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Socialist high modernity and global stagnation: a shared history of Brazil and the Soviet Union during the Cold War*

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Abstract

This article questions a prevailing bipolarity of traditional Cold War history by examining commonalities and interactions between the Soviet Union and Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s. After outlining the common characteristics of both states around 1960, it analyses the cultural diplomacy of the post-Stalinist Soviet Union towards Brazil. Transforming its hitherto prevailing image as the cradle of world revolution and communist class struggle, the USSR now represented itself as a role model for the quick industrialization of the economy and education of the masses. Many Brazilian intellectuals and political reformers from President Kubitschek to President Goulart shared with the Soviets an interest in what is here called 'socialist high modernity'. Contacts with the Soviet Union were connected to the putsch and the end of Brazilian democracy in 1964. However, the new military leaders also had their own interests in, and surprisingly good relations with, the stagnating Soviet Union. This was again based on a set of commonalities in the historical development of the two ostensibly idiosyncratic and distant states on either side of the Iron Curtain. Eschewing teleological interpretations of the period and exploring the ideational basis of actors in the conflict, this article – based on new documents from Moscow archives and recently declassified sources from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry – aims to link Cold War historiography to the debates on global history, which have lately neglected both Latin America and eastern Europe.

Keywords Brazil, Cold War, development, (concepts of) modernity, Soviet Union

Introduction

The Cold War has long divided not only Europe and the world into different camps but also scholarship on the history of the second half of the twentieth century. The newly created Western alliance sought its identity in histories of 'the West', or historians stuck to their respective national histories. Soviet specialists dealt with the enigmatic communist empire

* Thanks to Steve Smith, Arne Westad, and the two anonymous reviewers for comments on previous drafts. The transliteration of Russian follows the international scientific ISO 9 standard, with the exception of commonly known personal names.

and its satellites, while 'Third World' matters tended to be edged aside to area studies, especially in continental Europe, rather than being discussed in historical seminars. Norman Davies in one chapter, and the late Tony Judt in an entire book, attempted to overcome this methodological partition. In their histories of post-war Europe they also accommodated what was then known as the Eastern bloc, and underlined the many commonalities in the development of all European societies.[1]

In global perspectives on the Cold War, however, many old divisions still prevail. Advocates of a new global history, inspired by postcolonial studies, have questioned the all-encompassing and mono-directional influence of the West on the history of the world and its interpretation.[2] However, so far, they have predominantly implemented their theoretical approach through a historiography of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Southeast Asia, China, India, and sometimes Africa. Latin America, once prominent in Marxist, world systems, and dependency theories, has all but disappeared from recent debates. New Cold War historiography has included Central and South America but, even in its new 'global' form, it still focuses almost exclusively on diplomatic and military confrontations within a Washington-centred framework, from the US intervention in Guatemala through the Cuban Crisis to the Iran–Contra Affair during the civil war in Nicaragua.[3] The *longue durée* impact of the Cold War on Latin American societies and their intellectual history has been explored, but with an exclusively inward-looking view that has ignored any impact from other world regions.[4]

However, the world beyond Latin America, and especially the two superpowers, was not a mere backdrop to internal Latin American affairs, for these powers also interfered directly. This is widely recognized in the case of US activities in their southern hemisphere, and has been researched for military interventions, development aid, and cultural influence.[5] In contrast, the Soviet Union – which was, after all, the indispensable 'other' in the conflict – remains a somewhat passive, distant actor in the game. Historians of the Soviet Union have lately cautiously included relations with the emerging 'Third World', but Latin America has

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1 Tony Judt, *Postwar: a history of Europe since 1945*, London: Penguin Press, 2005; Norman Davies, *Europe, a history*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

2 For an overview, see Sebastian Conrad, Andreas Eckert, and Ulrike Freitag, eds., *Globalgeschichte: Ansätze, Theorien, Methoden*, Frankfurt: Campus, 2007.

3 Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In from the cold: Latin America's new encounter with the Cold War*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007; Odd Arne Westad, *The global Cold War: Third World interventions and the making of our times*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

4 Jean Franco, *The decline and fall of the lettered city: Latin America in the Cold War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

5 Laura Belmonte, *Selling the American way: U.S. propaganda and the Cold War*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008; Michael Grow, *U.S. presidents and Latin American interventions: pursuing regime change in the Cold War*, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008; Greg Grandin, *Empire's workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the rise of the new imperialism*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006; Sewall Menzel, *Dictators, drugs and revolution: Cold War campaigning in Latin America 1965–1989*, Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006; Greg Grandin, *The last colonial massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*, Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press, 2004; Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who paid the piper? The CIA and the cultural Cold War*, London: Granta Books, 1999; Stephen Rabe, *The most dangerous area in the world: John F. Kennedy confronts communist revolution in Latin America*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

not yet triggered scholarly interest among them.[6] Only some shop-worn literature on support for Cuba, undercover secret service activities, or military support for guerrillas in later periods engages with the Soviet impact on Latin America.[7]

This article places an analysis of Soviet–Brazilian relations into these different academic contexts, and combines the history of the Cold War in Latin America with a global view of Soviet history. A first, comparative, section reveals commonalities between Brazil and the Soviet Union in their shared history of the 1950s and 1960s, which relativize the notion of separate camps in the Cold War. Interactions between the two entities across the Iron Curtain adds a transnational dimension: the second section outlines Brazilian interests in and contacts with the Soviet Union, as well as Soviet cultural diplomacy towards Brazil. In a third step, an examination of Soviet–Brazilian relations during the military dictatorship from 1964 shows continuities in their contacts, which raises questions about the role of Brazil as a rather passive actor in the Western camp. The Soviet Union and Brazil, it is argued, had a specific common history in the second half of the twentieth century. This common, or shared, history does not fit neatly into the usual categories of the East–West conflict, and points at developments in post-war world history that proceeded similarly in distant states on different sides of the Iron Curtain. Going beyond traditional diplomatic history, replacing bipolarity with mutual interactions, and putting individual actors and societies in an international context, this contribution to a global history of the Cold War period tries to overcome the methodological boundaries and barriers that the East–West conflict once created.

Socialist high modernity: Brazil and the Soviet Union around 1960

After the dictator Getúlio Vargas committed suicide in 1954, Brazilian populism lingered on in a new democratic form for another decade. Left-wing reformist governments, under presidents Juscelino Kubitschek, Jânio Quadros, and João Goulart, led Brazil in an age that was characterized by nationalism and developmentalism.[8] Raúl Prebisch's *desarrollismo* (developmentalism) caught on in Brazil: when Kubitschek (1954–61) took office, he promised fifty years of progress in five. The largely agrarian, multi-ethnic South American giant had

6 For an overview, see David Engerman, 'The Second World's Third World', *Kritika*, 1, 2011, pp. 183–211; Tobias Rupprecht, 'Die Sowjetunion und die Welt im Kalten Krieg: neue Forschungsperspektiven auf eine vermeintlich hermetisch abgeschlossene Gesellschaft', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 3, 2010, pp. 381–99.

7 Christopher Andrew and Vasilij Mitrochin, *The world was going our way: the KGB and the battle for the Third World*, New York: Basic Books, 2005; Nikolai Leonov, 'La inteligencia soviética en América Latina durante la Guerra Fría', *Estudios Públicos*, 73, 1999; Nicola Miller, *Soviet relations with Latin America, 1959–1987*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; Eusebio Mujal-León, ed., *The USSR and Latin America: a developing relationship*, Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989; Cole Blasier, *The giant's rival: the USSR and Latin America*, Pittsburgh, PA: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987; Jacques Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban revolution: Soviet ideological and strategic perspectives, 1959–77*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.

8 Leslie Bethell, 'Politics in Brazil under the liberal republic, 1945–1964', *The Cambridge history of Latin America, Vol. IX, Brazil since 1930*, pp. 87–164; Oscar Terán, Gerardo Caetano, Sofía Correa Sutil, and Adolfo Garcé García y Santos, *Ideas en el siglo: intelectuales y cultura en el siglo XX latinoamericano*, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI editores, 2004.

long vanquished colonial rule but was economically dependent on the United States and divided by a huge gap between a rich and well-educated ruling minority and an often illiterate and poor majority. To overcome what was increasingly felt as backwardness, Brazilian elites sought to convert their country into a modern industrial nation. Via import substitution, albeit with foreign capital and initially foregoing nationalizations, Brazil stimulated the expansion of its heavy industry. Grand national plans organized the modernization of the infrastructure, and huge investments in education and culture aimed to bring the entire Brazilian population on board the modernizing project. In 1955, the Cultural Ministry founded the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (Higher Institute for Brazilian Studies, ISEB). Mostly left-leaning, even Marxist and communist, intellectuals debated the future of the country, based on an 'autonomous, non-alienated' national development, and found sympathetic ears in the government. The head of the ISEB, the philosopher Roland Corbusier, edited a journal (*Cadernos de nosso tempo, Notebooks of our Time*) that propagated a rationalization of the political system and the introduction of economic and social planning.[9]

The year 1956 saw the beginning of the construction of Brasília, in the highlands of inner Brazil. Plans for the relocation of the capital had existed since the late nineteenth century, but it was only in the remarkable spirit of optimism of the 1950s that a belief in the technical feasibility of the project became tangible. The new capital, with its broad streets and parking lots, offered individual mobility; its museums, operas, and theatres brought highbrow culture into the wilderness. Planned from scratch, overmastering nature, functional, rational, and clean, Brasília epitomized high modernity. The chief architect, Oscar Niemeyer, a member of the Brazilian Communist Party, sketched not only representative buildings but also blocks of flats that deliberately mingled workers' and managers' families. Not least, the utopian city freed Brazil from its colonial legacy in the field of architecture: the period was characterized not only by a stalwart belief in progress but also by a growing sense of solidarity with the emerging postcolonial 'Third World'.

As early as 1954, a year before the Bandung Conference, an anti-colonial congress of writers took place in Goiania. Kubitschek's successor, Quadros, who won the elections with an anti-elite and anti-corruption campaign, was said to have photographs of Nasser, Nehru, and Tito on his desk. He also rhetorically supported the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, at the time still under Portuguese colonial rule.[10] He decorated Che Guevara with a Brazilian state medal, and touted (albeit unsuccessfully) membership in the Non-Aligned Movement among Latin American statesmen. Emphasizing a 'common ethnic and cultural heritage … as well as current underdevelopment', he also founded an Afro-Asian Institute, which gathered prominent left-wing intellectuals and became an influential voice in a new, independent Brazilian foreign policy.[11]

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9 Terán, et al., pp. 191–7.

10 Jorge Amado, *Navegação de cabotagem: apontamentos para um livro de memórias que jamais escreverei*, Lisbon: Editora Record, 1992, p. 93, p. 285.

11 James Hershberg, '"High spirited confusion": Brazil, the 1961 Belgrade Non-Allied Conference, and the limits of an "independent foreign policy" during the high Cold War', *Cold War History*, 3, 2007, pp. 373–88; Jânio Quadros Neto and Eduardo Gualazzi, *Jânio Quadros: memorial à história do Brasil*, São Paulo: Editora Rideel, 1996, pp. 101–7.

Ideologically confused and with authoritarian and neurotic tendencies, Quadros resigned as president after only eight months, but Vice-President Goulart, who replaced him, continued his path of left populism and anti-imperialism. He invited Tito to Brazil and, during his visit as the first Western statesman to communist China, drank a toast with Mao to Afro-Asian-Latin American friendship. Imperialism, they agreed, was the culprit for their countries' backwardness: earlier in history it had been Portugal, the Dutch, or the British; now it was American monopolies that aimed at keeping Brazil as a supplier of raw materials. Goulart went further in his reforms than Kubitschek: he nationalized central industries and banks, legalized the Communist Party (the PCB), launched agrarian and university reforms, extended suffrage to the illiterate masses, and announced a return to stronger controls over foreign capital. Claiming that the Congress was no longer in tune with the aspirations of the people, with a referendum in 1963 he set Brazil on the path of presidentialism.[12] During this entire decade of left-wing populism, reformers never questioned Brazil's affiliation with the Western world or the anti-communist Organization of American States (OAS). But, by launching modernizing campaigns within the country, they also sought to strengthen Brazil's dominant position within Latin America (and potentially the entire 'Third World'), and to gain an independent voice in international affairs that could also be heard outside the United States' 'backyard'.

Almost the exact same decade (1953/54–1964) saw even more ground-breaking reforms in the Soviet Union. Stalin died in March 1953, and his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, greatly reduced repression and censorship. Millions of political prisoners were freed from labour camps, and, in 1956, Khrushchev denounced some of Stalin's crimes at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). For a while, the arts enjoyed relative freedom, and Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Thaw* gave a name to the epoch. The end of Stalinism, pride in victory in the Second World War, and technological feats such the construction of hydroelectric power plants and the space programme promoted a widespread optimism. The educated, urban part of the new Soviet generation placed great hope in the prospect of a modern, de-Stalinized socialism, not only within the Soviet Union but also in those parts of the world that were about to rid themselves of the yoke of colonialism and would soon form the 'Third World'.[13]

For all their enormous cultural and ideological differences, striking commonalities existed between Brazil and the Soviet Union around 1960. Both spanned huge territories that were being developed with gigantic projects. By building dams, power plants, and even entire cities, 'civilization' was taken to backward parts of the countries that lay far beyond existing core zones. Both countries had overcome dictatorships (if not on the same scale and not to the same extent) at the same time, and in both a spirit of optimism and an unshaken belief in the benefits of technology prevailed. Heavy industry, combined with economic and social planning and the education of the masses, was expected to bring about desired higher living standards and a stronger geopolitical position in the world. Both Brazil

12 Jorge Otero, *De Lula a Jango: João Goulart: recuerdos en su exilio uruguayo*, Montevideo: Ediciones de la Plaza, 2003.

13 Petr Vajl' and Aleksandr Genis, *60-e: mir sovetskogo čeloveka (The 60ers: the world of Soviet man)*, Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001; Evgenij Evtušenko, *Volčij passport (The wolf's passport)*, Moscow: Bagrius 1998.

and the Soviet Union began to be interested in the 'Third World' and identified, or at least showed solidarity, with the 'backward' parts of the planet. Technological progress was embraced uncritically, and ever higher levels of economic production and social planning helped to justify authoritarian and nationalist governance. Interestingly, Kubitschek was put on public display after his death and, just like Lenin in Moscow, still lies in a mausoleum in Brasília, whose modern architecture stands in remarkable contrast to the apparently un-modern ideas of death and personality cults. His sculpture on top of the mausoleum even resembles a hammer and sickle, to which the army, which had its headquarters nearby, objected. However, while Kubitschek's five-year plan may have sounded Soviet to some contemporary anti-communists, it was much more an expression of the worldwide heyday of a socialist high modernity than an attempt to introduce bolshevism to Brazil.

To this perception, however, which finally led to a military putsch against Goulart in 1964 (in the same year in which Khrushchev was overthrown and the thaw ended), the Soviets also made their contribution: after years of self-isolation and paranoia about everything foreign during late Stalinism, the Soviet Union cautiously opened up to a world that was divided into three camps. Towards the West, Khrushchev announced his policy of peaceful coexistence. The 'Third World', which in the Soviets' view had always included the whole of Latin America and thus Brazil, became a target of a renewed Soviet internationalism. All the same, Soviet political leaders no longer advocated the violent overthrow of capitalist regimes by communist parties. They rather encouraged peaceful development to socialism, led by bourgeois nationalists, with or without the support of the local communists, presenting Soviet internal modernization of the 1920s and 1930s as a role model for rapid progress. In this spirit, the Soviet Union began an extensive cultural diplomacy campaign all over Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in order to convince the world of the great achievements and the good intentions of the Soviet state. Similar Soviet advances towards Sukarno's Indonesia, Nehru's India, and Nasser's Egypt are well known.[14] But 'semi-colonial Brazil', as Khrushchev called it at the 20th Congress,[15] had now come on the radar, too – and it showed great interest.

Across the Iron Curtain, part one: Brazilians in the Soviet Union

Relations and interactions between the Soviet Union and Brazil as they emerged from the mid 1950s were not built up from nothing. A first attempt to establish diplomatic relations in the wake of the World War alliance had failed in 1947, when Vargas, upon US recommendation, sent the Soviet ambassador Jakov Suric back to Moscow after only a year. The emerging Cold War brought back the fear of a communist insurrection, which the Brazilians had already experienced in 1935: under the auspices of the Komintern, Brazilian

14 Bradley Simpson, *Economists with guns: authoritarian development and U.S.–Indonesian relations, 1960–1968*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008; David Engerman, *Staging growth: modernization, development, and the global Cold War*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003.

15 *Pravda*, 15 February 1956.

communists, led by Luis Carlos Prestes, had reacted violently to an attempt to outlaw them, and had brought about a serious constitutional crisis. In the late 1940s, communists were still a remarkably strong political force in the country, with a stronghold in the harbour city of Santos, which was called Prestesgrad by some contemporaries. However, they strictly followed the Moscow party line, which, after Stalin's death, prohibited violent revolutions. Declared illegal during the 1950s under both Vargas and Kubitschek, and shaken by Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalinism, the Brazilian Communist Party later splintered into dissident groups, such as the Maoist Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB) or the Cuban-inspired *guerrilleros*, who tried to revive the revolutionary spirit but in fact only contributed to the already dwindling importance of the communist movement in Brazil.[16]

When Quadros took office in 1961, he was thus able to declare: '*Derrotamos o comunismo*!' – 'We have defeated communism!' He declined the support of the PCB and in his first interview as president made it clear that he was going to fight any possible communist threat. Having underlined his staunch anti-communism, however, Quadros outlined a different kind of interest that he had developed in the Soviet Union: 'I agree with the socialists in the assessment of some demands of modern life: increasing state intervention in the economy ... and the necessity of social planning and a welfare state.'[17] In an article in *Foreign Affairs* he repeated this to an international audience: 'The Western world must show and prove that it is not only Communist planning that promotes the prosperity of national economies. Democratic planning must also do so, with the assistance of those economically able.'[18] Negotiations with Moscow for the reestablishment of diplomatic relations invoked the needs of the Brazilian economy, but were strongly opposed by the military and many in the Foreign Ministry.[19] Quadros then further emphasized the parallels that he saw between Brazil and the USSR. Both had 'specific problems of a huge country, (with) vast territories where misery reigns and people fight for progress'. It was thus 'important for Brazil to develop exchanges with the Soviet Union. We have something to offer and much to learn.'[20] To Khrushchev personally, Quadros said:

> The Russian people are in a position to understand us. Their modern history is characterized by a struggle, under different historical and social conditions, to reach today's wellbeing of the country. ... The scientific and technical knowledge of the Soviet Union can, in this phase of enormous movement of progress, contribute to

16 William Waack, *Camaradas – nos arquivos de Moscou: a história secreta da revolução brasileira de 1935*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993; Stanley E. Hilton, *Brazil and the Soviet Union challenge, 1917–1947*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991.

17 Quadros Neto and Gualazzi, *Jânio Quadros*, pp. 26, 71, 87.

18 Janio Quadros, 'Brazil's new foreign policy', *Foreign Affairs*, 40, 1, 1961, pp. 19–28.

19 See, for example, Historical Archive of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty), Brasília (henceforth AHMRE), 845.1 (42) (74), Itamaraty to Frederico Mindello, 'Director Comercial da Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional', 4 July 1960; AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), 'Reatamento de relaçoes diplomáticas com a União Soviética', Jorge de Carvalho e Silva, Ministro, Chefe da Divisão da Europa Oriental to Secretário-Geral Adjunto para Asuntos da Europa Oriental e Asia, 5 December 1961; AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), Memorandum by E. Dayrell de Lima, Chefe da DOR, sent to Secretário Geral para Assuntos de Europa Oriental e Asia, 23 May 1962.

20 Stephen Clissold, ed., *Soviet relations with Latin America, 1918–1968: a documentary survey*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 190–1; *Novos Tempos*, 49, 1961, p. 3.

> the development of my country, in a time when Brazil has decided to burst its chains of poverty, disease, and ignorance.[21]

Other leading Brazilian statesmen spoke in a similar vein. Goulart turned to the Soviets for information on their literacy campaigns and wrote emphatic letters on peace and the progress of humankind to Khrushchev.[22] The conservative first new ambassador to the USSR, while appalled by the restrictions on diplomats in Moscow and the melancholy in the streets, could not conceal his 'respect for the great technological achievements of the Soviet people'.[23] And the foreign minister San Tiago Dantas charmed a Soviet business delegation: 'For a long time, Brazil has admired the achievements of the Soviet Union in the fields of industry, science and technology, which have brought the USSR into the global lead.'[24]

In fact, contacts went back to the early days of the Kubitschek government, when several Brazilian political delegations visited the Soviet Union. In 1956, Ivette Vargas, Getúlio Vargas' niece and the most influential female politician in Brazil at the time, headed a group of parliamentarians, who were deeply impressed by their visit to Moscow: 'No doubt there is much we can learn from the experience and the development of the Soviet Union.'[25] The year after, another group of fifty members of parliament, including the future Brazilian prime minister Tancredo Neves, followed. They admired power plants, industrial sites, and a colourful international youth festival in Moscow, although the conservative Brazilian Foreign Ministry still felt the need to declare these visits strictly private, to avoid trouble with the United States.[26] Quadros spent two weeks in the Soviet Union in 1959, long before he was elected president and before diplomatic relations were established. Khrushchev received him in the Kremlin. The same accolade was awarded to Goulart, who was greeted by the entire Presidium of the Central Committee and was given the standard tour programme for friends of the Soviet Union when he came as vice-president in December 1960, and again in August 1961.[27]

In the late 1950s and early 1960s there was a constant coming and going of Brazilian delegations to all parts of the Soviet Union. Federal and provincial parliamentarians and senators saw metro construction sites, hydroelectric power plants, the modernized cities of Central Asia and the Caucasus, schools, universities, and hospitals. They met civil servants,

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21 *Pravda*, 26 August 1961.

22 State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow (henceforth GARF), f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.169, Goulart to Soviet Ambassador Fomin, 18 December 1962; AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), 'Carta do Presidente República ao Primeiro Ministro da União Soviética', 30 April 1962.

23 AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), Brazilian ambassador to Moscow to Itamaraty, 'Condições da vida diplomática na União Soviética', 22 December 1961.

24 'Será ampliado o comércio entre o Brasil e a URSS', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 2 May 1963.

25 'Diálogo com a Sra. Ivette Vargas', *Novos Tempos*, 14, 25, 1956, p. 17.

26 Russian State Archive of Contemporary History, Moscow (henceforth RGASPI), f.3M op.15 d.27l.53/204, undated; AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), Itamaraty to the Brazilian mission at the UN, 'Viagens de brasileiros à União Soviética', 7 August 1957.

27 Russian State Archive of Photo- and Film Documents, Krasnodarsk (henceforth RGAKFD), #18667, O. Poreckaja, *Vice-prezident Brazilii – gost' SSSR (Brazil's vice-president, a guest of the USSR)*, 1960.

intellectuals, and engineers, and marvelled at museums and ballet performances.[28] Mário Pedrosa, a former communist and now president of the National Cultural Council, helped build up cultural relations during a visit to Moscow.[29] The federal ministries also sent observers to their Soviet counterparts for longer periods: an expert from the Brazilian health ministry spent fourteen months in Leningrad, studying the local healthcare system.[30] When Quadros flew to Moscow for the second time in spring 1960, members of the economic council of the Brazilian government came along and, among other things, had the Soviet system of education explained to them. The council's interest, however, was less in the Soviet system than in economic prospects. A Brazilian economist argued in a long plea for closer and more pragmatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1958: 'As red as the Russians may be, they will never change the black colour of raw oil that they sell us or the green colour of coffee beans that they buy from us. Commerce is commerce and not the Sermon on the Mount.'[31] The year after, the head of the Brazilian coffee institute signed a trade contract in Moscow, whereupon Kubitschek showed good will and released from prison over fifty high-ranking PBC members.[32]

In addition to officials and businessmen, academics developed a growing interest in the Soviet Union. Brazilian doctors came over to study the Soviet health system, and agrarian experts asked to be invited.[33] Soviet polytechnic institutes and universities received Brazilian professors, students, and interns regularly. What a young man from Goiania wrote to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, asking for an invitation to study medicine in Moscow, represents hundreds of similar letters from ordinary Brazilians at the time: 'I by no means adhere to communist ideas; like most of my fellow students, however, I admire the remarkable development we see happening in the Soviet Union.'[34]

Until the early 1950s, Brazilian travellers to the USSR were usually communists. Travelogues by the novelists and committed party activists Jorge Amado and Graciliano Ramos, by the Marxist historian Caio da Silva Prado Júnior, and by the communist journalists Victorio Martorelli and Enaida Morais, uncritically celebrated every aspect of Soviet life.[35]

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28 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223–322, is full of reports by the translators on the reception of these delegations. See also AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), Brazilian embassy in Moscow to Itamaraty, 'Visita do Ministro Aluysio Regis Bittencourt a URSS', 26 May 1962.

29 AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), 'Viagem a Moscou do Mário Pedrosa, Presidente do Conselho Nacional de Cultura: relações Brasil e U.R.S.S.', 13 June 1961.

30 RGASPI, f.3M op.15 d.72 l.106, letter from the Soviet Ministry of Health, 22 July 1957.

31 AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), Wilson Sidney Lobato, 'Pequeno Memorandum sobre as relações Brasil–URSS', undated (1958).

32 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.168, 2 December 1959; Samuel Shapiro, 'Selling oil and influence', *Problems of Communism*, 1, 1961, pp. 14–18; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.180–2, 3 May 1960.

33 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.46, letter to the Soviet Ministry of Health, undated; Russian State Archive of Sociopolitical History, Moscow (henceforth RGANI), f.5 op.28 d.439 l.185–91, letter from group of Brazilian veterinarians and agronomists, undated.

34 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.94, 6 October 1958.

35 Jorge Amado, *O mundo da paz: União Soviética' e democracias populares*, Rio de Janeiro: Editorial Vitória, 1951; Graciliano Ramos, *Viagem: Tcheco-Eslováquia-URSS*, Rio de Janeiro: Olympio 1954; Caio da Silva Prado Júnior, *O mundo do socialismo*, Rio de Janeiro: Brasiliense, 1962; Victorio Martorelli, *No país dos sputniks*, Rio de Janeiro: Brasiliense, 1958; Enaida Morais, *Caminhos da terra: URSS, Tchecoslováquia, China*, Rio de Janeiro: Antunes Livreiros e Editores, 1959.

From the mid 1950s, however, politically neutral intellectuals also wrote accounts that, while not embracing all its aspects, showed a fascination for the Soviet project. José Mendes, a young journalist for *O Globo* and *Correio da Manhã*, came for several weeks in 1955. His *O povo nas ruas* (*The people in the streets*) was a collection of smart and nuanced essays on the lives of Soviet citizens.[36] While he did criticize censorship of the media and privileges for party members, and sometimes noticed fear of foreigners and a rather paltry living standard, people seemed to him confident in the system in which they lived, despite all its shortcomings, as well as patriotic and proud of their achievements. Mendes was deeply impressed by a highly developed agriculture and industry, by the quick reconstruction of cities after the war, and by progressive gender relations. He had his readers consider that, back in 1920, illiteracy among Soviet citizens was at the same level as in contemporary Brazil, and had now been completely eliminated. Especially full of respect were his reports from the Caucasus, where he examined electrification, education, and health in Armenia and Azerbaijan.[37]

Even more enthusiastic was a series of publications by another Brazilian traveller, Nestor de Holanda, a notable newspaper and television journalist, who visited eight Soviet republics in June 1959. His travelogue *O mundo vermelho* (*The red world*) was a multi-edition bestseller in early 1960s' Brazil.[38] His Soviet guide/translator/minder, the future ambassador to Cuba, Aleksandr Alekseev, initially reported sceptically to his superiors: 'Holanda has extraordinarily vague ideas about the Soviet Union … and asked many provocative questions that I refused to answer.'[39] But these concerns were unfounded: his Brazilian fosterling gave an entirely positive account of Soviet modernization, gender roles, ostensible religious freedom, and 'colourful everyday and cultural life'. Two factors certainly contributed to Holanda's benign views. First, he was received with full honours and privileges; indeed, in Georgia he 'felt like the most important man of the entire Caucasus'. Second, he was steered towards selective aspects of Soviet life by his round-the-clock guardians and translators, and he made more roubles than he could spend with several publications in Soviet newspapers and journals. The third factor needed no official staging, for Holanda was charmed by the knowledge of, and interest in, his home country. Everyone in the Soviet Union seemed to know and love Brazilian football, Jorge Amado, and samba music. He was constantly asked how the construction of Brasília was going, and was overwhelmed when he found the collected works of Castro Alves, a nineteenth-century Brazilian poet, in the public library in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent.[40]

Holanda was so impressed by these well-educated Soviet citizens that he wrote another book, aiming to eliminate prejudices that his fellow Brazilians may have had about the country. Published in two editions, *Diálogo Brasil–URSS* listed 100 typical questions and

36 José Guilherme Mendes, *Moscou, Varsóvia, Berlim: o povo nas ruas*, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1956.

37 *Ibid*., pp. 20, 51, 80.

38 Nestor de Holanda, *O mundo vermelho: notas de um reporter na URSS*, Rio de Janeiro: Irmãos Pongetti, 1961; http://www.nestordehollandacavalcanti.mus.br/nestordeholanda (consulted 20 August 2010).

39 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.143, undated.

40 De Holanda, *O mundo vermelho*, pp.123, 135, 207f.

criticisms by anti-communist and politically indifferent Brazilians. Soviet citizens, allegedly without the interference of any officials, answered them.[41] Hoodwinked by this Soviet self-representation, Holanda was convinced that he had found a role model for the development of his native Brazil. In a third book, he imagined what Brazil would look like as a socialist country (*Como seria o Brasil socialista?*).[42] He still denied being a communist, and in his introduction underlined that socialism in Brazil would be different from that in the Soviet Union. However, he fantasized about the advantages of Soviet style organization of all sectors of Brazilian society.

Most of Holanda's contemporaries did not share his unconditional enthusiasm for the USSR. A *New York Times* survey in 1963, following the Cuban missile crisis that chipped away at the Soviet image, showed that only 12% of the Brazilian population thought of the Soviet Union as a 'good country', while more than half of them simply had no opinion.[43] But it is fair to say that, in crucial sectors of Brazilian society around 1960, there was an extensive interest in certain aspects of the Soviet Union. Lopsided though they were, Holanda's books sold record numbers of copies. The political elite of reformers, the administrative and technical intelligentsia, engaged in a fight against the perceived backwardness of their own country, venerated the scientific and technological progress of the Soviet Union. Left-leaning writers, and more generally the young, educated strata of the urban population, admired Soviet feats in erasing illiteracy and giving access to education and high culture to the masses.

Across the Iron Curtain, part two: Soviet cultural diplomacy in Brazil

The Soviets became increasingly aware of this selective interest in them. Accordingly, their embassies in Latin America regularly sent home suggestions on how to improve the image of the USSR. In March 1957, Oleg Ignat'ev, head of the Sovinformbjuro in Argentina, wrote a long letter to Moscow that listed more than forty suggestions on how to 'strengthen Soviet propaganda in Latin America'. More modern technologies, matching up to those of the Americans, were to be used, and the focus should not be on political issues but on Soviet daily life and culture, in a way that would appeal to non-communist 'progressive circles'.[44] The lavish inviting of Brazilian official delegations and academics to the Soviet Union was already part of a new charm offensive towards Latin America.

Soviet delegations travelled to Brazil, too: a group of fifteen members of the Supreme Soviet visited the Brazilian Academy of Science and toured factories, power plants, and the construction site of the future capital, Brasília, in the summer of 1958. After meeting

41 Nestor de Holanda, *Diálogo Brasil–URSS*, Rio de Janeiro: Editôra Civilização, 1962.

42 Nestor de Holanda, *Como seria o Brasil socialista?*, Rio de Janeiro: Editôra Civilização, 1963.

43 Tad Szulg, 'What Latins think about us: their feelings are affected by attitudes on Soviet [sic] and Cuba', *New York Times*, 4 March 1963.

44 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.39 l.168–84, Oleg Ignat'ev to GKKS, 'Predloženija po usilenju našej propagandy v stranach Latinskoj Ameriki (Suggestions on how to strengthen our propaganda in the countries of Latin America)', 8 March 1957.

several high-ranking Brazilian politicians, including President Kubitschek and both his future successors, they finally signed a cultural treaty between their countries.[45] In an international conference of parliamentarians, they then debated common resolutions on 'Third World' issues.[46] Besides the task of establishing contacts, these delegations had a symbolic purpose: they were sent as representatives of the Soviet state, not as communists. As parliamentarians they had no political influence at all back home, but abroad they delivered an image of 'normality' to the political elites in Brazil. Several more of these delegation visits took place in the years to come. They all reported back to Moscow, were very positive about the prospects of collaboration, and recommended foregoing communist rhetoric in all contacts.[47]

In order to appeal to progress-hungry and independence-seeking political leaders and populations, the Soviets changed their self-representation considerably. To this end, they also needed to restructure institutions that dealt with the world abroad. After its breakup in 1943, the Komintern apparatus had been reorganized within the Communist Party. The organ changed its name and leadership several times, until from 1955 Boris Ponomarev headed what was called the 'International Department of the Central Committee'. Among other tasks, it oversaw the work of several front organizations and institutions that were to promote the Soviet way of life abroad. The handling of cultural relations thus came under direct Party control.[48]

Having secured its tight grip on these institutions, the Party then moved to conceal this influence in their presentation to the outside world. From the 1920s, the All-Union Organization for Cultural Contacts (VOKS) had organized much of the Soviet Union's foreign propaganda, most notably the notorious visits of hundreds of foreign intellectuals. Its somewhat discredited name was changed to the Union of Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union (SSOD) in early 1958.[49] In addition to the structures of the SSOD, a State Committee for Cultural Relations (GKKS) had come into being in 1957. The GKKS was responsible for the final implementation of most cultural foreign activities in the ten years of its existence. For organizational purposes, its officials collaborated with local communist parties, but, whenever they negotiated with foreign authorities

45 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.82–5, 'Zapis' besedy členov delegacii verchovnogo soveta SSSR s rukovodstvom institute kulturnych svjazej ''Brazilija–SSSR'' (Transcript of the conversation of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with the leadership of the Institute of Cultural Relations ''Brazil–USSR'')', 4 August 1958; Clissold, *Soviet relations*, pp. 182–3.

46 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.56–72, 'Očet o poezdke delegacii Parlamentskoj gruppy SSSR v Braziliju na 47-ju Konferenciju Mežparlamentskogo Sojusa (Report on the trip of the delegation of a group of Soviet parliamentarians to Brazil to the 47th Conference of the International Group of Parliamentarians)', undated (July 1958).

47 RGAKFD, #22357, *Poezdka M. P. Georgadse v strany Latinskoj Ameriki (Trip of M. P. Georgadse to Latin American countries)*, (1961); GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.197–203, 15 October 1960; Bayram Riza and Catherine Quirk, 'Cultural relations between the Soviet Union and Latin America', *Studies on the Soviet Union*, 2, 1968, p. 34.

48 Jurij Poliakov, 'Posle rospuska Kominterna (After the break-up of the Komintern)', *Novaja i Novejšaja Istorija*, 1, 2003, pp. 106–16; Nigel Gould-Davies, 'The logic of Soviet cultural diplomacy', *Diplomatic History*, 27, 2, 2003, p. 203.

49 Vladimir Pechatnov, 'Exercise in frustration: Soviet foreign propaganda in the early Cold War', *Cold War History*, 1, 2, 2000–2001, p. 16.

in Soviet missions and embassies, they were supposed to show a certain distance from the CPSU and to represent the Soviet state.[50] Together with the longstanding news agency TASS, the Sovinformbjuro was charged with attracting foreign non-communist audiences. In 1961, it was given the more neutral and modern name *Novosti* (*News*) or APN, and was officially affiliated with SSOD and not with the party. Some of the exchange activities of these organizations did have practical value; for example, they arranged an investigation by Soviet geologists to find crude oil in northern Brazil.[51] However, most Soviet endeavours in Brazil had a purely symbolic, representative character.

The Instituto Cultural Brasil–U.R.S.S., founded in Rio de Janeiro by a group of local intellectuals and headed by the writer José Monteiro Lobato, distributed its own publication *Brasil – U.R.S.S.*, as well as a number of journals and periodicals that were sent in from Moscow.[52] Until the mid 1950s, this Soviet international press was rather grey, theory-laden, and available only in German, English, or French.[53] During the 'thaw', and with the advent of decolonization, material was translated into a wider range of foreign languages, including Spanish and Portuguese, and much space was given to the Soviet inner periphery. Central Asia and the Caucasus, having undergone an ostensibly successful development programme directed by Moscow, were presented as role models for the modernization of the 'Third World'.

In its regular evaluations, the cultural department of the Central Committee demanded that these journals should also be addressed to a broader, non-communist, readership by 'adapting to local customs'. According to the Soviet officials responsible, this meant the 'frequent use of terms such as ''elections'', ''decision'', and ''resolution''', as well as 'more humour and a modern language'. More illustrations and photos and less recourse to politics were also necessary.[54] The highly ideological political journal *War and the Working Class* now became the colourful *New Times*, one of the most popular Soviet international monthly illustrated reviews, which appeared as *Novos Tempos* in Brazil. There were also several Spanish-language magazines.[55] The monthly *Kul'tura i Žizn'* (*Culture and Life*) had been in the forefront of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign in the late 1940s.[56] From 1957, it was available as *Cultura y Vida* in Brazil and all over the continent, with a focus on internationalist topics. From July 1962, a Soviet newspaper, *Novedades de Moscú*, was sent to Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Cuba.

50 More than once stirring up discontent with the PCB: see, e.g., RGANI, f.5 op.36 d.136 l.27–9, correspondence between the GKKS and the Communist Party of Brazil, 9 March 1961.

51 Michajl Lavričenko, *Economičeskoe sotrudničestvo SSSR so stranami Azii, Afriki i Latinskoj Ameriki (Economic collaboration of the USSR with the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America)*, Moscow: Progress, 1961, p. 103.

52 RGANI, f.5 op.36 d.193 l.129.

53 Thomas Wolfe, *Governing Soviet journalism: the press and the socialist person after Stalin*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005; Mark W. Hopkins, *Mass media in the Soviet Union*, Cambridge: Pegasus, 1970.

54 RGANI, f.5 op.36 d.36 l.2, El. Romanova, 'O žurnale *Sovetskoj Literaturoj* (About the journal *Soviet Literature*)', 2 February 1957; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.343 l.4–45, 12 June 1957. See also RGANI, f.5 op.36 d.194 l.285–297, suggestions from the Sovinformbjuro in Mexico.

55 GARF, f.5283 op.14 d.631 l.30, 'Spisok sovetskich žurnalov v Latinskoj Amerike v 1954g. (List of Soviet journals in Latin America)', undated.

56 Ilja Ehrenburg, *Menschen, Jahre, Leben: Memoiren*, Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1977, vol. 3, p. 258.

All publications now featured many photos, reports on cultural exchanges, visits, and trips to the Soviet Union, student exchanges, fashion, sports, cars, technology, the cosmos, and stories of ordinary Soviet people or folklore stars and Soviet heroes in private. Eventually, some twenty Soviet periodical publications found their way to Latin American countries, in Spanish, Portuguese, and even Quechua. Some covered special subjects, or still discussed Marxist theory. But *Novos Tempos*, *Cultura y Vida*, *El Teatro Soviético*, *Film Soviético*, and *Deporte en el URSS* presented an idealized version of all walks of Soviet life to a much broader audience. Based on such American journals as *Life* or *Look*, these glossy new Soviet journals printed hardly a word on politics, or even the word 'communism', between their photos of shining modern machinery, young and active people, and smiling Caucasian girls with flowers; yet Soviet journals were all shipped first through diplomatic and Communist Party channels, mainly via Mexico City and Buenos Aires, and later through Havana. Fiction and technical literature joined periodicals in increasing quantities. American sources estimated the number of Soviet publications available in Latin America at over 400 in 1957. The cost – more than US$100 million annually – was covered by trade agreements, so little foreign exchange had to be spent.[57]

Soviet radio started to broadcast special programmes for Brazil regularly, with the help of Portuguese communists in Moscow from 1953. As with the magazines, in these radio shows an effort was made to address an audience beyond communists. Some political news was given, but the bulk of programmes was devoted to the scientific, economic, and cultural achievements of the Soviet Union and eastern European peoples' democracies. Siberian landscapes, travels to the cosmos, and the modernization of Central Asia were typical features. A Portuguese-language show from January 1959 is a representative example: the head of a boarding school in Tashkent gave an account of the changes in the educational system of his native Uzbekistan, whose pre-revolutionary history was unfavourably compared to its progress under Soviet rule; a feature on the evildoings of American imperialism in Panama was followed by reports about Soviet agriculture, medicine, and energy production.[58] 'Peace', 'progress', and 'development' had ousted 'revolution' and 'communism' as catchphrases. Reports on tourism in the Soviet Union, technological feats, cultural events, sports news, or the Sunday show on philately gave rather apolitical views of the USSR, as did a weekly show by foreign students at Soviet universities, who shared their experiences with their compatriots back home.[59]

Films helped to convey this new image of the USSR to Latin America. Distributed by a *Sovexportfilm* office in Buenos Aires, Soviet movies gained international attention and respect. Michail Kalatosov's *Letjat žuravli* (*The cranes are flying*) won the Palme d'Or in Cannes in 1958, and it moved Brazilian audiences with its tragic love story set during the

57 Robert J. Alexander, *Communism in Latin America*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1957, p. 42; Rollie Poppino, *International communism in Latin America: a history of the movement 1917–1963*, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964, p. 170.

58 GARF, f.6903 op.24 d.242 l.37–59, 'Govorit Moskva: Komitet po radioveščeniju, otdel Latinskaja Amerika (Moscow speaking: the committee of radio broadcasting, department of Latin America), 14 January 1959.

59 L. Novikov, 'Golos Mira: k 40-letiju radioveščanija na Latinskuju Ameriku (The voice of peace: 40 years of radio broadcast to Latin America)', *Latinskaja Amerika*, 9, 1972, p. 144; 'Escuche diariamente Radio Moscú', *Boletín del Instituto Cultural Colombo Soviético*, 5, 6, 1974, p. 7.

Second World War. The filmmakers Nikolai Čerkassov and Sergej Jutkevič organized a 'Week of Soviet films', which brought another forty Soviet films to Brazil. In São Paulo alone, 40,000 people saw productions such as Ivan Pyr'ev's *Belye noči* (*White nights*) and Grigori Čuchrai's *Čistoe nebo* (*Clear sky*).[60] In 1963, the Soviet embassy in Rio even suggested buying a cinema that would only screen Soviet and eastern European productions.[61]

The Instituto Cultural Brasil–U.R.S.S. further organized the reception of growing numbers of Soviet artists touring Latin America. In 1958, the Bolshoi Theatre performed in Rio de Janeiro, and repeated its trip many times in the late 1950s and 1960s. The company's shows were always a guaranteed success. The prima ballerina Violeta Bovt and her partner Evgenij Kuz'min danced six consecutive sold-out evenings in Rio alone. Another ballerina, Irina Tichomirovna, gave forty-two shows with an audience of 140,000; in São Paulo, the demand was so great that she had to perform in the football stadium. Classical musicians and sportsmen represented the Soviet Union abroad, too. The pianist Sergej Dorenskij gave nine concerts throughout Brazil on his 1962 tour, and an Uzbek football team learned some bitter lessons playing Brazilian teams in 1963.[62]

In this rather traditional, Western-style cultural diplomacy, as well as in the Soviet media, modernization, 'human interest' stories, and the depiction of the USSR as a successful and idyllic modern state replaced communism and class struggle. The left-wing intellectuals in the Instituto Cultural Brasil–U.R.S.S. found fault, however, with the apolitical nature of these performances. They were favourable to increasing the Institute's influence on Brazilian politics and society. Indeed, members went so far as to warn of an upcoming competitor. When the Chinese sent their opera in 1956, they allegedly used the performance for political propaganda.[63]

Probably the most successful element of Soviet self-representation offered something that traditional Western cultural diplomacy could not yet do: the flight of the Sputnik in 1957 had impressed many ordinary Brazilians, many of whom expressed their admiration in telegrams and letters to Moscow.[64] The flight of *Vostok 1* in 1961 subsequently became the 'success story of Soviet modernity'. In a somewhat double-edged comparison, Jurij Gagarin

60 *Novos Tempos*, 42, 1962, pp. 26–8; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.56–64.

61 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.323–6, 19 November 1963.

62 A. Gukasov, 'Sovetskij ballet v stranach Južnoj Ameriki (Soviet ballet in the countries of Latin America)', *Teatr*, 19, 5, 1958, pp. 164–5; Sergej Dorenski, 'En Brasil', *Cultura y Vida*, 1, 1960, pp. 53–5; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.105–8, 19 September 1962; Gennadij Krasnickij, *Ot Rio-de-Žanejro do Montevideo (From Rio de Janeiro to Montevideo)*, Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1964.

63 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.322 l.84, 'Zapis' besedy členov delegacii verchovnogo soveta SSSR s rukovodstvom instituta kulturnych svjazej "Brazilija–SSSR" (Transcript of the conversation of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with the leadership of the Institute of Cultural Relations "Brazil–USSR")', 4 August 1958.

64 E.g. 'Pozdravitel'noe pis'mo profsojuza švejnikov štata Guanabara (Brazilija) v VCSPS po povodu poleta v kosmos Germana Titova (Congratulatory letter of the union of needleworkers of the state of Guanabara on the occasion of German Titov's flight into space), 24 August 1961, in N. Isaev, ed., *Dokumenty proletarskoj solidarnosti: sbornik dokumentov o sodružestve trudjaščichsja Sovetskogo Sojuza s trudjaščimisja stran Azii, Afriki i Latinskoj Ameriki v 1918–1961 godach (Documents of proletarian solidarity: a compilation of documents about the friendship of the toilers of the Soviet Union with the toilers of the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America)*, Moscow: Profizdat, 1962, pp. 174–8.

was labelled the 'Columbus of the Cosmos'[65] – and sent to conquer the Americas. In July 1961, shortly after his successful space flight, he arrived in Brazil. After a street parade with President Quadros, Gagarin was decorated with the state's highest order of merit, the Ordem Nacional do Cruzeiro do Sul. These events were very popular with the public and were repeated with the next wave of cosmonauts, when Andrijan Nikolaev and Pavel Popovič came to Brazil in March 1963.[66]

The space programme became a central feature in a series of exhibitions that the Soviets held in the Americas. The largest and most notable one took place at the São Cristóvão fair ground in Rio de Janeiro in May 1962. On the opening day, Nikolai Patoličev, the Soviet minister of foreign trade, met Carlos Lacerda, the militantly anti-communist governor of the state of Guanabara, who conceded: 'Your technological achievements can serve any type of regime!'[67] The contract they then signed was modest, as trade rose from US$100 million to US$140 million but effectively remained a bartering of oil for coffee, insufficient for an exhibition of such scope. The exhibition, however, did things in a big way: according to Soviet sources the largest one ever held in Latin America, it displayed more than 10,000 exhibits that reflected many aspects of a highly optimistic Soviet Union some months before the Cuban Crisis. Khrushchev wrote an article for the conservative newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, in which he explained magnanimously that the Soviet Union had also started from the level of Brazil, which after its national independence still had to achieve economic autonomy. The Soviets were glad to offer a role model for further development. They themselves had free health care and free education and would, by 1980, be able to offer free apartments and free transport, and the economy would have increased six-fold. The Soviet Union, according to Khrushchev, was the future, the power behind peace, freedom, and development, and the exhibition was intended to give a taste of this.[68] To see this state of affairs, selected visitors could fly in from downtown Rio in a Soviet helicopter squadron to see big elaborate models and documentary films of a hydroelectric power plant in Bratsk, Soviet aircraft, and the nuclear-powered icebreaker *Lenin*. An entire section was dedicated to the space programme, with models of the spaceships *Vostok 1*, *Vostok 2*, and *Sputnik* on display, and there were huge posters of handsome cosmonauts smiling at visitors. Detailed models and interactive panels explained electrification and energy supply in the USSR.[69]

While the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade was the chief organizer of the exhibition, the GKKS was responsible for its representative aspects. To make the trade fair appealing to a broad audience, they made sure that all publications were colourful and easy to understand.

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65 Krasnicki, *Ot Rio-de-Žanejro*, p. 58; Klaus Gestwa, 'Kolumbus des Kosmos: der Kult um Jurij Gagarin', *Osteuropa*, 10, 2009, pp. 121–51.

66 N. Denisov, 'Na orbite mira i družby (In the orbit of peace and friendship)', *Sovetskaja Pečat'*, 10, 1961, pp. 38–42.

67 'Inaugurada ontem a exposição russa no Rio; Lacerda falou', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 3 May 1962.

68 'Saudação de Kruchev aos visitantes da exposição soviética', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 5 May 1962; also published in the USSR as: Nikita Chruščev, 'Poslanie k posetitelam sovetskoi vystavki v Rio-de-Zanejro (Message to the visitors to the Soviet exhibition in Rio de Janeiro)', *Vnešnjaja Torgovlja*, 42, 6, 1962, pp. 3–5; Ivan Bol'šakov, 'Vystavka SSSR v Brazilij (The USSR's exhibition in Brazil)', *Vnešnjaja Torgovlja*, 42, 8, 1962, pp. 17–19.

69 Ivan Bol'šakov, 'Uspech sovetskich vystakov v stranach Latinskoj Ameriki (The success of Soviet exhibitions in the countries of Latin America)', in Ivan Bol'šakov, ed., *Na vsech kontinentov mira (On all continents of the world)*, Moscow: Progress, 1962, pp. 96f.

Soviet commodities, fashion, and literature were displayed, too. Translators facilitated communication between visitors and Soviet experts, and there was a cultural framework programme. Journalists could meet the Soviet ambassador, and Russian-language students were invited. Several Soviet artists came to Rio, there was a ballet performance by the Beryozka Ensemble, and Soviet filmmakers presented their feature films.[70]

President Goulart, Prime Minister Tancredo Neves, and even the military high command were shown around and, filmed by a group of Soviet personnel, marvelled at Soviet robots and other high technology.[71] While several exiled Cubans were arrested in front of the exhibition for rallying against the Soviet Union, Goulart congratulated the organizers on their great success. Like their president, the 500,000 visiting Brazilians were transfixed by the shining ball bearings, modern machinery, fancy watches, upmarket private cars, and tractors in the exhibition. The inclusion of such luxury goods was a gimmick stolen from the Americans, who had introduced them into their fairs from the mid 1950s. For ordinary Soviet citizens, these goods were about as readily available as the beautiful Russian models who presented Soviet-produced short skirts in a fashion show. And behind the colourful façade of cutting-edge technology and highbrow culture remained a deep belief in the prospects of socialism. But the Soviets had learnt that, to reach a broad worldwide audience and interact with 'bourgeois nationalist governments', they had to minimize their rhetoric. In the run-up to the exhibition, long conversations were held with experts on eastern Europe in the Brazilian foreign ministry, who prophetically but unsuccessfully warned of an 'explosive situation' that the exhibition might create.[72] All designated publications and exhibits had to be proofread and authorized by Brazilian officials. A galley proof in the GKKS documents shows precisely how this happened: the term 'communist' was replaced with 'Soviet', the 'Party' (CPSU) with 'Soviet government'; and all references to the Cold War, such as 'overtaking the capitalist countries in twenty years', were cut out completely. A big bust of Lenin in the entrance hall was the only remaining trace of ideology in the exhibition.[73]

Reactions from the Brazilian side were diverse. Hundreds of letters reached the organizers and the overwhelming majority commented positively. A remarkable number, however, enquired about the lack of freedom of religion in the Soviet Union. In their self-representation, the Soviets emphasized that they respected the exercise of religion, while at the same time the Komsomol launched new anti-religious campaigns back home. Brazilian newspapers reported neutrally, but it was certainly no coincidence that during the time of the exhibition *O Estado de São Paulo* featured a series of articles on the deficiencies of Soviet

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70 'Soviet exposition opened in Brazil: diversified show is Russia's biggest in Latin America', *New York Times*, 4 May 1962; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.13–15, 'Posol'stvo SSSR v Brazilii', GKKS, 3 March 1962; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.56–64.

71 'Goulart e Tancredo visitaram ontem a exposição Soviética', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 7 May 1962; RGAKFD, #19909, *Sovetskaja vystavka v Rio-de-Žanejro (Soviet exhibition in Rio de Janeiro)*, 1962.

72 AHMRE, 920.1 (42) (74), Jorge de Carvalho e Silva, Ministro, Chefe da Divisão de Europa Oriental to Secretário-Geral Adjunto para Assuntos de Europa Oriental e Asia, 'Reatamento de relações diplomáticas com a União Soviética', 5 December 1961.

73 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.223 l.13–15, Posol'stvo SSSR v Brazilii, GKKS, 'Ob izdanii vystavočnoj literatury' (Soviet embassy in Brazil to the GKKS, 'On the edition of written material on the exhibition'), 3 March 1962; Bol'šakov, 'Uspech sovetskich vystakov', pp. 96f; I. Dubinina, 'Sovetskij Sojus v Rio-de-Žanejro (Soviet Soyuz in Rio de Janeiro)', *Ogonek*, 20, 1962, p. 2.

industry. Others reacted more tensely. Rio's archbishop, Cardinal Jaime Câmara, warned publicly of a 'Trojan Horse' of communist infiltration, especially among 'indigenous elements', who, owing to their poverty and ignorance, were susceptible to the bad intentions of the Soviets and might bring about an 'indigenous bolshevism'. Câmara called for greater spiritual peace and less technology, demanding that Brazilians take action against the 'Cubanization' of Brazil.[74] Shortly afterwards, some Brazilians did take action and substantiated the warnings made by the Foreign Ministry. The Soviet exhibition had to shut its doors temporarily, after an anti-communist group of army officers planted a bomb that would have destroyed the entire fair, had it not been found before it exploded. The Soviet media could not but see this conspiracy as a prime example of the evildoings of frequently invoked reactionary circles.[75]

With the relatively modest efforts of their cultural diplomacy, the Soviets succeeded in making themselves heard in Brazil. Left-wing reformers, in their desire to modernize their country rapidly through the state, had a strong interest in certain aspects of the Soviet concept, and thus readily collaborated with the USSR in many of its activities. Hundreds of thousands of Brazilians flocked to Soviet exhibitions, venerated Sputnik and Gagarin, or marvelled at ballet shows. In its official self-representation towards both politicians and the public in Latin America, the Soviet Union was no longer the cradle of world revolution but a technologically advanced and cultivated European state, with a highly educated and happily consuming population.

This Soviet development model, child of its time, shared many features not only with Brazilian needs but also with Western modernity. An undiluted belief in the benefits of technology, and optimism in historical progress, had captured large parts of the world, regardless of political orientation in the Cold War. No longer did the Soviets pursue old Marxist questions on the alienation of the human being, on the relationship between humankind and nature, or on the structural deformation of north–south economic relations, as some had done in the 1920s. They now joined the global euphoria for development and modernization. Socialist high modernity embraced most of the ideas of its Western role model but spiced them up with the more just and provident aspects of an ostensibly harmonious Soviet path, without a pauperization of the masses or the exploitation of others. It also included a certain leaning towards authoritarian or populist rule, and rather prudish morals and aesthetics. Quadros' much-ridiculed attempt to outlaw bikinis on the Copacabana beach was in the same spirit as Khrushchev's attacks against contemporary art displayed in the Moscow Manež exhibition hall during an infamous incident in 1962. Overall, Soviet modernist rhetoric, which emphasized not only progress but also national autonomy, peace, and international solidarity, found an audience in developmentalist Brazil.

74 'Advertencia de D. Jaime sobre a exposição da URSS no Rio', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 6 May 1962.

75 Bol'šakov, 'Uspech sovetskich vystakov'.

The end of socialist high modernity and the rise of global stagnation: Brazil's military junta and the Soviet Union

Brazilian conservatives and military officers looked warily upon expanding interactions with the Soviet Union. Economic difficulties, increasing inflation, and imminent nationalizations and land reforms unsettled many middle-class Brazilians, who thus supported Goulart's overthrow in a military putsch in March 1964, and the installation of General Humberto Castelo Branco as the new president. To the internal and international public, the new men in charge presented themselves as staunch anti-communists. Censorship now prevented positive reporting about the Soviet Union, and officially Brazil sided wholeheartedly with the United States in the Cold War. The US had supported anti-Goulart movements for years, fearing a 'second Cuba', or even a 'second China'. During the coup d'état, the American embassy helped with communication among the putschists, and the US army had its aircraft carriers and battleships patrol the Brazilian coastline to give military assistance if needed. Washington immediately recognized the new government that had allegedly staved off international communism, and hailed the putsch, which overthrew a democratically elected administration and disbanded political parties, as one of democratic forces.[76] The new regime had Soviet-friendly intellectuals arrested. Purges in the administration, the military, politics, trade unions, think tanks, and universities removed whomever they considered to be leftists or to have collaborated with the Soviets. The generals even declared a ban on Russian and communist authors such as Maxim Gorki and Bertold Brecht, and had Russian music removed from radio programmes.[77]

The Soviets themselves reacted remarkably calmly to their ousting from Brazil, and only a short newspaper report stereotypically condemned the putsch.[78] The Cuban crisis had dampened the cheerful optimism in Soviet possibilities in Latin America. And after the dismissal of Khrushchev in October, the Soviets were even more unwilling to support another ideologically unreliable, wayward, and tremendously expensive partner like Fidel Castro. They were thus not unhappy that relations with Brazil were put on a much more pragmatic level. For links were never cut: diplomatic relations were maintained, and as early as September 1964 the Soviets congratulated the military dictators on the Brazilian national day and wished them success in their further development.[79] Later that month, staff from the Soviet embassy in Brazil secretly met the vice-foreign minister, Dario Castro Alves, in Brasília. These Soviet diplomats recorded the friendly atmosphere in which they were asked to keep a low profile and for a while avoid contacts with certain Brazilian institutions.[80]

In fact, the Brazilians still had political and economic interests in the USSR, for example through the influential media mogul Assis Chateaubriand. Before the putsch, he had led

76 Ruth Leacock, *Requiem for revolution: the United States and Brazil 1961–1969*, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990, especially pp. 197–220.

77 *Novos Tempos* 45, 1965, p. 24; *Izvestija*, 5 May 1964.

78 *Izvestija*, 4 April 1964.

79 V. Kobyš, 'Uspechov tebe, Brazilija (Success to you, Brazil)', *Pravda*, 7 September 1964.

80 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.324 l.86–8.

campaigns against Goulart and his 'flirtations with international bolshevism'. From 1964, however, he developed an intimate friendship with the Soviet ambassador Andrej Fomin, whom he had decorated with his Ordem do Jagunço. Setting up the Soviet flag in his São Paulo residence, Casa Amarela, Chateaubriand now propagated the maintenance of diplomatic relations with the USSR. In July, he was given medical treatment for several weeks in Moscow, a journey that was presented as a cultural delegation trip for his foundation, in order not to overly provoke the generals.[81]

In a similar feint in early November, the Soviet diplomats Anatolij Šadrin and Nikolaj Jackov received medals from the Castelo Branco government. The Brazilian press announced that they had acted against orders to interfere in Brazilian internal politics. This was a completely made-up story, as the Brazilian foreign minister, Vasco Leitão da Cunha, openly admitted in a meeting later that month with the Soviet embassy: 'The ambassador should take that episode as a reflection of future policies towards socialist countries.' While public discourse changed to constant denouncements of communism and Soviet interference, economic and political relations with the USSR in fact remained at the same level. Leitão da Cunha handed over a list of persons and organizations with whom the Soviets were allowed to have contact, and they readily accepted.[82] Football was to support the ongoing friendship of the two nations: a friendly game was organized in Rio's Maracanã stadium in 1965, and the Soviet team achieved a respectable two-all draw against the incumbent world champions.

Albeit now standing clearly on different sides of the Iron Curtain, Brazil and the Soviet Union still shared many characteristics that explain the somewhat surprising interest of the new Brazilian leaders and elites in maintaining solid relations with Moscow. In Brazil, as in the Soviet Union between the mid 1950s and the mid 1960s, bustling and scurrying reformers had enthusiastically implemented the ideas of socialist high modernity, and had finally failed economically and spiritually. In both countries, the reformers were overthrown in 1964 by conservatives with the backing of the military. Brazil, as well as the USSR, then entered a period of political stagnation. The CPSU boss Leonid Brezhnev and the junta leader Castelo Branco headed what were democracies on paper but were in fact one-party states that outlawed and persecuted political opponents. Decision-making was centralized, the opposition was curtailed, and parliaments or congresses had little political influence. Trade unions, academic institutions, the judiciary, and the media were under political control.

However, seeing a vital connection between development and security, both countries' leaders accelerated their industrialization. Just like their predecessors, the Brazilian military rulers craved progress, and sought self-sufficiency via import substitution. The number of state enterprises, such as communications and electricity companies, actually rose during the dictatorship in Brazil. Petrobras' extended nationalizations threatened even Soviet endeavours in a bitumen factory in São Paulo, as Ambassador Fomin complained to the Brazilian authorities.[83]

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81 Fernando Morais, *Chatô, o rei do Brasil: a vida de Assis Chateaubriand, um dos Brasileiros mais poderosos deste século*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994, pp. 638, 654–64; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.324 l.153, 7 July 1964.

82 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.324 l.86–92, 232–45, 18 November 1964.

83 AHMRE, 812 (42) (74), Soviet ambassador to Brasília, Andrej Fomin, to Itamaraty, April 1965.

In both countries, the military now had a tight grip on all sectors of society, including politics, and cemented their positions from their propaganda departments in the ministries of the interior. Secret services worked with extra-legal methods against real and ostensible foes of the regime, and they developed refined mechanisms of control and repression. Representative democracy was despised and a cult of the military prevailed. In Brasília, the socialist utopian city, the new men in power now found much space for their military parades, which looked just like those in Moscow, and the wide streets and squares offered no hideouts for possible demonstrations.

Like the European fascists of the 1920s and 1930s, authoritarian regimes in Brazil and all over the 'Third World' had a certain interest in the organizational principles of Soviet power.[84] In fact, it was not only in Latin America that military rule followed populists or socialists with affiliations to the Soviets from the mid 1960s. Examples came from Iraq after the Ba'ath party's takeover in 1963, Algeria after Ben Bella's ousting by generals in 1965, the downfall of the reformers Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria in 1966, and Suharto's replacement of Sukarno in Indonesia in 1965–66. Just like the stagnating USSR under Brezhnev and General Castelo Branco's Brazil, these regimes were characterized by forced industrialization, centralized economic planning, modernizing society by harnessing the masses, and autocratic governance while keeping a democratic façade. The last phase of high modernity, from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s, can thus be considered as a period of global stagnation.

Other reasons contributed to the surprisingly relaxed nature of Brazilian–Soviet relations. After a short period of convergence with the USA, the military government, just like the left-wing populists before them, sought to expand Brazil's influence in the world by pursuing an independent foreign policy. The Soviet Union served two purposes in Brazilian geopolitical manoeuvring: it had become a trading partner and it offered political leverage in relations with Washington. From 1965, the liberal economist Roberto Campos presided over the newly established Ministry for Economic Planning and Coordination. His first foreign trip as representative of the anti-communist military junta took him ... to the Soviet Union! To the dismay of the Latin American left, he was received with all honours and was shown around the country for a week.[85] Campos had no sympathies at all for Soviet ideology but pragmatically saw the advantages of collaboration in certain fields, and the Soviets liked his realist approach. His meeting with the deputy Soviet foreign minister Achimov was to signal political independence from the United States, and a meeting with Brazilian industrialists and the trade minister Patoličev paved the way for a trade protocol, which was signed during Patoličev's visit to Brazil in 1966.[86] He was certainly moved to hear that the Brazilian coffee institute had named their export brand 'Gagarin'.[87] As early

84 Stephen Marks, *How Russia shaped the modern world: from art to anti-Semitism, ballet to bolshevism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 299–332; Engerman, *Staging growth*.

85 Eduardo Galeano, *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*, Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 1971, p. 350; Juan de Onis, 'Latin diplomacy touchy to Soviet: envoys try to be moderate and "revolutionary", too', *New York Times*, 30 May 1966, p. 3; Clissold, *Soviet relations*, p. 195.

86 Roberto Campos, *A lanterna na popa: memórias*, Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2001; AHMRE, 812 (42) (74), Itamaraty to Brazilian embassy in Moscow, 'Visita do Ministro Roberto Campos à União Soviética', 13 August 1965.

87 J. O. de Meira Penna, 'Brazilian relations with eastern Europe', *Studies on the Soviet Union*, 2, 1968, pp. 83f.

as 1966, the USSR transacted two-thirds of its trade in Latin America with Brazil and Argentina, another military dictatorship.[88] Economic relations would remain stable: the Brazilian minister for development and industry, Paulo Egydio, came to Moscow in 1967; the protocol was prolonged in 1972; another Soviet trade fair was held in São Paulo that year and the Brazilians held one in Moscow in 1974.[89]

In terms of technological cooperation, military-ruled Brazil was still – after Cuba – the most important Soviet partner in Latin America. As agreed with Goulart's administration and during Campos' visit, Soviet technicians helped to build a combined heat and power station in the state of São Paulo, they participated in Brazil's ambitious electrification programme, and Soviet geologists continued their expeditions in rural Brazil.[90] After some failed attempts in the early 1960s, the Soviets profitably shared their expertise in hydroelectric technology for several dam and power plant projects, where they collaborated with Brazilian engineers who had studied in the Soviet Union.[91] Building on these contacts, a Soviet–Brazilian consortium participated in a hydroelectric construction programme on the river Cuanza in Angola.[92] Even Brazilian ministries were not obliged to cut their connections to Moscow. In 1965, the Ministry of Health proposed resuming collaboration and asked for subject literature from its Soviet counterpart.[93] The following year, a delegation of the Soviet ministry was received in Brasília and helped conceptualize a vaccination plan.[94] The Council of Engineering and Architecture, at the Brazilian Ministry of Labour, remained in contact with the Institute for Railway Building in Dnepropetrovsk, and the national school of engineering sent students to Moscow and Leningrad for specialized training.[95]

In the aftermath of the putsch, the new government had been very insistent about repressing any communist influence in the arts. Despite this, the Instituto Cultural Brasil–U.R.S.S. was allowed to continue its work, and court cases against its members were soon stopped, not least because it took over some of the communication on technical collaboration.[96] After a short break in 1964, the Soviets were able to continue a pared-down version of their

88 'C.I.A. is spying from 100 miles up: satellites probe secrets of the Soviet Union', *New York Times*, 27 April 1966, p. 28.

89 Ilya Prizel, *Latin America through Soviet eyes: the evolution of Soviet perceptions during the Brezhnev era 1964–1982*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 169ff.; I. Goranskij, 'Na Sovetskoj vystavke v San-Paulo (At the Soviet exhibition in São Paulo)', *Latinskaja Amerika*, 1, 1973, pp. 161–6.

90 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.324 l.194, parley with Brazilian ambassador to the USSR, E. Valle, in the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 3 August 1965; Prizel, *Latin America*, p. 153; S. Korneev, 'Svjazy Akademii nauk SSSR s Latinskoj Amerikoj (Ties of the Soviet Academy of Science to Latin America)', *Latinskaja Amerika*, 8, 1974, p. 142; AHMRE, 451 (74), Itamaraty to Brazilian embassy in Moscow, 'Concessão de vistos oficiais a cientistas russos para visitarem Belém', 20 December 1966.

91 De Meira Penna, 'Brazilian relations', pp. 88f; V. Stanis, 'Kuznica kadrov dlja razvivajuiščichsja stran (Cadre training for the developing countries)', *Latinskaja Amerika*, 7, 1972, p. 119; Prizel, *Latin America*, pp. 169f.

92 Augusto Varas, ed., *Soviet–Latin American relations in the 1980s*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987, p. 30.

93 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.324 l.205, 3 May 1965.

94 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.997 l.127, Posol'stvo SSSR v Brazilii, GKKS (Soviet embassy in Brazil to GKKS), 15 January 1966.

95 GARF, f.9576 op.10. d.72 l.2, 13 September 1966; GARF, f.9576 op.10. d.72 l.22–3 December 1966.

96 GARF, f.9576 op.10. d.55 l.19–22, letter from the head of the Institute, Alfred Moraes, to the SSOD, 30 December 1965.

cultural diplomacy programme. In December of that year, they participated in the four hundredth anniversary celebrations of Rio de Janeiro, and they were free to organize their art exhibitions, ballet tours, cinema festivals, and book fairs.[97] Soviet academics attended the fiftieth anniversary of the Brazilian Academy of Science in 1966, and the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko was invited to be a juror for a music festival in the state of Rio in 1967.[98] Brazilian students in the Soviet Union (about a hundred in Moscow's Lumumba University, two-thirds of whom were apolitical according to Soviet estimates) continued their studies, and returned without harassment, at least in the case of those who studied in technological faculties.[99]

The journalist Genival Rabelo, originally a left-wing populist but now collaborating with the military government, could travel to the Soviet Union in 1966 and publish his very favourable account of Soviet life in *No outro lado do mundo* (*On the other side of the world*). Just like the travellers in the 1950s, he described the civilization that came to the former backwoods and unexplored areas with Soviet power enthusiastically:

> As late as the thirties Siberia was a neglected land, a predominantly agrarian area, like Brazil. Now it is being electrified, its heavy industry is growing rapidly. It is producing steel. Many labour processes are being mechanized. It will not be long before Siberia really becomes one of the richest places in the world. Even today it provides 90 per cent of the Soviet Union's hydropower resources and 80 per cent of its timber wealth.

Like Nestor de Holanda a decade before (who wrote an introduction for this book), Rabelo saw the responsibility for the Cold War as lying with the West. He was very positive about technological and educational achievements, the 'feeling of internationalism and fraternal concern for the working people of the world', progressive gender relations, and the lavish healthcare system in the USSR. 'Twenty more years of development in peace, and the Soviet Union will be the most progressive and happiest country on earth', he concluded in his book.[100] Although Rabelo collaborated with a staunchly anti-communist regime, he repeatedly favoured the Soviet model of development over the American one.[101] Similarly, Brazil actively exploited the geopolitical constellation and different sources of inspiration in its own interest until the end of military rule in 1985.

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97 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.324 l.109–78, Posol'stvo SSSR v Brazilii, Ministerstvo Kul'tury (Soviet embassy in Brazil to Ministry of Culture), 18 December 1964.

98 GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.997 l.14, 4 January 1966; GARF, f.9518 op.1 d.998 l.75, 23 June 1967.

99 Interview with a male Brazilian alumnus, middle-class background, student of economics in the Soviet Union 1973–79; RGASPI, f.1M op.39 d.30 l.1–14, 'O situacii studentov iz Latinskoj Ameriki v SSSR' ('About the situation of students from Latin America in the USSR'), 13 May 1966; AHMRE, 451 (74), Itamaraty to Brazilian embassy in Moscow, 'Universidade da Amizade dos Povos, programas', 8 September 1966; *ibid*., Itamaraty to Brazilian embassy in Moscow, 'Estudantes brasileiros na URSS', 30 March 1966.

100 Genival Rabelo, *No outro lado do mundo: a vida na URSS*, Rio de Janeiro: Diversas, pp. 10, 193, 238.

101 Genival Rabelo, *Ocupação da Amazônia*, Rio de Janeiro: Gernasa, 1968.

Conclusion

Interactions and commonalities from the 1950s show that the USSR should be considered as less of an idiosyncratic state and Brazil as more of an active, independent, and influential actor in Cold War history than is usually acknowledged in bipolar master narratives about the defeat of communism and the victory of the West. During the hottest phases of the Cold War, in the 1950s and 1960s, many commonalities existed in the development of seemingly different and distant countries such as Brazil and the Soviet Union. Albeit on two different sides of the Iron Curtain, they shared interests that went beyond transitory geopolitical orientations and specific governments. Whereas, from a European point of view, the Soviet Union often looked like a rather peculiar phenomenon, a global perspective reveals that it shared many characteristics with other places in the world. Understanding this common ground, the Soviets began their cultural diplomacy campaign in an optimistic global age of reform and belief in progress, conveying an image of the USSR as a role model for development towards socialist modernity. Beefed up with anti-imperialist rhetoric and the promise of being obtainable without the hardships of the capitalist path, this Soviet variant of modernity in fact embraced most of the ideas of its Western counterpart.

It was not, of course, the only, nor the most influential, concept of modernity. In Latin America, the Alliance for Progress and USAID propagated, on a grand scale, 'modernization theory' along lines elaborated in the USA. After this had failed in democracies, the US supported modernizing autocracies. The modernization processes in Japan and western Europe after the war were also observed closely, and China increasingly became a focus of interest, actively propagating its own development path all over Latin America.

However, the Soviets did leave a lasting, and today sometimes forgotten, impact on the 1950s and 1960s. With their cultural diplomacy, the USSR not only provoked the expansion of US efforts but also contributed to the violent downfall of many progressive administrations, owing to the imperial logic of the Cold War camps. For Brazil, contact with the Soviet Union played a part in the ending of a short phase of democratic rule, which was replaced by the first Latin American military dictatorship of the 1960s. Only with the close of the East–West conflict did a left-leaning president become acceptable to internal and external conservatives again.

That said, the Soviet Union also awoke certain questions among military leaders in Brazil, which went beyond geopolitical manoeuvring grounded in politico-military realism. Generals were inspired by state-led industrialization and the harnessing of the masses. Indeed, the repressive techniques of Soviet power were of considerable interest. There are hints that influence also flowed the other way, and that the Soviets looked to Latin American military regimes for new methods of stabilizing their own power from the late 1970s. Future archival research might reveal more in this as yet unexplored field.

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