calouros – 1972*, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6.

21. For more on the arrests, the organization, and the concert, see Caio Túlio Costa, *Cale-se: a saga de Vannucchi Leme, A USP como aldeia gaulesa, o show proibido de Gilberto Gil* (São Paulo: Editora A Girafa, 2003). For more on the death of Vannucchi Leme, see Kenneth Serbin, *Secret Dialogues: Church-State Relations, Torture, and Social Justice in Authoritarian Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 200–218.

22. *Libertas-Caderno Especial dos Calouros – 1972*, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6.

23. Transcript of interview with Geraldo Siqueira Filho, conducted by Angélica Müller, December 1, 2004, PMME.

Despite their importance in reestablishing institutional organizations on individual campuses after 1968, many leftist students encountered real limitations in their ability to recruit students to their various political positions. While non-affiliated students sometimes supported such activities, they feared in the repressive climate that representatives on the *conselhos* would be arrested and that even students with lesser connections to the *conselhos* would face arrest and torture, even if they were not themselves members of leftist political movements.<sup>24</sup>

Further complicating matters were the left's own divisions. Ideological debates between the clandestine lefts also excluded or turned off incoming students. Surveying the climate in the early 1970s, former UNE vice president Nilton Santos lamented the fact that, since 1968, leftist organizations had transformed the DCEs, DCE-Livres (Free-DCEs, alternative and unofficial DCEs that students established), and the *conselhos* as well, "into 'apparatuses,' into channels of transmission for these political groups," rendering them "an instrument of the political group, and not an instrument of the combined movement." Santos also noted that "the student movement today resent[ed] this" apparent political takeover.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, while groups like the PCB, PC do B, and AP could agree on the need for incorporating educational issues, questions of how that would happen, and along what lines, continued to divide these groups tactically.<sup>26</sup> Finally, many student leaders spent more time out of class reorganizing than in class building a rapport with the broader student population.<sup>27</sup> The result was that "many students participated in these [student] movements" but remained "independent and were tied to no [political] group."<sup>28</sup>

As the 1970s progressed, the focus on "criticizing failures of education" became the issue around which students mobilized.<sup>29</sup> Regardless of students' political ideologies, educational matters affected one and all. Indeed, if the left had chosen educational issues to recruit students to leftist organizations, it ended up

24. Transcript of interview with Adriano Diogo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 11, 2004, PMME.

25. Nilton Santos, O significado do 29º Congresso, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6.

26. See transcripts of PMME interviews with Aldo Rebelo, conducted by Angélica Müller, Ana Paulo Goulart, and Paulo Markun, December 4, 2004; Amancio de Carvalho, conducted by Carla Siqueira, May 30, 2005; and Luiz Mariano, conducted by Angélica Müller and Carla Siqueira, May 17, 2005.

27. Transcript of interview with Renildo Calheiros, conducted by Angélica Müller and Ana Paula Goulart, December 7, 2004, PMME; transcript of interview with Ruy Cesar Costa Silva, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 12, 2004, PMME.

28. Transcript of interview with Renildo Calheiros, conducted by Angélica Müller and Ana Paula Goulart, December 7, 2004, PMME.

29. *Jornal do Conselho de Representantes da Escola de Engenharia da UFRJ*, No. 1, Ano 1, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6.



selecting issues that led to widespread support of a movement representing students overall, even if fewer students openly joined the ideological leftist groups. As student expectations of higher education encountered the reality of educational policy and reform under military rule, student organizers emphasized the politics of everyday experience and the quotidian existence on campus to again challenge the military regime in increasing numbers. If it was in the period of the mid to late 1970s that “the student movement became the Student Movement,” it was the educational issues that led more students to mobilize and rally to that reconstituted “Student Movement.”<sup>30</sup>

### TRANSFERRING THE COSTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

From the initial expansion of Brazil’s higher education system in the 1930s through the 1960s, the state had borne the burden of funding higher education.<sup>31</sup> In stark contrast with Spanish America, where many countries had centuries-old universities, Brazil’s university system was comparatively young. The first university was established only in 1920, in preparation for the visit of the Belgian royal family, and the federal university system began to develop only in the 1940s.<sup>32</sup> By the 1960s, however, the system had expanded to nearly 20 federal universities. With the exception of a handful of Catholic and state-level universities, the federal government remained the primary source of funding for a public higher educational system that was free to those who gained admission. This was admittedly a microscopic total—out of a population of over 70 million people, only 124,214 Brazilians attended university in 1963.<sup>33</sup> Higher education was overwhelmingly the purview of those middle- and upper-class students whose families could afford the private secondary schools and extracurricular courses to prepare students to pass the entrance exams to public university. The result was a system that reinforced middle-class privileges and social hierarchies within the educational system and excluded nearly all working-class and poor Brazilians—a majority of the population—from higher education. Nonetheless, upon gaining admission, university students expected a free public education, as universities had operated in this fashion since their creation and expansion from the 1930s through the 1950s.

30. Transcript of interview with Adriano Diogo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 11, 2004, PMME.

31. For the transformation of higher education in Brazil beginning in the 1930s, see Luiz Antônio Cunha, *A universidade crítica: o ensino superior na república populista*, 3rd ed. (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2007).

32. Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 48–78.

33. Matrícula geral, segundo os ramos do ensino, and População estimada, segundo as regiões fisiográficas e as unidades da Federação, 1960/1970, Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [hereafter IBGE].

By the 1970s, one of the biggest quotidian issues that students raised in their critique of higher education under military policy was “the question of increasing *anuidades* [annual fees],” framed as “*ensino pago* [paid education].”<sup>34</sup> The issue had first come to attention in the late 1950s as a threat, but given the turmoil before and after the military coup of 1964, it did not garner much political attention, and the threat remained abstract for much of the 1960s.<sup>35</sup> *Anuidades* reappeared as an issue around which students mobilized in 1967, when President Artur Costa e Silva’s ministry of planning declared that universities could charge students an “annual quota” that “represent[ed] the total value of the expenses and installments of the investments of the schools.”<sup>36</sup> While Costa e Silva did implement a fee, it remained symbolic, nominal, and affordable for most of the middle-class sectors who had access to public universities in the 1960s.

The question of “paid education” came again to the fore in student politics and organization only during the 1970s, as the fees were introduced along with the new Reforma Universitária and the state began to shift the cost of education to students. Perhaps more important, private universities dramatically increased in both number of institutions and total enrollment as the state turned to private education to defray the federal government’s responsibility for funding public education. Already by 1973, the percentages of students enrolled in public and private universities showed a massive transformation: whereas over 80 percent of all university students attended free public universities in the early 1960s, only 42 percent of Brazil’s university students in 1973 were in free public education, with the remaining 58 percent attending private institutions. That number would continue to rise in the 1970s.<sup>37</sup>

In this context, students at both public and private universities found themselves suddenly bearing the burden of the cost of education, and the renascent organizations led by leftist students pounced on the issue. In 1972, student leaders at USP managed to hold a university-wide referendum on the question of fees. Over 90 percent of the entire student body voted against the establishment of fees, marking a rare early success in mobilizing a large number

34. Encaminhamento No. 73/75/DPPS/INT/RJ, August 25, 1975, Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Secretaria de Segurança Pública/DPPS/INT/RJ, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

35. Politização da classe estudantil, Arquivo Nacional [hereafter, AN], Coleção DSI, box 40–4706, Unidade 137. Although no date is given, the document refers to Raimundo Eirado’s presidency as “last year.” Given that Eirado was president of UNE from 1958–59, this puts the document somewhere around 1959–60, well before the military coup of 1964.

36. Encaminhamento No. 130/76/DPPS/RJ/Interior, Festa Junina Promovido pelo Diretorio Central dos Estudantes, June 21, 1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 44.

37. Informações estatísticas, Coordenador Regional do Arquivo Nacional [hereafter COREG], Brasília, Coleção MEC, SEEC-MEC, M.8. While the document contains no date of publication, it focuses on educational data from 1963–1974.

of students and also revealing the capacity of all students—not just those on the left—to mobilize around education.<sup>38</sup> Over time, the issue of fees would mobilize students on other campuses. At UFRJ, a pamphlet reported that while the “symbolic” fee of Cr\$28 had remained steady from its establishment in 1967 until 1972, it had increased from Cr\$28 to Cr\$435 between 1972 and 1976—an inflationary rate of over 1500 percent in four years, far greater than real inflation in that period.<sup>39</sup> Another student pamphlet, published at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, expressed outrage over the fact that the annual fees there had gone up by 200 percent, “aggravated by the establishment of more than thirty fees, which range from 7.5 to 1200 cruzeiros.”<sup>40</sup>

Not only did the rates go up, but there was also an increase in the “number of fees paid for the use of services (beyond the matriculation fee, growing each year),” including fees for study materials, classroom hand-outs, and student IDs, among other items.<sup>41</sup> Whereas public education had once been free for those who could enter the university system, students now found that the privileges public education had provided them were eroding as the Brazilian dictatorship reallocated funds away from education, placing the onus on students. Students at UFRJ even called these rates “illegal” for going beyond the ceiling the ministry of education and culture had set for annual fees.<sup>42</sup> Suddenly finding themselves having to pay their own money for goods that universities had previously offered free of charge, students mobilized against the post-Reforma’s shifting of the cost of education from the state and to students, reacting to a violation of their expectations that the state would reward their admission to public universities with a free education. Even as UNE returned in 1979, fees continued to be a backbone of student protest, with the now revived organization building on students’ efforts on individual campuses.<sup>43</sup>

The increase in anuidades hit students at private universities even harder. The government had created an educational credit program (Crédito Educativo)

38. Transcript of interview with Geraldo Siqueira Filho, conducted by Angélica Müller, December 1, 2004, PMME.

39. Relatório, DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB, Seção de Buscas Especiais, DPPS Gabinete Reservado No. S-490/1976, Livro 4, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43. In 1977, overall inflation in Brazil was 38.8 percent, further illustrating just how dramatic the jump in fees was for university students. For general inflationary data, see Skidmore, *Politics of Military Rule in Brazil*, 206–207.

40. Unnamed document, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 41.

41. *Jornal da Química* 1, June 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

42. In making this claim in 1976, students pointed to a July 11, 1975, article in *O Globo*. See Relatório, DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB-Seção de Buscas Especiais, DPPS Gabinete Reservado No. S-490/1976, Livro 4, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

43. Transcript of interview with Clara Araújo, conducted by Angélica Müller and Ana Paula Goulart, December 7, 2004, PMME.

designed to help students defray these costs, but the program functioned primarily to make student loans, meaning students would still eventually have to pay for their education. Students and others were quick to condemn the program, both on campuses and in the alternative press. A cartoon in *O Pasquim*, an underground publication that was a fixture on campuses and was part news and part *Mad Magazine*, showed a student considering accepting a loan from Crédito Educativo, with an angel and a devil hovering over each shoulder, both shouting “No!” and encouraging him to reject the offer.<sup>44</sup> Students at the Faculdade de Engenharia Industrial e Civil of Itatiba, in São Paulo, claimed that the educational credit system that the government had launched to help students attend university only “masked the high rates of fees” and did nothing to ameliorate the cost of education for students.<sup>45</sup>

As the decade progressed, students portrayed the fees as symptomatic of the broader undemocratic conditions in Brazil, implicitly criticizing the nondemocratic rule of the military regime through the centralized university system in which the military appointed rectors and police increasingly were present on campus. At an April 1979 rally of over 300 people protesting the merger of the independent federal schools in Rio de Janeiro into the Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, “various speakers criticized the adoption of paid education,” maintaining that the unilateral increases in the fees were symbolic of the government’s imposition of paid education on campuses without listening to students’ perspectives.<sup>46</sup> This rally and others like it were not necessarily fiercely politicized, nor were they ideological critiques of the regime from the left. Although students from the left were involved, the issue of anuidades exemplified the quotidian ways in which the regime’s undemocratic practices filtered onto campuses, affecting students of all ideological stripes financially and institutionally. Simply put, the state had failed to ensure its historical role of facilitating free access to higher education for students of primarily middle-class backgrounds, fomenting unrest on campuses in the 1970s.

Whereas students in the 1960s marched in the streets beneath banners that shouted “*Abaixo a ditadura*” (Down with the dictatorship) and “*Contra os Acordos MEC-USAID*” (Against Ministry of Education and Culture-USAID Agreements), students on campuses in the 1970s met under banners that proclaimed “*Abaixo a sobre taxa*” (Down with surcharges) and “*Contra o ensino*

44. *O Pasquim* 408, April 1977, 22–28.

45. Informação No. 066/78/DSI/MJ – Faculdade de Engenharia Industrial e Civil de Itatiba/SP – Jornaleco Alvorada, AN, Coleção DSI, box 618–04284.

46. Polícia Militar do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Informe No. 101-20/79/PM-2/PMERJ – May 7, 1979, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 70.

*pago*” (Against paid education).<sup>47</sup> Repression may have made more public displays in city streets and political organizing on campuses more difficult, but it did not eradicate student mobilization around the issues that mattered to them on campuses.

Nor were fees the only fiscal issue that caused outrage among students, as the state also diverted its spending away from higher education. While the total amount the regime spent on education did rise, the percentage of the federal budget devoted to education dropped, leading to a decline in educational quality and infrastructure on campuses throughout Brazil.<sup>48</sup> Already in 1969, some leftist student leaders were pushing for organizations on campuses to shift their attention from fees to funding.<sup>49</sup> By the 1970s, students demanded that the regime allocate more funds for education, especially higher education, in the hope that it would simultaneously improve conditions on campus (as the Reforma Universitária claimed to be doing), even while reducing the fees students had to pay. In 1975, engineering students at UFRJ complained not only about the anuidades, but also “the terrible conditions of education, due principally to the lack of funding that dominates not just UFRJ, but Brazilian education in general.”<sup>50</sup> In São Paulo, amid a limited political opening and the worsening economy of the late 1970s, students and professors from USP took to the streets, not only demonstrating in favor of amnesty and human rights, but also raising the banner of more funding for higher education.<sup>51</sup>

Nor were these complaints limited to the major university centers in Rio and São Paulo, the traditional hotbeds of student activism.<sup>52</sup> In 1976, students at both the

47. For banner images, see Araujo, *Memórias estudantis*, 160. The MEC-USAID accords were an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the United States Agency for International Development to explore the possibility of reforming higher education in Brazil. While the MEC-USAID accords were just one of several studies the military regime undertook to consider university reform in the 1960s, the fact that MEC-USAID was based on a partnership with the United States made the agreements especially offensive to leftist student movements opposed to US imperialism in the midst of Cold War politics and discourse. An image of the banner in the 1970s can be found in *O Trabalho*, O Decreto 477 e a UNE na clandestinidade, Memorial da Democracia, available at [www.memorialdademocracia.com.br/publico/thumb/6979/740/440](http://www.memorialdademocracia.com.br/publico/thumb/6979/740/440), accessed on June 2, 2016.

48. David S. Brown, “Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Education Finance in Brazil,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34:1 (January 2002): 115–141.

49. Transcript of interview with Jean Marc von der Weid, conducted by Carla Siqueira and Ana Paula Goulart, October 7, 2004, PMME.

50. *Jornal da Engenharia* 4:8 (June 1975), DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB – Seção de Buscas Especiais – Encaminhamento No. 049, June 21, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 41, unnamed document; APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

51. Centro de Pesquisas e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil [hereafter CPDOC], weekly Sistema Nacional de Informações reports, EG pr 1974.03.00, Roll 2, Photo 0099; Ministério da Justiça, Documento Sigiloso No. 100368 – “Jornal *O Trabalho*,” May 10, 1978, AN, Coleção DSI, box 3410–08077.

52. Scholars have tended to focus on the Universidade de São Paulo and universities in Rio de Janeiro in studying the “revival” of the student movement in the 1970s and 1980s. It is undeniable that USP, UFRJ, and UFF witnessed a disproportionate number of high-publicity mobilizations in the Brazilian university system. However, these two cities were not the only loci of major mobilizations, as the case of UFRRJ makes clear. Another aspect of student

Universidade Federal de Pernambuco and the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo pointed to data that showed that funding for education had dropped from 11 percent of the total federal budget in 1965 to just 4.7 percent for 1976. In the process, they ushered in a new demand that would have a long-term impact on student politics: that 12 percent of the federal budget be devoted to education. This issue would continue to serve as a major axis for student politics in the 1980s and beyond, even into the twenty-first century.<sup>53</sup> And leftist leaders who helped reconstitute UNE in the latter half of the 1970s pointed to the importance of funding, alongside fees and the importance of free public education, as backbones of UNE's efforts to appeal to students nationwide.<sup>54</sup>

If the military regime hoped that 1968's Reforma Universitária would transform and modernize Brazil's university system by expanding Brazilians' access to higher education, the implementation of fees and the shifting of costs to the students shut that door for many. Access to higher education in Brazil had long been privileged and unequal.<sup>55</sup> Yet while the Reforma Universitária set out to expand the university system and improve access to higher education, the results, as assessed in the mid 1970s, were mixed at best. The mounting fees ensured that only those who had an adequate income and time—in other words, those from privileged middle- and upper-class backgrounds—could attend university. The diversion of budgeting to areas other than education led to declining conditions on campuses, contradicting the goal of modernization laid out in the Reforma Universitária and subsequent educational policies of the military government. These complaints and demonstrations against the regime's policies were not merely symbolic; they could and did lead to the reduction of fees at some schools. Such successes especially resonated in the repressive years of the early 1970s, even as they also allowed students to connect their own struggles with those of the 1960s in a broader trajectory of student politics. When universities reduced fees in the face of student demands, the nascent student organizations on campuses pointed to these successes as the students' first “important victory” since 1969.<sup>56</sup>

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mobilizations that remains understudied is the role of Universidade Federal da Bahia in the 1970s and 1980s. See for example, weekly Sistema Nacional de Informações reports on “Educação e Cultura” to Ernesto Geisel in CPDOC, EG pr 1974.03.00.

53. Colin M. Snider, “Student Mobilization, Higher Education, and the 2013 Protests in Brazil in Historical Perspective,” *Latin American Research Review* 52:2 (2017): 253–268.

54. Transcript of interview with Aldo Rebelo, conducted by Angélica Müller, Ana Paula Goulart, and Paulo Markun, December 4, 2004, PMME.

55. For the roots of inequality and limited access in higher education in Brazil, see Luiz Antônio Cunha, *A universidade temporária: o ensino superior, da Colônia à Era Vargas*, 3rd ed. (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2007); Cunha, *A universidade crítica*; and Andrew J. Kirkendall, *Class Mates: Male Student Culture and the Making of a Political Class in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

56. *Jornal da Engenharia* 4:9 (November 1975), APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 41.

While the traditional national student organizations and movements had suffered gravely in the face of repression, students continued to mobilize locally around quotidian issues. In the absence of UNE or other national organizations, these local struggles on individual campuses laid the groundwork for successful student resistance and challenges to the military dictatorship, and kept student organization and mobilization alive, if reduced. As one leader in the early 1970s, recalled, “at this time there were no demonstrations unless there were internal demonstrations on campus.”<sup>57</sup> When the national movements like UNE returned in 1979, they were successful in no small part because of these early successes of micro-level mobilizations on individual campuses. While the students affiliated with the clandestine lefts had used such issues to appeal to students, the fact remained that many more students chose to mobilize around these issues without necessarily affiliating with leftist groups. According to students, by shifting the costs of education from the state to the students themselves, the government hypocritically revealed its intent to divest itself of its responsibility to provide education, leading to a decline in the quality of education in Brazil and thereby demonstrating broader failings on the part of the government in helping Brazil to develop. Politicians from the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, one of the two legal political parties under military rule, also began to circulate this message as the decade progressed.<sup>58</sup>

The result was that the policies that the state had established, in part in the hope of ending student activism, had created the very conditions and discursive resources for a new generation of leftist leaders to use against it. The left was able to tap into policies promoted by the regime to appeal to students and reconstitute student organizations, first on campuses and, as time passed, at the national level.

## “RETIRING” ACTIVIST STUDENTS

Fiscal issues were but one area around which students mobilized in the aftermath of the repressive measures of 1968 and 1969. A major target in the 1970s was the military government’s new program of *jubilção*, or “retirement.” Established in 1972, in the Ministry of Education and Culture’s own words, *jubilção* was “intended to impede the permanency of the ‘professional student’” who remained in college for several years and

57. Transcript of interview with Adriano Diogo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 11, 2004, PMME.

58. Manifesto sobre o Crédito Educativo, March 27, 1976, annexed to Encaminhamento No. 63/76/DPPS/RJ/Interior, Serviço Público Estadual, Secretaria de Estado de Segurança Pública, DPPS/RJ/Interior, April 5, 1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43; Informação No. 262/78/DSI/MJ, March 31, 1978, AN, Coleção DSI, box 3408–08075.

continued working in the student movement (often UNE). It was these students, the military felt, who were responsible for much of the student activism of the 1960s.<sup>59</sup> *Jubilação* would theoretically get rid of these “professional students” by limiting the time students could remain in university: those who did not complete their courses in the more regimented timeline faced expulsion. Ultimately, *jubilação* was yet another strategy to minimize political dissent on campus and reduce “subversion” by shepherding students through the university more quickly. Students would now enter university as a cohort, all taking a certain number of hours each semester so that they might graduate in a more timely fashion. The upside of this policy for the regime was that it could prevent student activists from remaining on campuses long enough to bridge generations in the ways they had done in the 1960s, and at the same time it would more rapidly produce university graduates whose white-collar jobs would help further the regime’s vision of national development.

Yet *jubilação* revealed the limits of the military’s efforts to reform the operations of the university system, and provided students with yet another mechanism to criticize and oppose the military regime’s everyday forms of authoritarianism. By the mid 1970s, with the UNE still “extinct” and repression, censorship, and other limitations on national political activism on campuses continuing unabated, groups of students at individual campuses nationwide protested the excessive use of *jubilação*. They argued that rectors had been given broad discretion to apply the policy and were deploying *jubilação* far too liberally or for their own political purposes. For example, students at UFF argued that “more than 50 percent” of the student body had been unable to complete their degree requirements quickly, due to the courses they needed being unavailable. Yet when these students fell behind the regime’s targeted progression to graduation, the rector began using *jubilação* to expel students who were not finishing their degrees quickly.

These students blamed the university’s “deficient character of education,” declaring that students who were expelled should not “shoulder the onus” for the lack of course offerings and poor curricula and instruction.<sup>60</sup> While the state’s use of torture and state-sponsored assassinations targeted only a tiny minority, *jubilação* potentially threatened all students and offered them a new arena in which to criticize the regime’s authoritarian practices and its violation of student liberties in the *anos de chumbo* (the military regime’s

59. Parecer No. 36/79, Processo 228.297/78, COREG, Coleção MEC, DAU, box 12, M.8.

60. Encaminhamento No. 74/75/DPPS/RJ/Interior, August 22, 1975 – Falta de Vagas na Engenharia – UFE [sic], APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40. See also Encaminhamento No. 165/75/DPPS/RJ/Interior, October 23, 1975 – Cancelamento de Matrícula na UFF, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 41.



most repressive period).<sup>61</sup> In regulating when students had to take classes and how quickly they were to finish their degrees, the regime had set out to do nothing less than regulate the very time and plans of students’ everyday lives, unintentionally creating a space in which students could politicize the mundane.

The issue of jubilação also revealed the internal divisions within the regime’s own ranks over the implementation of its educational policies. In doing so, it illuminated the reality that higher education was not a monolith and exposed divisions within the university system that students could exploit. When the rector of the Universidade Federal da Bahia expelled 900 students under the policy of jubilação in 1976, he prompted a strike of the university’s 14,000 students that garnered national attention among university student bodies who were familiar with and confronted the everyday threat of jubilação on their own campuses.<sup>62</sup> Even the minister of education and culture, Ney Braga, asked the rector of the Bahia institution for a report justifying the high index of jubilação, and went on to organize meetings with the rectors of all public and private universities in the country to discuss the application of jubilação, among other topics.<sup>63</sup>

Once again, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the rector of a particular university seemed at odds, revealing the internal fractures that hid behind the “masks of the state.”<sup>64</sup> Braga sent an inquiry to the Bahia university regarding “the criteria [it had adopted] . . . for the jubilação of students,” implying that the university had failed to follow the letter of the law. Additionally, the ministry requested data on the percentage of jubilados who had not met their degree requirements and asked for further information on the rates of failure and suspension at the school.<sup>65</sup> The ministry was also concerned that such a high number of jubilações could send the signal of that “perfectionism” was expected of students in their courses. Finally, the ministry was dissatisfied with the Universidade Federal da Bahia’s practice of expelling students via jubilação and then allowing them to re-enter the program in the following year, as it undermined the ministry’s efforts to expand new student enrollment after the

61. Comissão Nacional da Verdade, Vols. 3A-3D. Commensurate with the phrase *anos de chumbo*, 74 percent of those who died as a result of repression (319 of 434) died between 1968 and 1974. Of those 434, the CNV identified 123 as “student,” either secondary or university. Though this number does not include those who were tortured, which is inevitably a higher (if uncertain) number, the fact remains that such physical repression reached only a tiny number of the university population more generally in this period.

62. *Quilombo dos Palmares* 2:3 (March 1976), APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 42.

63. *Vai Chover Canivete*, Jornal do Diretório Central dos Estudantes da PUC 1:1 (May 1976), APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

64. Derek Sayer, “Everyday Forms of State Formation: Some Dissident Remarks on ‘Hegemony,’” in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 367–377.

65. MEC quer que a UnB diga porque jubila os alunos, COREG, Coleção MEC, DAU, box 12, M.8.

1968 Reforma Universitária. Holding back so many students for a year would negatively impact the total number of openings available the following year.

Braga's meeting seemed to have little effect. When students at the Universidade de Brasília went on strike in 1977 after the university's rector failed 1,500 of their colleagues under the jubilação policy, the rector called for the military police to occupy the campus, claiming students' demands were political rather than educational. Even as he violated campus autonomy, the rector seemed to neglect the reality that the political and the educational were not mutually exclusive—in students' direct challenge to the military's educational policies, their everyday educational demands had become political issues.<sup>66</sup> When the rector declared that students' complaints were not about academic questions, students pointed to their opposition to the rector's initiation of more than 1,500 processes of jubilação to argue that their concerns were indeed "academic."<sup>67</sup>

Student antagonism to jubilação was not limited to federal university students. The case of UFBA in 1976 had captured the attention and opposition of students who protested at the private Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.<sup>68</sup> A year later, students at the Faculdade de Engenharia Industrial e Civil de Itatiba (São Paulo) criticized jubilação for its inherent classism, a line students at UFBA took as well. These students condemned the system's failure to deal with broader teaching deficiencies, saying that jubilação was just another mechanism to keep poor students out of universities, one that did nothing to address broader structural deficiencies in the university system.<sup>69</sup> Yet the particular complaints they raised—of the poor education and the expulsion of those middle-class students already enrolled—revealed the contradiction of these demands. Students insisted that the regime's educational policies prevented working classes from being able to attend university by limiting, rather than increasing, the number of students who could enroll. Yet jubilação more immediately affected those middle-class students already enrolled.

This contradictory vision illustrated the paradox at the heart of these demands: while students theoretically wanted higher education to expand for all, they mobilized over those issues that were most immediately affecting their own

66. The Universidade de Brasília also had the military invade its campus shortly after the April 1, 1964, coup, and the military infamously invaded it again in 1968. See Gurgel, *A rebelião dos estudantes*.

67. Documento Sigiloso No. 100840, November 16, 1977 – Greve de Estudantes da UnB, AN, Coleção DSI, box 616–05282.

68. *Vai Chover Canivete*, Jornal do Diretório Central dos Estudantes da PUC 1:1 (May 1976), APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

69. Informação No. 066/78/DSI/MJ – Faculdade de Engenharia Industrial e Civil de Itatiba/SP, January 26, 1978, AN, Coleção DSI, box 618–05284.

expectations on campuses. Of particular concern was the fact that many students were increasingly working days and taking classes at night, while the courses they needed were offered only during the day, making it difficult to finish in the time span jubilação mandated.<sup>70</sup> With jubilação serving as a very real threat to students who could not finish courses on a timeline imposed from above, and with even the Ministry of Education and Culture wavering on the application of the federal policy, students took advantage of the strategic value jubilação offered for challenging the dictatorship. The fact that more students now had to work while studying indicated the ways that higher education had expanded to include the lower middle classes, especially in the growing number of private universities—even as it revealed the literal costs of the regime’s policies for many students. Jubilação imposed a timeline on students that contradicted their expectations to finish courses on their own schedule without the threat of having to repeat courses (and pay duplicate fees). Where once a smaller number of students could count on access to free education on their own time, the regime’s expansion of higher education and emphasis on private education and public fees now ran up against students’ historically rooted expectation of access to free, public education on their own schedule, rather than on an authoritarian-imposed calendar.

## FEEDING RESISTANCE: THE POLITICS OF FOOD

Of the seemingly apolitical issues that could serve as fuel for student challenges to the military regime, nothing matched the question of food. It was a literal bread-and-butter issue around which students mobilized. Complaints about the prices and quality of food at university restaurants were nothing new, dating back at least to the early dictatorship period. By the early 1970s, food was already a cause around which to mobilize students in the face of repression.<sup>71</sup> During the 1970s, it became an increasingly potent topic for highlighting the everyday failures of higher education in Brazil in the post AI-5 context. The repressive atmosphere of the 1970s may have reduced overt political organization on campuses, but everyday issues like food provided the means for students to continue to challenge the dictatorship and the quotidian lived experiences of its policies.

70. Transcript of interview with Apolinário Rebelo, conducted by Angélica Müller, July 14, 2005, PMME.

71. See for example “Entrevista do Magnífico Reitor da Universidade da Bahia, Professor Albérico Fraga, na Televisão Itapoan, em 4 de Março de 1964 (Notas taquigráficas de uma gravação),” CPDOC, CMA pi Fraga, A. 64.03.04, 7; transcript of interview with Jean Marc von der Weid, conducted by Carla Siqueira and Ana Paula Goulart, October 7, 2004, PMME; and Informação No. 271/DPPS/RJ – Serviço de Cadastro e Documentação (SCD) – September 23, 1968, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 30/31.

In April 1969, before it was fully understood that 1968 had been a high-water mark rather than the initiation of a new and even stronger phase of student mobilization, thousands of students at UFRJ gathered to protest the rising prices of food at the university's restaurant, demonstrating on campus in clear defiance of AI-5 and Decree-Law 477.<sup>72</sup> At USP, leftist students led a larger movement that took over the campus restaurant after a price hike, running the restaurant, cleaning it, and maintaining the previous costs.<sup>73</sup> Such demonstrations even extended to the equally decimated secondary student movement, with leftist students in at least one high school mobilizing around the poor quality of the school cafeteria.<sup>74</sup>

Food brought together leftist students and broader campus communities throughout the decade. Seeking new avenues for recruiting students to rebuild student organizations, leftist leaders recognized campus restaurants and food as important to all students and thus as “a great focus of student agitation and a great source of demands for the improvement of student aid policies.”<sup>75</sup> The student newspaper at UFRJ's engineering school was memorably sarcastic in dealing with the question of food quality on campus. In a mock interview, a *fundãoista* (a student at UFRJ's new campus on the Ilha do Fundão in Guanabara Bay) commented that he “received two invitations from abroad, one from North Vietnam and the other from South Vietnam, and they both said the same thing: ‘We would very much like to have you on the front lines for us. After eating at the *bandejão* (university restaurant) for more than a year and not dying, you will be invincible on the battlefield.’”<sup>76</sup> Another pamphlet found at UFRJ called the campus food service “one of the most explosive points of complaints,” due in no small part to “the constant worsening of the quality of the food.”<sup>77</sup>

Food also served to tap into broader issues: the commodification of goods, the cost of higher education, and who was responsible for both. At UFRJ, prices in the school cafeteria increased from Cr\$0.05 to Cr\$5.00 between 1967 and 1975, forcing students to pay more for a basic necessity on campus even as fees

72. Transcript of interview with Jean Marc von der Weid, conducted by Carla Siqueira and Ana Paula Goulart, October 7, 2004, PMME.

73. Transcript of interview with Geraldo Siqueira Filho, conducted by Angélica Müller, December 1, 2004, PMME.

74. Transcript of interview with Ruy Cesar Costa Silva, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 12, 2004, PMME.

75. Transcript of interview with Javier Alfaya, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 8, 2004, PMME.

76. “Entrevista com o fundãoista,” *Jornal do Conselho de Representantes da Escola de Engenharia da UFRJ* 1:1, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Dossiê 6.

77. Relatório, March 31, 1976, DDPS Gabinete Reservado No. 2-490/1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, livro 4, folder 43.

had also risen.<sup>78</sup> Similar “food fights” against the poor quality and high price of food occurred at PUC-Rio and the Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto in Minas Gerais. Students at UFF were even more emphatic. They tied the issue of food to broader political struggles over democracy, insisting that the need for cheaper, subsidized food was as essential to forming a “democratic university” as were the rights to free education and assembly, thereby forcefully politicizing the seemingly innocuous question of campus refreshments.<sup>79</sup> And at PUC-Rio, the student newspaper commented on leaflets “that spoke about ‘the absurd increases in the University Restaurant,’” in the process broadening the audience for its limited number of leaflets. Lacking alternatives to the expensive campus restaurant, where lunch cost Cr\$8.50, many poorer students, like “Jorge”—a fictional archetype representing broader student experiences at PUC-Rio—could not afford to eat between classes. While the fight for better quality food may seem inconsequential compared to the struggles against Decree-Law 477 and AI-5, or the fight for better quality education in Brazil, it was clear that the campus restaurants played an important role in student activism in the 1970s. Students’ willingness to make food a central part of their demands for a “democratic university,” one that was open to those from poorer backgrounds, reveals that their quotidian experiences on campuses played an important role in contesting the policies of the dictatorship and defining their own political mobilization and discourse as part of the broader political struggles for democracy.

As did anuidades and jubilação, food affected students on campuses throughout Brazil. As the universities increased the prices of food at rates that outstripped the national inflation rate, the institutions—and, in the case of the public universities, the government that oversaw them—provided students with another seemingly apolitical arena around which they could politically mobilize and challenge the military regime and its policies. As with fees, students saw the food service that the state once provided virtually for free suddenly skyrocket in cost. There were no riots—the repressive atmosphere of the early 1970s and the absence of a national organization that could coordinate broader protests prevented the overt demonstrations of the 1960s. Yet the food issue also revealed the ways in which students continued to contest the military regime and its policies, deploying the everyday issues they faced on campuses and transforming those seemingly apolitical matters into political issues that could be used to highlight the worsening economic conditions under military rule in the latter half of the 1970s.

78. Relatório, March 31, 1976, DDPS Gabinete Reservado No. 2-490/1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, livro 4, folder 43.

79. Informação No. 1316/D.Arj/DGIE, June 10, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

## STUDENT DISCOURSE AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN THE 1970S

By pressing issues like anidades and jubilação, the military regime had created discursive and political weapons that students could co-opt to resist and undermine the military's own efforts to control student activism. However, these issues paled in comparison to the scale of the Reforma Universitária, both in scope and in terms of providing students new issues with which to contest the military regime and its policies. In the implementation of the 1968 reform, students found the clearest path yet to challenge the military regime for its social failures, even as they outlined their own alternative vision of the role of higher education and the corresponding role of students in national development. Students also constructed visions of a democratic and representative system on campuses, one that could serve as a model and a synecdoche for the broader democratization of Brazilian politics and society.

As the 1970s dawned, the effects and failures of the Reforma Universitária became increasingly apparent, providing new avenues for students to organize based on their campus experiences. Early in the decade, leftist campus newspapers were already highlighting the lack of “sufficient space” in the classrooms. They complained that rapid expansion in enrollment on campus “impedes participation and learning” in the classroom. Such complaints were not unique nor did they constitute scaremongering. Expansion at one university was so dramatic that one class had 320 students. For these, there were only 50 copies of handouts available. Meanwhile, professors remained “inaccessible to dialogue” and exams were based not on critical thought, but on rote memorization.<sup>80</sup>

As the decade continued, such complaints intensified. At UFRJ, a student newspaper listed 20 items on the agenda for a meeting of the council of student representatives from the engineering school, among them a proposal to hold seminars discussing the Reforma itself and the new curricula under it.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, students in the Instituto de Ciências Humanas e Filosofia at UFF suggested discussing the Reforma Universitária in small groups, as its implementation directly affected the school. Here again, as with other educational issues, there was little thought of recourse to a national political struggle, but that did not stop students on individual campuses from reacting

80. *Libertas-Caderno Especial dos Calouros – 1972*, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6.

81. *Jornal do Conselho de Representantes da Escola de Engenharia da UFRJ 1:1*, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Dossiê 6.

to the daily issues they faced and organizing around them. These students were concerned that under the Reforma Universitária, the rates of anuidades would go up each time the minimum salary in Brazil was changed. The student-penned article asked rhetorically, “Until when will we passively accept the escalation of paid education?” Students tied the escalation directly to the 1968 Reforma.<sup>82</sup>

Meanwhile, these students’ colleagues in the UFF Engineering department criticized the Reforma Universitária and the military’s educational program since the 1960s more generally, lambasting the military’s economic policies and claiming that the educational enterprise had become completely disconnected from Brazil’s economic realities. They also suggested that the military’s academic purges and efforts to strip campuses of any political activity rendered universities little more than “a prop for its [the dictatorship’s] own maintenance” by eliminating the critical thinking and political organizing conducive to contesting the dictatorship.<sup>83</sup> In challenging the Reforma Universitária directly, universities served as both the physical and discursive sites through which students challenged the military regime more generally.

Even private schools whose operations were not directly governed by the Reforma Universitária were critical of the government’s policy. At PUC-Rio, students complained that theirs was the “first university in Brazil to apply the Reforma Universitária,” and second only to UFRJ’s engineering and architecture school in the number of graduate theses defended. Until 1972, the article went on, PUC had sought to apply the Reforma Universitária by hiring more professors and directing its program toward teaching and research in an effort “to respond to the governmental policy.” Yet, by 1973, this program “revealed itself to be impractical, and . . . PUC entered into great crisis,” asking for a four million dollar loan from abroad just to be able to pay its faculty.<sup>84</sup> The threat of foreign debt carried with it echoes of the fear of dependence upon US cultural imperialism via education. The incident served as a reminder that in spite of the regime’s hope that the Reforma Universitária would improve higher education, the growing uncertainty and failures of the government program provided students new avenues to critique the regime on its failed social policies.

These perceived failures continued to multiply as the decade progressed. By the mid 1970s, it became clear that the issues of *excedentes* (students who passed entrance exams but for whom there were no openings) and the shortage of

82. Encaminhamento No. 130/76/DPPS/RJ/Interior, June 21, 1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 44.

83. Encaminhamento No. 49, June 21, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

84. *Quilombo dos Palmares* 2:3 (March 1976). APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 42.

*vagas* (available positions for students in universities) had returned. This was particularly troubling for the military's educational program, as the Reforma Universitária had the specific goal of permanently addressing the matter of excedentes and *vagas*, both of which had been very real problems in the 1960s.<sup>85</sup> In 1975, students again noted that there were not enough openings nationwide for the number of matriculating students. At the Second National Seminar of Engineering Students—a national meeting that students utilized early on to attempt to reestablish national connections that the crackdown on UNE had eliminated—a pamphlet circulated among students pointing out that across the nation's 848 universities, *faculdades*, and private schools, there were only 940,000 openings for over one million students. Students claimed that this situation had led to a deficit of 160,000 *vagas*—nearly three times the entire capacity of the University of São Paulo, the country's largest university and exceeding the number of students enrolled in *all* universities and colleges in 1964.<sup>86</sup> At UFF, some students blamed the termination of the astronomy and architecture programs on budget cuts, and the lack of infrastructure on overcrowding. The military police placed the blame elsewhere, declaring that “the greater problem is created by repeating students,” citing an administrative report from within UFF that indicated a failure rate of 80 percent out of a group of 120 students. According to the secret police, the number of students repeating the courses was thereby responsible for insufficient *vagas* for the next incoming class.<sup>87</sup>

Yet security agents' predilection to blame the students could not mask the fact that the dictatorship's educational policies, combined with the policy of jubilação, were making it more, not less, difficult for students to gain access to universities—the very problem that had been a cornerstone of students' demands in the 1960s. Psychology students in Belo Horizonte satirically reported on the “novelties” students could expect in 1977: “The number of lines increased and the number of *vagas* decreased!!!” The results, the pamphlet went on, were that many students could not matriculate in obligatory courses, and a greater number failed to receive passing grades in classes outside of their program.<sup>88</sup> Newer students were finding it harder to enroll in courses where older students were being “held back,” leading to a bottleneck that left even fewer openings. Given that the regime had defended its 1968 Reforma Universitária in no small part on the grounds that it would make universities

85. Ministério da Educação e Cultura, *Reforma Universitária*, 1968.

86. As queixas contra o ensino, Encaminhamento No. 73/75/DPPS/INT/RJ, August 22, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40. To understand the rapid expansion of higher education in Brazil after 1968, it is worth recalling that student enrollment in all universities in 1964 was about 120,000.

87. Encaminhamento No. 74/75/DPPS/RJ/Interior, August 22, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

88. Documento Sigiloso No. 100714, September 26, 1976, AN, Coleção DSI, box 614–05280.



more accessible and get rid of the problem of too many applicants for too few openings—a major issue in the 1960s—both current and prospective students were increasingly willing to mobilize against the regime over such educational policies. Rather than addressing more overtly political issues and risking being branded as subversives, students pointed to vagas as evidence of the military’s inability to uphold even that small end of the bargain promised by its Reforma Universitária.

The state was also unprepared for the dramatic increase in the number of students in the expanded university system that the Reforma Universitária itself had sought to amend. Students pointed out that the rapid expansion of student enrollment did not witness an accompanying increase in qualified faculty. Indeed, purges following the 1968 edicts suspended professors deemed subversive, further undermining universities’ ability to educate students.<sup>89</sup> The result was that universities hired under-qualified professors. The association of graduate students at PUC-Rio reported that higher education enrollment had increased by 131 percent from 1969 to 1973, and pointed out that of the professors hired to deal with this growth (and to replace those whom the regime had purged), “61 percent only have a Bachelors’ degree, and 22 percent of these only have technical degrees; only eight percent have a Master’s degree; and nine percent a doctoral degree.”<sup>90</sup>

Students throughout Brazil lamented the faculty shortages. Another article that circulated at the 1975 Second National Seminar of Engineering Students condemned the “failings in the curricula, the low level of professors and students, elevated fees, deficient installations and, principally, the lack of an opportunity to participate more in the solutions of the problems of the school.”<sup>91</sup> This latter point implicitly tapped into the undemocratic conditions on campuses that excluded students’ voices from decision-making. Students at UFE, UFRJ, and UFPE echoed similar sentiments, going so far as to call higher education “a public calamity,” allowing the universities to serve as both real and emblematic examples of the military regime’s failure to improve the federal universities and, in a larger arena, to help Brazil achieve overall progress.<sup>92</sup>

89. Personal interviews with A. P., November 26, 2007; S. C., September 10, 2007; and J. E., June 19, 2007. See also Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 124–129; Elio Gaspari, *A ditadura encurralada* (São Paulo: Editora Schwarcz Ltda., 2004), 229; and Marilena Chauí, *Escritos sobre a universidade*, (São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2000), 161.

90. Encaminhamento No. 51, June 27, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

91. Encaminhamento No. 73/75/DPPS/INT/RJ, August 22, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

92. Jornal “DCE” – Universidade Federal Fluminense, May 4, 1977, AN, Coleção DSI, box 610–05276; Jornal “Momento” – Órgão Oficial do MDB em Pernambuco, June 27, 1977, AN, Coleção DSI, box 610–05276; Encaminhamento No. 73/75/DPPS/INT/RJ, August 22, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40; Relatório, March 31, 1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

Although private universities were exempt from some of the Reforma Universitária provisions, several were quick to follow its prescriptions, and all schools in fact felt the effects of its incomplete implementation. Due to the cost of rapid expansion and the reduction in the percentage of the federal budget devoted to education, the military government could not expand the federal university system fast enough. Consequently, private universities increasingly saw their schools fill with the students whom public universities could not accommodate, a situation that led in turn to rapid growth and overcrowding in private universities. As this process accelerated, students at private universities joined their colleagues in the federal universities in complaining about the Reforma.

### STUDENT DEMANDS, COMMODIFIED DEGREES, AND THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Further, students felt that the government, in its rush to expand the university system, had left the faculty at federal universities woefully unprepared and unqualified. Echoing the rhetoric of the 1960s, a student directorate at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais declared that “the University today, instrumentalized to serve the dominant sectors in accord with this phase of capitalist development, reduces higher education to fragmented, super-specialized, and non-integrating professionalization. The transmission of broad scientific knowledge and learning has been completely abandoned in favor of *alienated professional training* that serves the interest of business.”<sup>93</sup>

Students also criticized private businesses for their failure to invest in the development of technology on campuses, accusing business elites and the government of viewing the universities only as vehicles for the “formation of cheap and technical labor with the capacity to use and adapt imported technologies.”<sup>94</sup> In this framing, students were genuinely interested in improving higher education and in turn the nation, while business elites were seeking only their own profit. Thus, students symbolically framed the universities as the medium through which national development would occur: only students combatting the military’s Reforma Universitária were working in the nation’s interest. Such a discursive move allowed students in the 1970s to reclaim the mantle of representing the true interests of the nation—much as they had done in the 1960s, albeit in a very different mode and context.

93. Informe No. 500/80-SI/SR/DPF/RJ, July 31, 1980, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 69-A, emphasis in original.

94. Relatório, DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB-Seção de Buscas Especiais, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

Students also felt that state-led efforts to increase the number of white-collar professionals to accelerate national development was having a negative effect on their education. Early in the decade, leftist students’ campus newspapers emphasized that higher education should not aim to create technical professionals with narrow interests, but should instead provide a humanist education.<sup>95</sup> These students felt that their training had become too narrow for them to take their broader place in Brazilian society as university-trained professionals. In the 1960s, conservatives in government like Aliomar Baleeiro had accused students of viewing degrees as commodities; students in the 1970s redirected such rhetoric, claiming that the emphasis on technical know-how commodified and devalued university degrees to suit the narrow-minded, self-serving, capitalist goals of the Brazilian state.<sup>96</sup>

Instead of providing a humanistic education for Brazilian students, degrees had become another item exchanged on a market, violating the traditional function of higher education in Brazil. One student newspaper article condemned the government for “dangerously pushing students for the exclusive search for a diploma at whatever cost.”<sup>97</sup> A pamphlet found on UFRJ’s campus similarly observed, “As the number of graduates increased at an accelerated rhythm, the value of the graduation diploma fell.”<sup>98</sup> An article in the alternative newspaper *Opinião* declared that the commodification of degrees expanded “the market of those who have a high school diploma [who] were eager to consume higher education.”<sup>99</sup> Students at an independent college in São Paulo published an article bluntly inquiring whether they were attending a college or a diploma factory.<sup>100</sup> At PUC-Rio, students produced a pamphlet featuring the stories of four fictional students who, they assured the reader, “although created by us, are not imaginary people. Any similarity between them and hundreds of students at PUC/RJ, in 1975, is not a mere coincidence.”

The case of one of the four, “Jorge,” mentioned above in this article, illustrated the issue of commodification. Jorge was anxious about the value of his college education for his own professional mobility and the economic security of his family. Using Jorge’s imagined narrative, the students criticized the quality of education, with professors who saw students as “empty boxes in which they

95. Libertas-Caderno Especial dos Calouros – 1972, APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Série Movimento Estudantil, folder 6.

96. Texto sobre a universidade, discutindo reformas modernizantes, CPDOC, AB pi Baleeiro, A. 1961.00.00.

97. Encaminhamento No. 73/75/DPPS/INT/RJ, August 22, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

98. DPPS Gabinete Reservado No. 2-490/1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, livro 4, folder 43.

99. “O Negócio do ensino superior,” *Opinião* 42, (August 27-September 3, 1973), APERJ, Coleção Periódicos Alternativas.

100. Informação No. 066/78/DSI/MJ, January 26, 1978, AN, Coleção DSI, box 618–05284.

deposit all of the knowledge they should acquire” for students to regurgitate on exams. They also condemned “the preoccupation with tests and exams and the need to work.” These activities “impede[s] Jorge from participating in other activities. He learns only the techniques of work, without a general vision, without a perspective.” As a result, instead of becoming a good citizen who contributes to society through critical thinking and the benefits of his humanist education, Jorge would become obsessed with good grades in the name of personal financial advancement.<sup>101</sup>

These examples reveal the ways students used the government’s rapid expansion and reform of the university system to undermine the effectiveness of the state under military rule. Even as they reshaped the educational context that state policy attempted to impose on them, they used those very issues against the state, to continue to challenge the military regime. Students decried narrow professionalization that led to a degree stripped of any of their broader philosophical or social concerns, such as the student’s role in the university and in society. Additionally, this emphasis on college degrees for professionalization led to an increasingly glutted job market as the 1970s went on. When the press commented that “today we produce medical doctors who are unable to find work as doctors, journalists who cannot be journalists, professors who do not learn,” it simply echoed a growing frustration among many students that rapid university expansion had left university graduates under-educated and the job market oversaturated.<sup>102</sup>

Poor campus infrastructure did nothing to brighten this situation or impede student demands. In 1975, attendees from around the country at a national meeting of medical students—another gathering in which leftist students organized and exchanged ideas in the absence of UNE—drafted a resolution on universities in Brazil. The resolution decried the fact that universities throughout the Brazil “did not have even the minimum number of books required for courses,” and suffered from an “absence of laboratories” and “didactic books for free consultation.” In the resolution, students also demanded “improvements in the material conditions of education.” These quotidian issues had come to serve as means to criticize the social policies, and thus the political legitimacy, of the regime.<sup>103</sup> That it was medical students who in this instance contested the regime’s policies was particularly ironic: along with engineering, medicine was an area that the military had praised and

101. DPPS-DO-SB-SBE, February 24, 1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 42.

102. Encaminhamento No. 088/79/DSI/MJ – Jornal “*Em Tempo*,” March 9, 1979, AN, Coleção DSI, box 616–05282.

103. Relatório Especial de Informações No. 4/75 – VII ECEM [Encontro Nacional de Estudantes de Medicina do Brasil], July 28, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

avored for its apolitical nature and its importance in national development.<sup>104</sup> Although the government had focused on improving medical schools, medical students were increasingly dissatisfied with their education and mobilized to contest the regime and its policies. At these national meetings, students from schools from throughout Brazil were able to meet and learn that these deficiencies were not isolated to certain campuses, but were a major issue confronting Brazilian education in general.<sup>105</sup>

Students vociferously complained about the “physically deficient conditions” of campuses that were “inadequate” compared to the number of students entering the university system.<sup>106</sup> Leftist leaders even referred to these mobilizations as deploying “drinking-fountain tactics: it began with the drinking fountain and ended in imperialism.”<sup>107</sup> While not all who mobilized used “ended in imperialism” in their rhetoric, the impact of such tactics was real. Even as UNE made its return at the end of the decade, student leaders looked back and acknowledged that these infrastructure issues had become a central pillar in bringing students together to reconstitute the organization.<sup>108</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Student organization in the 1970s saw both successes and failures. The educational arena was an important part of the matrix that led to the return of student mobilization throughout the 1970s, a matrix that also included human rights struggles and reaction to institutional politics.<sup>109</sup> Yet educational issues were a vital, if often overlooked, component of student movements’ reorganization and remobilization in the 1970s. In the early part of the decade, students allied with various *tendências* of the clandestine lefts who played a vital part in maintaining mobilization in the face of repression, albeit on a smaller scale. Student mobilizations around educational issues throughout the 1970s show both the impact and limitations of more explicitly left-leaning groups in reconstituting the student movement throughout that decade.

104. Transcrição dos debates sobre o Estado, sociedade, democracia e universidade; Exposição sobre as tendências da democracia contemporânea; Conferência para o SBPC sobre o desenvolvimento científico-acadêmico, all in APERJ, Coleção Jean Marc von der Weid, Dossiê 6.

105. Encaminhamento No. 049, June 21, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

106. Informação No. 1093/75, August 19, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

107. Transcript of interview with Luiz Mariano, conducted by Angélica Müller and Carla Siqueira, May 17, 2005, PMME.

108. Transcript of interview with Clara Araújo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Tátiana Di Sabbato, October 25, 2004, PMME.

109. See for example Serbin, *Secret Dialogues*; Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*; Costa, *Cale-se*; Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*; and Maria Helena Moreira Alves, *State and Opposition in Military Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985).

It is true that these actions of the small number of leftists had a mixed outcome. On the one hand, their appeals to educational issues overcame the prejudices or fears many “common” students held regarding the left, and as the decade progressed, the number of students gathering and speaking out went from dozens to thousands. As one student in the early 1970s observed, “Students liked us, were in solidarity.” But they also feared being arrested if they became too close to these campus groups.<sup>110</sup> That fear eroded over time. As several hundred students attended clandestine and still illegal meetings to reconstitute UNE between 1977 and 1979, the success in rebuilding a national movement was self-evident.

On the other hand, the central goal of those leftist leaders was as much to recruit students to their organizations as to maintain student mobilization, and in this regard, the outcomes were much more mixed. Very few of those who attended these national meetings in the late 1970s affiliated with the PC do B, PCB, the Movimento Revolucionário – 8 de Outubro (MR-8), or other leftist groups that nominated delegations for leadership of UNE. At the congress that reconstituted UNE in 1979, over 800 students attended, but leftist leaders recalled that the immense majority were independent: students who attended “went there to reorganize UNE and fight for democracy; they did not go to fight for [a single] group.”<sup>111</sup> The membership of leftist groups like the PC do B, MR-8, and others did grow somewhat in this period. Yet the growth of a national student movement was much more visible as the decade closed and UNE made its official, if still technically illegal, return.

Many education-related issues—fees, jubilação, food, and the Reforma Universitária—were vital to the return of UNE. If they seemed to be specific to the university setting, they also operated in student discourse as metonyms for democratization in the broader scope of national politics. In their calls for students’ rights to more active participation in decision-making at the universities—a demand they had been making since the 1960s—students were offering, by extension, alternative visions of a more democratic society.<sup>112</sup> In students’ rhetoric, with greater participation, they could help bring an end to the top-down authoritarianism prevalent in universities, thus democratizing state institutions from within.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, students used the universities to

110. Transcript of interview with Adriano Diogo, conducted by Ana Paula Goulart and Angélica Müller, November 11, 2004, PMME.

111. Transcript of interview with Aldo Rebelo, conducted by Angélica Müller, Ana Paulo Goulart, and Paulo Markun, December 4, 2004, PMME.

112. Informação No. 446/78-B13, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, box 53. For students making this demand in the pre-dictatorship period, see Snider, “A More Systemic Fight for Reform.”

113. Relatório, March 31, 1976, DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB-Seção de Buscas Especiais, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

advocate for a more socially democratic society that would open admission to student applicants from all social classes, particularly the popular classes. Eliminating the mounting fees would make education accessible to the poorer sectors of society. Running against the military’s reliance on private education and incorporation of student fees, students offered an alternative vision in which the extension of public (not private) universities would finally allow Brazil to achieve “the creation of a just and democratic society.”<sup>114</sup> Students also critiqued the rising income gap between rich and poor in the wake of the Brazil’s “economic miracle,” thereby introducing into their definition of democracy a sense of social justice that was absent in state officials’ rhetoric.<sup>115</sup>

As the Brazilian state under military rule shifted toward private education in the 1970s, students continued to counter and challenge the regime by advocating an alternative society where free public education was available to all. They sought an expansion of free higher education—a goal that the regime’s fees and rising food prices, and the failures of its Reforma Universitária, undermined, further spurring contestatory student mobilization. Free public education accessible to all would define a developed nation, according to students who accused the government of holding Brazilian development back by failing to understand the university’s role “as an efficient instrument for the country’s economic and more socially just development.”<sup>116</sup> Discontented with the growing stratification of Brazilian society and the difficulties of the poor in gaining access to free higher education, student groups called for “an end to the privatization and elitization of education” and the opening of higher education and culture for all socioeconomic classes.<sup>117</sup> Students insisted that “true development” would happen in Brazil only when all groups and social classes could participate “in solving socioeconomic and political problems.”<sup>118</sup> Students at UFRJ perhaps put it most succinctly in their definition of a university: “The university is not a ‘social position,’ but a *contract with society*.”<sup>119</sup> From the campuses, which students saw as sites for development and social justice, they demanded inclusion of other socioeconomic groups.

114. Ministério da Justiça No. 103712, Seminário “*O São Paulo*,” 1977, AN, Coleção DSI, box 614–05280. See also Relatório, March 31, 1976, DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB-Seção de Buscas Especiais, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

115. DPPS-DO-SB-SBE, February 24, 1976, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 42.

116. Relatório Especial de Informações No. 4/75 – VII ECEM, July 28, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

117. Relatório, March 31, 1976, DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB-Seção de Buscas Especiais, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 43.

118. Relatório Especial de Informações No. 4/75 – VII ECEM, July 28, 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40.

119. DGIE-DPPS-DO-SB-Seção de Buscas, June 1975, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 40, emphasis in original.

Students at different universities increasingly worked together as the 1970s progressed. At meetings like the engineering students' and medical students' national meetings, they exchanged experiences and ideas, leading to the development of collaborative pamphlets and agendas. Networking could be professionally or regionally based. For example, in 1976, students from 25 departments in Rio de Janeiro's four largest universities (UFF, UFRJ, PUC-RIO, and UERJ) gathered at UFF to protest the repressive measures of the dictatorship, including the firing of two professors at UFF and UFRJ.<sup>120</sup> At these gatherings, students were better able to coordinate their tactics and strategies of resistance and articulate the issues they were facing, both in the university system and with respect to national political agendas. As UNE began its official (and still illegal) return in the late 1970s, it would adopt many of these platforms. Clearly, student mobilization and activism continued throughout the 1970s, and debates continued about the role of universities and higher education in democracy and development in Brazil. As a result, students offered alternate visions about education and politics to those offered by the state. The military may have virtually destroyed the national movement in the wake of AI-5, but students at individual campuses and departments continued to press for what they considered meaningful university reform.

In its efforts to halt student activism in the 1970s, the dictatorship through its own policies had created the very conditions that enabled students to continue to mobilize along new fronts. This mobilization, lacking the overtly ideological tenor of leftist leaders in the 1960s or the guerrilla movements of the early 1970s, were more difficult to crack down upon. The fact that there was no active national student organization had not halted student activism or organization around their educational experiences; it simply led them to politicize the everyday, using the quotidian to create a discursive space through which to continue to criticize and resist military rule. There was no national student movement or organization like UNE that could claim victory, nor were there individuals like Wladimir Palmeira or Luis Travassos who could be seen as representing the whole. Instead, *all* students were now united in their struggles, not through partisanship, but through the matter that all had to pay fees and suffer the implementation of the *Reforma*.<sup>121</sup>

In one particularly telling instance of the new sense of student activism, the popular and irreverent underground paper *O Pasquim* included a cartoon of an

120. DGIE/DPPS/DO, Seção de Buscas Especiais, APERJ, Coleção DOPS, Setor Estudantil, folder 42.

121. Palmeira had been the president of the União Metropolitana dos Estudantes in Rio de Janeiro in 1968, while Travassos was the president of UNE for much of 1968. As a result much of the media focus fell on them as protests and student demonstrations intensified throughout 1968, an arguable emphasis given the masses in the streets and those behind organizing.



alien asking a student to take him to his leader. The student pointed to the masses behind him, replying, “We’re all here.”<sup>122</sup> Student politics and their involvement in issues may not have matched the peaks of 1960s mobilization, but resistance in the 1970s fit within a broader trajectory of student activism. Though they could not and did not organize nationally or mobilize as visibly as they had in the 1960s, they reframed their activism by deploying a politics of the mundane to continue challenging the military regime and contesting its policies and effects on society, into the regime’s twilight.

## ANNEX

For student mobilization in Brazil in the long 1960s, see Victoria Langland, *Speaking of Flowers: Student Movements and the Making and Remembering of 1968 in Military Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); James N. Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Colin Snider, “A More Systemic Fight for Reform’: University Reform, Student Movements, Society, and the State in Brazil, 1957–1968,” in *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, Samantha Christiansen and Zachary Scarlett, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 101–115; Maria Paula Araujo, *Memórias estudiantis: da fundação da UNE aos nossos dias* (Rio de Janeiro: Ediouro Publicações S.A., 2007); Antônio de Padua Gurgel, *A rebelião dos estudantes: Brasília, 1968* (Brasília: Editora Revan, 2004); Arthur José Poerner, *O poder jovem: história da participação política dos estudantes brasileiros* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1979); Roberto A. Salmeron, *A universidade interrompida: Brasília 1964–1965*, 2nd ed. (Brasília: Editora UnB, 2007); Maria Ribeiro do Valle, *1968: O diálogo é a violência – Movimento estudantil e ditadura militar no Brasil* (Campinas: Editora Unicamp, 2008); and Zuenir Ventura, *1968: O ano que não terminou: a aventura de uma geração*, 13th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1988).

For Latin American cases outside of Brazil, see Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Vania Markarian, *Uruguay, 1968: Student Activism from Global Counterculture to Molotov Cocktails* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017); Jaime Pensado, *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); and Heather Vrana, “Do Not Mess with Us!”: *Students and the State in Guatemala City, 1944–1996* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

122. *O Pasquim* 416, June 17–23, 1977.

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University of Texas-Tyler  
Tyler, Texas  
[csnider@uttyler.edu](mailto:csnider@uttyler.edu)

COLIN M. SNIDER