

FROM PUBLIC SILENCE TO PUBLIC PROTEST:
FOUCAULT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SÃO
PAULO IN 1975

Michel Foucault visited Brazil five times between 1965 and 1976.¹ His journeys there took him to the major metropolitan centers of São Paulo, Campinas, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Belém, and Recife. In these cities, Foucault delivered important talks and lectures on a variety of topics related to his ongoing research, from juridical practices to sexuality. Foucault's experiences in Brazil have recently elicited the attention of Brazilian interpreters of his thought. Heliana de Barros Conde Rodrigues recounts these experiences in great depth in her new book.² Roberto Machado, who attended Foucault's Collège de France courses and seminars and accompanied him on all of his visits to Brazil in the 1970s, recalls them in intricate detail in his new book.³ Yet the topic of Foucault's presence in Brazil remains overwhelmingly unexplored in the English-speaking world. Moreover, even within the rich confines of the Brazilian literature on this topic, there are many facets of Foucault's visits to Brazil that remain open to further exploration. His political involvement stands out as one such facet. It is especially worthy of greater consideration because it raises some questions that have not been formulated, much less answered.

One of these questions concerns the timing of Foucault's public opposition to the military dictatorship in Brazil. Foucault

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is widely (and correctly) regarded as a militant intellectual who spoke out against injustices and participated in various struggles for social transformation, often by facilitating the voices of those whose voices were suppressed. Such views of his militancy inform and stimulate the Brazilian reception of his thought and practice.⁴ A Brazilian interlocutor no less important than Machado offers the following deeply eloquent words about Foucault's militancy:

Foucault's connection to politics led him to participate in concrete struggles that went beyond the walls of the university, not only in thinking about society but also in taking part in movements that sought to transform it. He was capable of going to the Bibliothèque Nationale during the day and participating in a demonstration at night. He, already known as a warrior, as a samurai, was a militant intellectual who sought through his example to take philosophy out of the ghetto of specialists. And, among his qualities – generosity, intelligence, lucidity – the one that I perhaps admire the most is fearlessness, courage. He who said that all courage is physical was capable of using the body and fame, notoriety, to denounce established powers, their injustices and violence, in struggles against racism, the death penalty, in favor of immigrants, prisoners, the mad, striking workers etc.⁵

Yet the story of Foucault's five visits to Brazil in particular complicates this otherwise apt impression of his political militancy. *All* of Foucault's visits to Brazil took place in the context of a military dictatorship that had been in place since March 1964 yet it was not until October 1975, well into the occasion of his

fourth visit to Brazil, that he adopted a public stance against the dictatorship there. If Foucault was the kind of outspoken warrior depicted above in the admiring words of Machado, what happened to him in Brazil under the dictatorship? To be more precise, given his history of political militancy with all of its very public battles, why did Foucault remain publicly silent about the dictatorship for such a long period of time, and why did he finally break his silence? In the following pages, I develop answers to these potentially uncomfortable questions (for interpreters inclined to see Foucault as an unambiguously outspoken militant) through a detailed consideration of the larger historical and political context that framed his transition from a position of public silence to a position of public protest in Brazil. I suggest that Foucault remained publicly silent about the dictatorship there out of a prudence vis-à-vis his interlocutors. He did not want to recklessly endanger their lives by speaking out. Foucault nonetheless broke his public silence about the dictatorship owing to two interrelated developments: a more intensive and selective political repression under President Ernesto Geisel from 1974 and 1976 and the slow reawakening of the student movement in Brazil during the same period. These answers to the question of the timing of Foucault's involvement in protests against the dictatorship suggest that he did not abandon his militancy so much as carry it with him in subtle and prudent ways attentive to the importance of articulating an oppositional stance *through* the collective resistance of others. This understanding of the rationale behind Foucault's political actions has, in its turn, implications that extend well beyond the peculiarities of his manifold experiences in Brazil. Silence is all too often depicted as a form of complicity with intolerable acts.⁶ The story of Foucault in

Brazil suggests that silence may also serve as the constitutive backdrop to a kind of militancy against these acts.

“YOUR LIVES ARE THREATENED”

On October 6, 1975, Foucault arrived at Viracopos airport in Campinas for his fourth visit to Brazil.⁷ The Department of Philosophy of the School of Philosophy, Literature, and Human Sciences (FFLCH) at the University of São Paulo (USP) had selected him, along with Alain Grosrichard, to serve as a visiting professor during the second semester of 1975.⁸ Foucault’s visit, as explained in a March 24 letter to him from the USP Philosophy Chair Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco Moreira, would involve lecturing on a theme of his choosing.⁹ In his response letter from April 13, Foucault enthusiastically accepted the invitation to serve as a visiting professor and proposed the theme of “knowledge of human sexuality since the 17th century” for his lectures.¹⁰ In accordance with this proposal, he began teaching a (still unpublished) course on the history of sexuality at FFLCH-USP,¹¹ where he had lectured a decade earlier on what would become *The Order of Things*.¹²

Yet, after only a handful of classes, political events caught up with him and disrupted his teaching agenda. On October 17 approximately one thousand USP students prepared a protest in anticipation of a visit by the Minister of Industry and Commerce to the School of Architecture and Urban Studies (FAU).¹³ The protest was to be directed “against governmental measures and imprisonments.”¹⁴ When the visit of the Minister never materialized, students proceeded to hold an assembly, stage their protest anyway, and plan more assemblies.¹⁵ After these events, agents of the Second Army’s Detachment of

Information Operations and Internal Defense Operations Center (DOI-CODI) in São Paulo initiated a wave of arrests that swept up forty-eight USP professors and alumni, according to student estimates.¹⁶ Students nevertheless remained undeterred in their determination to protest the arrests of their peers and professors. On the morning of October 23, another assembly took place on the grounds of FAU-USP.¹⁷ It served as the occasion for yet another protest against the recent imprisonment of “students, professors and journalists.”¹⁸

It was in the context of this protest that Foucault adopted a posture of public opposition to the dictatorship in Brazil. On October 22 the FFLCH-USP philosophy professor Marilena Chauí contacted José Castilho Marques Neto and other militants in the student movement to inform them that Foucault wanted to protest against the unfolding political repression and solicit their suggestions about what to do. Castilho recounts that the students immediately recommended that Foucault renounce his course, denounce the dictatorship when abroad, and demonstrate his solidarity with the imprisoned. The students also invited Foucault to participate in a student assembly the next day. Foucault accepted their invitation but he wanted to have a conversation beforehand to prepare for the event.¹⁹ Castilho met with Foucault the next morning to discuss the student movement and its struggles against the dictatorship.²⁰ The content of their conversation revolved around the forms of organization and core problems in the student movement as well as the fear between students from the infiltration of informants into their everyday lives.²¹ After the conversation, Castilho accompanied Foucault and Gérard Lebrun in a taxi to the student assembly at the massive open space of the Caramelo

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room at FAU-USP. Upon arriving there, Foucault asked for paper, sat down on a bench, and penned his declaration. Glauco Arbix translated the declaration, and Lebrun and others revised it.²² Before an audience of roughly six hundred students,²³ Foucault then delivered his declaration in French as Castilho read it alongside him in Portuguese.²⁴ In his powerful words:

Many dozens of USP students and professors were recently imprisoned. Maybe they'll be tortured, if they are not already being tortured at this moment. Your lives are threatened. A university that is not fully free is nothing more than a business of servility. You can't teach under boot heels; you can't speak in the face of the walls of prisons; you can't study when arms threaten. The freedom of expression and research are the signs of the liberty of peoples. In the defense of rights, in the struggle against torture and the infamy of the police, the struggles of intellectual workers unite with those of manual workers.

The University of São Paulo knows that your struggle today is connected to the struggle for freedom in all of the countries of the world. I pay tribute to your courage and I willingly associate myself with the decisions that you make to ensure that justice here is not an outrageous word.²⁵

These hastily written words packed a political punch. Foucault here succinctly, forcefully, and lucidly asserted the impossibility of engaging in ordinary academic pursuits in the context of a pervasive and severe political repression. If his point was fairly

uncontroversial, Foucault took it in new directions by layering it within larger contexts of struggles for freedom nationally and globally. He suggested that political repression assaults the freedom of whole “peoples,” not just particular institutions or individuals inside academe. Foucault acknowledged the still incipient solidarity between (otherwise separated) intellectual and manual workers in their struggles against political repression in Brazil. He also situated the struggles at USP within a larger context of struggles for freedom elsewhere in the world. His overall message was clear: USP students and professors were in danger but they were not alone. Other segments of Brazilian society joined them and other groups in other countries struggled for the same principle. Finally, Foucault himself explicitly joined USP students and professors in their struggles but he did not play the role of the omniscient intellectual telling others what to do. He deferred to the decisions of a collective body assembled right before him rather than offer his own political prescriptions to it.

His declaration had an immediate resonance. Castilho reports that students greeted it with an “emotional applause.”²⁶ The assembly also passed a motion that reflected the original demands of students prior to the meeting of Castilho with Foucault. It approved Foucault’s suspension of “his work in the country” pending the release of “imprisoned colleagues.”²⁷ The motion also set out to have Foucault “produce articles offering his perspective on the imprisonments and denouncing them widely in the international press, especially in France.”²⁸ The same student assembly as well as another one on the evening of October 23 decided to write two letters: an open letter to the public denouncing “imprisonments and tortures” and a

letter to the President of Brazil demanding the release of prisoners or threatening a general strike by October 28.²⁹

FOUCAULT UNDER SURVEILLANCE

The history of the production and circulation of Foucault's little-known declaration (at least outside Brazil) is fascinating enough to warrant consideration before proceeding further in the elaboration of the historical and political context in which it was delivered. Students reproduced Foucault's declaration on a typewritten page with handwritten corrections. The bottom of the page contained a brief summary of the motions adopted by the student assembly for Foucault. This page circulated as a pamphlet among students.³⁰ It also ended up in the hands of the security services. We know from Daniel Defert that Foucault had his own suspicions about being under surveillance in Brazil and that the French diplomatic services had informed him that they were protecting him.³¹ Owing to the groundbreaking research of Conde and Maria Izabel Pitanga, we now know that Foucault was not misguided in his suspicions. Through a request for documents about Foucault from the National Archive at the Ministry of Justice in Brasília, Conde and Pitanga discovered that the national intelligence service created under the dictatorship, the National Information Service (SNI), had Foucault under surveillance.³² The SNI obtained a barely legible and heavily underlined copy of the pamphlet containing his declaration.³³ The SNI also produced its own legible version of Foucault's declaration in the presentation of his file.³⁴ Conde does a great service to researchers of Foucault and the Brazilian dictatorship by reproducing whole portions of this file in her recently published book.³⁵ Foucault's

declaration eventually circulated publicly through the letters to the editor column in the November 1975 issue of the alternative press monthly *Ex*.³⁶ There are mild and largely inconsequential discrepancies in the wording of Foucault's declaration in his SNI file and *Ex*. One major difference between them concerns authorship. *Ex* straightforwardly and correctly presented Foucault as the author of the statement whereas the SNI had a more complicated (and erroneous) view of the matter. It maintained that the FFLCH-USP philosophy professors Franco and Chauí had “maneuvered” Foucault into taking “a position against the government” at the student assembly.³⁷ Accordingly, the SNI attributed the drafting of Foucault's declaration to these leftist philosophers rather than to Foucault himself. It based this attribution on the content of the statement as well as Foucault's inability to “write correctly in the Portuguese language.”³⁸ The SNI even speculated that the point of getting Foucault to deliver the speech was to provoke security agencies into detaining him, thereby casting the Brazilian government in a negative light internationally.³⁹ In her probing commentary on Foucault's intelligence file, Conde writes, “the security agencies seem strangely committed to ‘exonerating’ Foucault of his own speech,” as if blame for it resided exclusively in the machinations of an internal enemy.⁴⁰

Yet the SNI version of what transpired at FAU-USP on October 23 is fanciful to say the least.⁴¹ Castilho acknowledges that Chauí may well have informed Foucault about the intensification of political repression in private conversations but he insists that her involvement would not have gone any further owing to her highly vulnerable position (as a known leftist professor) under the dictatorship. Castilho's account clarifies that

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Foucault accepted the invitation from students to attend the assembly on his own and authored the declaration from scratch at the assembly. Chauí had simply served in a capacity as an intermediary between student militants and Foucault prior to the assembly. Indeed, Castilho stresses that Chauí did not even attend the student assembly at FAU-USP.⁴²

Foucault's declaration at this assembly also elicited the attention of other state agencies. A document from the Ministry of Aeronautics dated for November 24, 1975 mentions his declaration in the context of a larger criticism of Foucault and other researchers for receiving funds from the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) in spite of challenging the policies of the dictatorship and even attempting to establish communism in Brazil.⁴³ Like Foucault's SNI file, this document also reflected a basic confusion about the precise impetus behind the student assembly and his participation in it. It suggested that Foucault had delivered his declaration at the assembly *in reaction* to the assassination of the journalist Vladimir Herzog but that assassination took place two days *after* the assembly.⁴⁴ The document from the Ministry of Aeronautics thus projected Foucault's response to Herzog's assassination *back* into his initial involvement in public opposition to the dictatorship, as if the assassination served as the catalyst for the entire sequence of his political activities in Brazil.

FOUCAULT'S DECLARATION AT FAU-USP IN CONTEXT

Universities throughout Brazil had a long history of political repression under the dictatorship because security forces viewed them as spaces of recruitment for the armed left and,

more generally, as hotbeds of “subversion.”⁴⁵ Apart from arrest, imprisonment, torture, death, and disappearance, this repression took a variety of subtle and overt forms with their own ebb and flow throughout the life of the dictatorship: successive legal prohibitions on student organizing,⁴⁶ military invasions and occupations of campuses,⁴⁷ purges of professors based on military-led investigations,⁴⁸ the blacklisting of students,⁴⁹ the use of rectors to gather and transmit information about students to security forces,⁵⁰ and the surveillance of students through undercover security agents in the classroom.⁵¹ USP had a long history of experiences with these and other forms of political repression going all the way back to the beginning of the dictatorship. Shortly after the coup d’état in 1964, security forces invaded and pillaged the grounds of the FFLCH, where Foucault would lecture in 1965 and 1975. At the time, the Rector of USP, Luís Antônio da Gama e Silva, even created a secret commission to investigate the allegedly subversive activities of USP professors for security forces.⁵² The commission produced a report accusing fifty-two USP professors, students, and administrators of subversion.⁵³ The report resulted in military police inquiries for many of the professors.⁵⁴ The ensuing trials cleared the professors of the charges of subversion but not before they had already been dismissed or forcibly retired,⁵⁵ and not before some of them had been arrested and imprisoned.⁵⁶ Less than a week after the dictatorship drastically increased its powers at the end of 1968, the military engaged in a brazen attack on USP dormitories that resulted in the arrest of hundreds of students.⁵⁷ The dictatorship also used its heightened powers to engage in another round of purges, forcibly retiring forty-two federal employees, including three USP professors, in April 1969. When the USP

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Vice-Rector, Hélio Lourenço da Oliveira, protested the compulsory retirements on grounds that USP professors are state rather than federal employees, the dictatorship responded in a vindictive manner by forcibly retiring him and over a dozen additional USP professors, including the future President of Brazil Fernando Henrique Cardoso.⁵⁸ After these purges, security forces intervened to block the release of approved and budgeted contracts for the appointment of individuals deemed subversive, once these contracts reached the office of the Rector.⁵⁹ By the time Foucault returned to USP in 1975, an atmosphere of fear, if not terror, pervaded the campus. As indicated by the mere existence of his intelligence file, informants circulated on campus to monitor the activities of students and professors. Security forces also arrested students and professors, sometimes even by pulling them out of the classroom.⁶⁰ Arrests in turn led to more extreme measures, such as imprisonment, torture, death, and disappearance. Security forces assassinated or disappeared forty-seven USP students, professors, and alumni between 1968 and 1976.⁶¹

In this larger history of political repression, the case of the torture and assassination of USP geology student Alexandre Vannucchi Leme merits special consideration because the reaction to it would anticipate the forms of collective mobilization that Foucault would witness and experience in São Paulo in October 1975. The date of this case is also noteworthy, as it occurred roughly two months before Foucault's first return to Brazil in the 1970s. Security forces picked up Leme on suspicions of his involvement in the armed wing of the guerrilla organization National Liberating Action.⁶² They then tortured him to death at DOI-CODI in São Paulo on March 17, 1973

and attempted to cover up his death through two incompatible versions of the event: one that claimed Leme was killed in a truck accident while fleeing arrest and another based on the claim of his suicide at DOI-CODI.⁶³ The reliance of security agents on *both* versions of Leme's death provoked disbelief and outrage among his family members, Catholic clergymen, and USP students. The students channeled their disbelief and outrage into protests over the course of the following two months.⁶⁴ Serbin provides a vivid account of the protests. In his words:

USP buzzed with activity – with meetings, pamphleteering, discussion at information tables, and class stoppages. Students wore black arm bands and draped black banners around the campus. Leme's geology colleagues organized a joint student-faculty committee to investigate the circumstances of his death and to establish proof of his innocence. Students from USP and other schools then issued a statement citing Leme's 'excellent reputation among students and professors' and his qualities as a leader. The geology students declared a state of mourning and proposed a memorial mass for Leme.⁶⁵

Cardinal Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns eventually presided over the proposed mass for Leme at the Sé cathedral in São Paulo on March 30. The service attracted three thousand persons in spite of the strong presence of security forces.⁶⁶ Castilho attended the mass. He describes the experience of passing the military police to enter the Sé cathedral as one of the most frightening in his life.⁶⁷ Foucault arrived in Brazil shortly after this event. It is unclear whether he ever learned about the assassination of

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Leme but the reaction to it created the first stirrings of the kinds of protests that he would encounter upon his return to São Paulo in October 1975.

As we can see from above, USP students did not need Foucault to go tell them that their lives were imperiled. These students and their professors lived under the constant threat of arrest, imprisonment, torture, death, and disappearance. They had the courage to mobilize against it on their own long before Foucault showed up on their campus in 1975. His words nevertheless turned out to have been sadly prescient. Only two days after Foucault delivered his political declaration at USP on October 23, security forces tortured and assassinated the Jewish journalist and USP professor Herzog at DOI-CODI in São Paulo. A rank and file Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) militant,⁶⁸ Herzog had voluntarily reported to DOI-CODI after being summoned there to clarify his ties to the PCB.⁶⁹ In a manner partially reminiscent of the case of Leme, security forces tried to cover up Herzog's assassination via torture by claiming that he committed suicide.⁷⁰ Yet the official version of Herzog's death was met with widespread disbelief in part because it simply did not sit easily with his voluntary appearance at DOI-CODI.⁷¹

After learning about Herzog's death, USP students reacted swiftly. Rather than wait until October 28, they started their strike on October 27.⁷² Serbin captures the immense scale of the strike. "Thirty thousand students," he notes, "went on strike at USP."⁷³ Outraged by the assassination of Herzog, Foucault proceeded to cancel his course at USP. This action may have already been inferred from his strong words at the student assembly on October 23. The editors of the alternative

press monthly, *Ex*, even reported that Foucault outright suspended his course *at* this assembly.⁷⁴ However, this reporting seems to have projected into the past an action that was anticipated but not yet undertaken. *Folha de S. Paulo* had a different take on the matter. The newspaper reported that Foucault had more carefully announced his *intention* to suspend his course.⁷⁵ Whatever the case, the subsequent sequence of events pushed Foucault into a more forthrightly unequivocal position. Conde suggests that if Foucault had any reservations about going through with the course suspension he swiftly dispensed with them upon learning about the assassination of Herzog.⁷⁶ Foucault announced the outright cancellation of his course at USP on October 27, the same day as the Jewish funeral for Herzog.⁷⁷ The magnitude of this gesture (in terms of Foucault's personal history as an educator with a rich history of political militancy) should not be missed. As far as I can surmise, it was the first and only time that Foucault cancelled a course for explicitly stated political reasons. He also read a statement about the assassination of Herzog that was immediately reproduced as a pamphlet for students. Unfortunately, the pamphlet has eluded the grasp of researchers on Foucault in Brazil.⁷⁸ Machado, however, recalls the public statement that Foucault delivered. According to his recollection, Foucault proclaimed that he "would not teach in countries where journalists were tortured and killed in prison."⁷⁹ Moreover, there is a now discontinued online record of a subsequent declaration that Foucault made right before his participation in an ecumenical memorial service for Herzog on October 31. In that declaration, Foucault straightforwardly explained his motives for cancelling his course at USP. "I won't," he said before an audience in an auditorium, "give a course here because they're

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killing the thinkers of this institution.”⁸⁰ After uttering these words, Foucault withdrew from the auditorium to participate in a march culminating in an ecumenical memorial service for Herzog led by Dom Paulo.⁸¹ The service attracted eight thousand persons to the Praça da Sé in São Paulo in spite of the efforts of the security forces to diminish attendance through the use of well over three hundred roadblocks.⁸² Foucault was deeply moved by the whole experience. In an interview with Thierry Voeltzel from 1978, he marveled at the spectacle of a Catholic leader adopting a Jewish salutation to channel resistance to the dictatorship:

It drew thousands and thousands of people into the church, on to the square and so on, and the cardinal in red robes presided over the ceremony, and he came forward at the end of the ceremony, in front of the faithful, and he greeted them shouting: ‘Shalom, shalom.’ And there was all around the square armed police and there were plain clothes policemen in the church. The police pulled back; there was nothing the police could do against that. I have to say, that had a grandeur of strength, there was a gigantic historical weight there.⁸³

Foucault had good reasons to marvel at this event and to speak of its tremendous historical significance. Herzog’s ecumenical memorial service would turn out to be a major catalyst for the reemergence of the opposition to the dictatorship and the very slow transition back to democracy.⁸⁴

Foucault also stuck to his words about not teaching in Brazil, at least for the remainder of his stay there in 1975.

However, after the assassination of Herzog, he did receive a speaking invitation from Mariza Corrêa and other students at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP).⁸⁵ Foucault accepted the invitation but *only* on condition that his talk take place *off* the main UNICAMP campus, no doubt in an effort to prevent even the semblance of suddenly betraying his own words about no longer teaching in Brazil.⁸⁶ His talk took place at the headquarters of an Academic Center (CA) in downtown Campinas, either on or right around October 27.⁸⁷ The choice of this location is telling in itself. Victoria Langland describes CAs as “centers that served as platforms for students’ participation in national political debates, as well as for organizing social activities, producing student newspapers, and generally representing student demands to university authorities.”⁸⁸ The CA is not, in other words, the more conventional pedagogical space of the classroom or lecture hall. It is emphatically not distinguished by the presence of professors, much less administrators. The CA is a space that nurtures the politicization of students *by* students. As Margareth Rago remarks, “The Academic Center is a space of students for students, a space of resistance, of their struggles.”⁸⁹ For this very reason, security forces arrested many CA directors.⁹⁰ They also invaded, occupied, and pillaged the grounds of some CAs.⁹¹ Langland suggests that CAs served to reawaken the student movement beginning in 1974, after a period of severe political repression.⁹² Foucault knew about the significance of CAs. He had asked Castilho about one at USP during their meeting.⁹³ The CA in Campinas provided Foucault with a seemingly ideal space from which to elaborate his newly publicized solidarity with the opponents and victims of the dictatorship. Still, it is not clear that he took advantage of the opportunity. Foucault’s

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talk does not appear to have been recorded or transcribed but the political scientist Armando Boito Júnior and the philosopher Luiz B.L. Orlandi were present for it. Their informal recollections of the event with Rago do not indicate that Foucault made any explicitly political declarations about the recent assassination of Herzog or political repression.⁹⁴ Boito recalls that Foucault affirmed the origins of sexual repression in the bourgeoisie rather than in the working class.⁹⁵ Orlandi, who translated the bulk of Foucault's talk, recalls that Foucault formulated a critique of totalizing syntheses.⁹⁶ It seems that Foucault may have restricted himself to the themes related to his burgeoning research on the occasion of his visit to Campinas. Then again, explicit political declarations of the sort he delivered at USP were not exactly urgent because Foucault had already made his political stance perfectly clear.

Through his declarations at USP and his participation in the ecumenical memorial service for Herzog, Foucault sought to be expelled from Brazil in order to draw international attention to the political situation there.⁹⁷ His strategy almost succeeded. Foucault was never kicked out of Brazil but there was an order for his expulsion that was, as he later explained, withdrawn in the final minute because of the potential reaction it could generate among students in Brazil and public opinion in France.⁹⁸ Immediately after his departure from Brazil on November 18, Foucault visited New York City.⁹⁹ There, he gave a talk at Columbia University in which he discussed recent events in Brazil.¹⁰⁰ In his words:

A few days ago I was in Latin America, in Brazil, where, as you know, there are a large number of political prisoners. Several hundred journalists, students,

professors, intellectuals and lawyers have been arrested there during these last few weeks. And in Brazil, of course, arrested also mean[s] tortured.¹⁰¹

In this context, Foucault touched on a number of points related to torture in Brazil, namely, the assistance of American advisors in the development of techniques of torture, the spatial separation of the torturers from those formulating the questions for the tortured (via the use of computers) as well as the involvement of doctors, psychiatrists, and (highly sophisticated) psychoanalysts in torture sessions.¹⁰² He mentioned Herzog in his remarks on the role of doctors in torture. Foucault suggested that Herzog had died because he had not been given a proper medical exam to assess the risk of death during his torture sessions.¹⁰³ In Foucault's words, "Herzog, who died in prison ten days ago, had not been adequately examined."¹⁰⁴ These words would not be Foucault's final words on torture in Brazil. In an interview published in 1977, he once again dwelled on the role of doctors, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts in torture in the country. However, in a subtler twist, Foucault went on to acknowledge the prominent role of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts in the *opposition* to the dictatorship.¹⁰⁵

After his visit to Brazil in 1975, Foucault received and accepted an invitation from Alliance Française to deliver lectures in the north and northeast of the country. He had hoped that the Brazilian government would block his entry into the country yet it did not pursue this course of action, no doubt in order to avoid the negative publicity that would have ensued.¹⁰⁶ At this juncture, Foucault could have refused to go back to Brazil in order to remain consistent with his own adamant

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statements about refusing to teach in a country where professors, students, and journalists are killed but he went back for what would be the last time. Why? The diminution of political repression does not seem to be a compelling enough answer. The intensity of that repression had only begun to relent through highly controlled processes of political liberalization under Geisel. These changes would have hardly appeared stark or definitive when Foucault returned to Brazil only a year later. Are we to then conclude that he violated his own stated commitments? That conclusion would seem to be a bit too hasty because Foucault had articulated his commitments in anticipation of an expulsion from Brazil. When no expulsion transpired, he had to adapt to the judicious strategy of the Brazilian government in coping with him. He had, in short, to find another way to upend this strategy. Foucault reasoned that since he had been not expelled from the country after his protests he would force the government to put up with him one more time. In his words:

I came more as a kind of challenge, after what happened in São Paulo, where an expulsion order was revoked at the last minute. When they asked me to come here to lecture at Alliance Française, I normally would have refused but I accepted it as a challenge to see what would happen. Because at that time, one year before, a relation of forces established itself: on one side, the Brazilian government wanted me to leave, then it considered that there would be many problems with USP (the University of São Paulo), with students, with French public opinion, etc. I exploited this

correlation of forces to say: not only did you not expel me, you were obliged to accept me one more time.¹⁰⁷

The Brazilian government did put up with Foucault again but not without resuscitating his own suspicions about being under surveillance.¹⁰⁸

GOING PUBLIC WITH RESISTANCE

The significance of Foucault's declaration at FAU-USP on October 23, 1975 resides less in its powerful content than in the dynamic relationship between this content and the larger context of his visits to Brazil as well as the still unfolding political events in the country, above all the torture and assassination of Herzog. To fully gauge the significance of the declaration, it helps to recall that Foucault had been to Brazil on three previous occasions during the dictatorship. His preceding two visits in 1973 and 1974 even took place at the *height* of political repression under the dictatorship, in a period known as "the years of lead" (*os anos de chumbo*) from 1969 to 1974.¹⁰⁹ Chauí repeatedly insists that Foucault visited Brazil in these years to support the resistance to the dictatorship.¹¹⁰ She also claims that he made a point of publicizing his support for this resistance within the Brazilian press.¹¹¹ Yet the latter claim in particular effaces an altogether crucial difference between Foucault's three visits to Brazil prior to 1975 and his visit there in 1975. Foucault adopted a posture of public silence about the dictatorship on his previous journeys to Brazil. Contra Chauí, there is simply no evidence to support the claim that he publicized his solidarity with the resistance to the dictatorship as early as 1973. In fact, "there are," as the journalist Rafael Cariello correctly cautions, "few records of public criticism by

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the author of *Discipline and Punish* of the Brazilian military dictatorship, which was in force during the entire period in which Foucault visited Brazil.”¹¹² For her part, Conde nicely captures a striking instance of Foucault’s public silence about the dictatorship without exploring it any further. She observes that Foucault offered no political commentary during a question and answer session in Belo Horizonte in May 1973 even though he had just concluded a tumultuous period of “battles with the French police.”¹¹³ Perhaps just as mysteriously, Foucault’s distance from Brazil did not afford a more publicly critical posture. He maintained his silence about the Brazilian dictatorship outside Brazil prior to November 1975.

As we have already seen, Foucault’s public silence did not signal his indifference toward the dictatorship or, worse yet, his acceptance of it. Foucault’s silence also did not preclude his Brazilian audiences from construing the content of his lectures as implicitly critical of the dictatorship.¹¹⁴ But his silence mattered because it left his position unclear to those who were not proximate to him or knowledgeable about his broader political orientation. It thus constrained the scale of possible forms of solidarity he apparently sought to nurture in Brazil. Herein lies a major part of the historical significance of Foucault’s political declaration at FAU-USP. It publicly announced his solidarity with the victims and opponents of the dictatorship for the very first time. The timing of this announcement raises, in its turn, two interrelated questions. First, why did Foucault remain publicly silent about the dictatorship *prior* to October 1975? Second, why did he suddenly break his silence?

To understand the impetus behind the first question, it helps to bring a few more basic details into sharper focus. One

is that Foucault had already transformed into a political militant by the time of his visits to Brazil in the early 1970s. As late as December 1972, Foucault had been extremely active in the Prisons Information Group (GIP), which he co-founded with Defert and others in February 1971. The GIP set out to heighten public intolerance of the prison system through the voices of prisoners themselves. If Foucault had been a politically inactive intellectual then his public silence about the dictatorship in Brazil would come as little surprise and raise few, if any, questions. Indeed, given his history of militancy in France, it would seem that Foucault would have easily gravitated toward a more forthrightly public posture about political repression in Brazil. The other pertinent detail is that his visits to the country recommenced (after his initial visit in October 1965) at the *height* of the dictatorship, as stressed above. The passage of Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5) in December 1968 signaled the beginning of this period. AI-5 drastically amplified the powers of the president, eliminated civil liberties, and further empowered the military. After AI-5, torture “became,” in the words of Langland, “the central weapon in the regime’s assault on its opponents, real and perceived.”¹¹⁵ Serbin summarizes the gruesome iterations of torture deployed to instill fear in the population:

Torturers used a horrifying array of techniques on prisoners: beatings, starvation, suffocation, near drowning, electric shocks to the genitals, rape, exposure to snakes and cockroaches, psychological abuse, and the infamous ‘parrot’s perch,’ a metal bar from which a bound individual was hung, then shocked and beaten.¹¹⁶

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Foucault returned to Brazil in the context of an intensification of these practices.¹¹⁷ The overall violence of the dictatorship thus provided him with what Conde aptly describes as “many reasons and occasions to protest.”¹¹⁸ The final detail worthy of retention is that Foucault’s interlocutors leave his staunch opposition to the dictatorship during this period entirely unambiguous.

Why, then, did Foucault remain publicly silent? Machado offers what might be construed as a partial answer to this question. “In all of my time with him during his visits to Brazil in the period of repression,” Machado writes of Foucault, “I never heard him, no matter how much he was asked, use his theoretical analyses to say how one should struggle against the dictatorship, even though he was viscerally against it.”¹¹⁹ The unstated flipside of Foucault’s aversion to prescribing political actions for Brazilians on the basis of his analyses was letting them figure out these actions for themselves and therefore enabling them to take responsibility for their own decisions. Indeed, we can go a step further: Foucault apparently exuded the conviction that the Brazilian people *would be* capable of dismantling the dictatorship once they committed themselves to a collective refusal of the kind he later witnessed in Iran. Foucault once told Machado, “If Brazilians really wanted to they would take down the military regime! If they all said *no*, state power would not function.”¹²⁰

What Machado recalls is undoubtedly illuminating. Yet Foucault clearly found ways of being vocal in public without telling others what to do. We are therefore still left with the question of why he chose to be publicly vocal at one moment rather than another. Castilho stresses that Foucault simply

lacked the context within which to become publicly vocal about the dictatorship, surrounded as he was by prominent leftist intellectuals who were too vulnerable to openly challenge the dictatorship.¹²¹ It could also be that Foucault simply did not know enough about the details of the situation in Brazil to feel comfortable taking a public stance against the dictatorship. Arbix opens up this interpretive possibility. He detected an inspiring “sign of rigor” in the fact that Foucault *only* composed his declaration from FAU-USP “after conversing with Castilho and becoming aware of the situation in detail.”¹²² The psychoanalyst Jurandir Freire Costa, who accompanied Foucault in Rio de Janeiro, offers another interpretive possibility. He picks up on something far more intentional in Foucault’s silence. “He,” Costa says of Foucault, “was never an irresponsible provocateur. He knew that he was under dictatorship, surrounded by persons who were vulnerable. There was a tacit agreement that we would only speak of what was possible.”¹²³ In other words, Foucault sought to protect his Brazilian interlocutors through silence. Just as importantly, the “we” in Costa’s observation suggests that others participated in this silence. Silence thus amounted to a collectively practiced experience.

The explanations above are not mutually incompatible. It could be that Foucault lacked the context for a political engagement in Brazil as well as a deep knowledge of the situation there but knew enough about the broad contours of this situation to want to protect his interlocutors by remaining silent. We know from above that Foucault had learned about the violence of the dictatorship in private conversations with these interlocutors. He also could have easily learned about

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torture in Brazil while still in France. Reports of torture in Brazil began to appear in the French press as early as December 1969.¹²⁴ Perhaps the best indication that Foucault adopted a posture of public silence to protect his interlocutors from the violence of the dictatorship derived from the stated reasons for his affirmations of a related and continuing silence. He refused to openly criticize Brazilian Marxists over his own implicit differences with them on grounds that they could not defend themselves in a climate of anti-Marxist political repression. “I do not,” Foucault declared with reference to Brazilian Marxists, “criticize those who do not have a right to a defense.”¹²⁵ He adopted this stance in the face of efforts by the Brazilian press to exploit his own underlying differences with these Marxists during his visit to Brazil in 1975.¹²⁶ Foucault also retained his aversion to criticizing Brazilian Marxists as he prepared to visit the more intellectually Marxist northeast of Brazil in 1976. He even told Machado something altogether astounding for a fierce and longtime critic of the French Communist Party (PCF).¹²⁷ “I,” Foucault confided to Machado, “would never speak against the Communist Party when it is outlawed and its members are in prison.”¹²⁸ If Foucault felt such a strong need to adopt a posture of public silence toward Brazilian Marxists in order to avoid exacerbating their highly vulnerable positions under the dictatorship, it seems entirely plausible and highly probable that he would have struck a similar posture to avoid imperiling the totality of his Brazilian interlocutors with arrest, imprisonment, torture, death, and disappearance prior to his declaration at FAU-USP on October 23, 1975.¹²⁹

He nevertheless found an occasion to break his silence on that day. What, then, changed? Two interrelated developments appear to have modified Foucault's approach. One was a more selective and intensive political repression under President Geisel. Though Geisel introduced policies of political liberalization that paved the way for a slow return to democracy, such as a reduction in censorship, this process was highly uneven in its application.¹³⁰ As Paulo Markun explains, "The project of political opening imagined by Geisel and [the architect of the SNI] Golbery [do Couto e Silva] never allowed for any tolerance toward what was regarded as subversive opposition."¹³¹ Indeed, the dictatorship under Geisel *unleashed* waves of repression against the PCB in particular in an effort to fully and definitively remove the threat of communism in the midst of the slow beginnings of the transition back to democracy. As the Brazil: Never Again project recalls, "Between 1974 and 1976, the PCB was subjected to successive waves of detentions in which hundreds of members and important party leaders were imprisoned, tortured, and killed throughout the country."¹³² This political repression intensified in the city of São Paulo in particular at the very moment that Foucault returned there in early October 1975,¹³³ to the point of ultimately compelling him to attend the student assembly at FAU-USP.¹³⁴ It also resulted directly in the assassination of a rank and file PCB member, Herzog,¹³⁵ which obviously drew Foucault even further into public protests against the dictatorship. The repression of the PCB thus acted as *the* stimulus to Foucault's sudden public involvement in protests against the dictatorship in Brazil. The irony of this situation was not lost on Arbix. He recalls that even though students affiliated with the PCB wrongly dismissed Foucault as "a liberal and critic of the left"

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Foucault's protest was fundamentally directed against waves of repression that targeted PCB militants.¹³⁶

The other development that precipitated his involvement was the reemergence of the student movement during the same period. As we have seen, it was the student movement that drew Foucault into open political struggle in Brazil. This movement created a literal space in which he could speak publicly without recklessly endangering others or superimposing his voice on their enforced silence. Right before his eyes, hundreds of USP students took a public stand against the imprisonment of their peers and professors. In this context, it suddenly made much more sense to publicly criticize the dictatorship. After all, Foucault would not have been acting alone. He would have been, rather, acting with others who had already assumed the risk of exposing themselves to political repression through their participation in a collective act of protest. This act was, in other words, initiated and opened up by the courage of the opponents and victims of the dictatorship. It thus made sense to enter into solidarity with them and to follow their lead by deferring to their collective decisions. From this perspective, the story of Foucault in Brazil in October 1975 matters because it belongs to the much larger story of a reemerging opposition to the dictatorship in Brazil and the slow transition back to democracy. Indeed, as Castilho points out, Foucault's reference to the unity of "intellectual workers" and "manual workers" in his initial declaration at USP even anticipated the increasingly important forms of solidarity in the reemerging opposition.¹³⁷

The story of Foucault in Brazil *before* this declaration also matters because it complicates an image and understanding of

his militancy as well as his own inchoate analysis of militancy. Foucault tended to practice a very vocal and public militancy, as perhaps best illustrated in a widely circulated image of him speaking into a bullhorn next to Jean-Paul Sartre before a dense crowd of journalists at a protest.¹³⁸ His analysis of militancy from his larger exploration of courageous truth telling (*parrhesia*) in antiquity also focused overwhelmingly on public acts, if not of speech then of manifestations of forms of life. Indeed, Foucault anachronistically cast Cynics in particular as militants precisely because they sought to challenge society (and thus transform the world) through combative and scandalous acts in public spaces.¹³⁹ Yet, as we have seen in some detail, Foucault hardly conformed to this kind of militancy throughout the bulk of his time in Brazil. Quite the contrary, he exhibited a conspicuous silence about the dictatorship and its bloody repression. However, his silence did not signal his abandonment of militancy. Foucault carried his militancy with him to Brazil, as indicated by his eventual involvement in protests against political repression. Indeed, through his actions and inactions in Brazil, Foucault disclosed another figure of the militant: not only the outspoken combatant in the streets but also the quiet opponent who breaks his or her silence only at a well-calculated and propitious moment in a public space. In this regard as well, Foucault shared a collective experience with many Brazilians. They had no choice but to be publicly silent in their militancy. Silence in public (and sometimes even in private) was a manner of protecting oneself and others in the context of a dictatorship bent on detecting, monitoring, and punishing the slightest signs of subversion. In the case of Foucault, public silence was a manner of engaging in solidarity with silenced others, including those who had divergent politi-

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cal and theoretical orientations. The progressive Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara, captured something of this kind of silence when pressed about not speaking during the ecumenical memorial service for Herzog. “Why speak in a high voice,” he asked, “when all of us are conversing in silence?”¹⁴⁰ An appreciation of the political potentialities of this experience of silence enables us to obtain a more robust understanding of the breadth and complexity Foucault’s political commitments and engagements. It also reminds us that silence in public need not be confused with complicity.

NOTES

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. I dedicate this essay to my mother, Josenilda de Araujo Hoffman. I thank Heliana de Barros Conde Rodrigues and Anderson Aparecido Lima da Silva for providing me with copies of the official documentation discussed in the essay.
- 2 Heliana de Barros Conde Rodrigues, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil: Presença, efeitos, ressonâncias* (Rio de Janeiro: Lamparina, 2016).
- 3 Roberto Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault* (São Paulo: n-1 edições, 2017).
- 4 For a detailed and theoretically engaging elaboration of the specificity of Foucault’s militancy from the Brazilian context, see Priscila Piazzentini Vieira, *A coragem da verdade e a ética do intelectual em Michel Foucault* (São Paulo: Intermeios, 2015). Vieira contends that Foucault went so far as to practice and then conceptualize a whole new form of militancy. She suggests that Foucault’s militancy broke with traditional molds of militancy on the left by aspiring toward autonomy and worldly transformations, rather than obedience and other worldly access (in the sense of utopian realizations).
- 5 Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 120-121.

- 6 Incidentally, the French Jesuit philosopher Michel de Certeau construed silence precisely in these terms in his foreword to a report on torture in Brazil published in a progressive Catholic magazine in France in 1969. After raising the possibility that Europe had “exported” the “virus” of torture, Certeau asked the following rhetorical question: “Can we be its accomplices, by our silence, by lassitude, by self-interest or by skepticism?” “Livre noir: terreur et torture au Brésil,” *Croissance des jeunes nations*, December 1969, 21.
- 7 “Paul Michel Foucault,” Informação No. 5497/71/ASP/SNI/75, November 14, 1975, 1, Arquivo Nacional, Ministério da Justiça, Brasília, Brazil.
- 8 Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco Moreira to Eurípides Simões de Paula, April 1, 1975, Arquivo Nacional, Ministério da Justiça, Brasília, Brazil.
- 9 Ricardo Parro and Anderson Lima da Silva, “Michel Foucault na Universidade de São Paulo,” *Discurso* 47, no. 2 (2017): 222. Franco’s open-endedness about the themes of Foucault’s lectures diverged from the way she subsequently portrayed these themes to the Director of FFLCH-USP, Eurípides Simões de Paula. In a letter to the latter, Franco indicated that Foucault would elaborate on themes related to his recently published book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Franco may have simply gravitated toward these themes as a de facto work plan for Foucault, pending the articulation of his own preferences for the plan. See Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco Moreira to Eurípides Simões de Paula, April 1, 1975.
- 10 Parro and Silva, “Michel Foucault na Universidade de São Paulo,” 221. Parro and Silva reproduce Foucault’s letter in the appendix of their collection of firsthand reflections on his activities at USP. Though dated for April 13 only, the content of the letter suggests that it was from 1975.
- 11 Daniele Lorenzini and Henri-Paul Fruchaud are currently preparing the edition of Foucault’s lectures at USP in 1975. Foucault offered glimpses into the content of his course there in an interview conducted and published during his visit to Brazil. His brief remarks suggest that the course sought to open up new ways of thinking about political power through a critique of repression and related concepts. See Michel Foucault, “Asiles. Sexualité. Prisons,” in *Dits et écrits 1954-1988*, Vol. 1,

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1954-1975, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald with the assistance of Jacques Lagrange (Paris: Quarto/Gallimard, 2001), 1639, 1649.

- 12 For firsthand accounts of his lectures at USP in 1965, see Parro and Silva, “Michel Foucault na Universidade de São Paulo,” 207-210. For a discussion of the larger intellectual and political context of his visit to USP in 1965, see Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 30-46. At the time, what is now the FFLCH was known as the School of Philosophy, Sciences, and Literature (FFCL).
- 13 Angélica Müller, “No caminho ao retorno democrático: Greves e manifestações estudantis nos primeiros anos do governo Geisel (1974-1975),” *Revista do Mestrado de História* 13, no. 2 (July/December 2011): 27.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 José Chrispiniano, “USP parou em repúdio ao assassinato de Herzog,” *Revista Adusp*, no. 33 (October 2004): 66.
- 17 Müller, “No caminho ao retorno democrático,” 27n31.
- 18 Quoted in “Outras deliberações,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, October 24, 1975, <http://acervo.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/1975/10/24/2//4633626>.
- 19 José Castilho Marques Neto, “No taxi com Michel Foucault: Memórias de um estudante de filosofia aos 22 anos,” *Cult*, no. 225 (July 2017): 22.
- 20 Ibid., 22-23.
- 21 José Castilho Marques Neto, interview with the author, July 23, 2017, São Paulo, Brazil.
- 22 Ibid.; Castilho, “No taxi com Michel Foucault,” 23; Glauco Arbix, e-mail message to author, August 10, 2017.
- 23 Müller, “No caminho ao retorno,” 27n31.
- 24 Castilho, “No taxi com Michel Foucault,” 23.

- 25 Michel Foucault, “Pronunciamento do Prof. Michel Foucault na Assembléia Universitária,” October 23, 1975, University of São Paulo, Brazil.
- 26 Castilho, “No taxi com Michel Foucault,” 23.
- 27 Foucault, “Pronunciamento do Prof. Michel Foucault na Assembléia Universitária.”
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Müller, “No caminho ao retorno,” 27-28.
- 30 Castilho, interview with the author.
- 31 Daniel Defert, “Chronologie,” in *Dits et écrits 1954-1988*, Vol. 1, 1954-1975, by Foucault, 65.
- 32 Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 113-115. For a helpful synopsis of the immense structure and size of the SNI, see Archdiocese of São Paulo, *Torture in Brazil: A Shocking Report on the Pervasive Use of Torture by Brazilian Military Governments, 1964-1979*, trans. Jaime Wright and ed. Joan Dassin (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 64. For a careful delineation of the scope of the activities of the SNI, see Kenneth P. Serbin, *Secret Dialogues: Church-State Relations, Torture, and Social Justice in Authoritarian Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 29-30. Serbin emphasizes that the SNI engaged in intelligence gathering while leaving the instantiation of political repression to other agencies. For a highly critical account of the birth and development of the SNI, see Elio Gaspari, *As ilusões armadas*, Vol. 1, *A ditadura envergonhada*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Intrínseca, 2014), 155-175.
- 33 “Paul Michel Foucault,” 4.
- 34 Ibid., 1.
- 35 Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 119-121.
- 36 Michel Foucault, “Uma aula de Fucô,” *Ex*, November 1975, 2.
- 37 “Paul Michel Foucault,” 5.
- 38 Ibid.

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- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 114.
- 41 The misattribution of the authorship of Foucault's declaration to Chauí and Franco belongs to a larger history of basic errors in the files of the SNI. Gaspari offers some glaring examples of these errors to arrive at the following (damning) conclusion about the service: "It spent a lot of money, but it did not acquire any sophistication beyond primitive police power, arbitrariness and corruption." *As ilusões armadas*, Vol. 1, *A ditadura envergonhada*, 173.
- 42 Castilho, interview with the author. I am deliberately privileging Castilho's account here because he attended the assembly and played a pivotal role in it. By contrast, Foucault's SNI file offers no indication that the informant or informants responsible for its materials even attended the assembly. The informant or informants may have simply obtained the pamphlet of Foucault's declaration and then used it to try to settle professional and/or political scores with Chauí and Franco without ever going to the assembly.
- 43 "Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo – FAPESP," Informação No. 505/A2/IV COMAR, November 24, 1975, 2-3, Arquivo Nacional, Ministério da Justiça, Brasília, Brazil.
- 44 Ibid., 3.
- 45 Serbin stresses that while "subversion" initially referred to activities prohibited by the dictatorship, it transformed, as political repression intensified, into "the military's catchall phrase for anything that smelled of leftism, that threatened the political status quo or implied criticism of the regime – for example, peasant organizations, student unions, and protest songs." *Secret Dialogues*, 21. For a similar point, see Victoria Langland, *Speaking of Flowers: Student Movements and the Making and Remembering of 1968 in Military Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 175-177. Langland suggests that the charge of "subversion" initially applied to individuals suspected of an association with the clandestine left but that as the dictatorship became more repressive "subversion" began to designate a remarkably wide range of behaviors, including sexual behavior.

- 46 Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 93, 98, 173.
- 47 Ibid., 96.
- 48 Ibid., 96-97.
- 49 Ibid., 174
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ibid., 177-178.
- 52 Associação dos Docentes da Universidade de São Paulo (ADUSP), *O livro negro da USP: O controle ideológico na universidade*, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: ADUSP, 1979), 11-15; Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 37-38.
- 53 ADUSP, *O livro negro da USP*, 16.
- 54 Ibid., 19, 24-25.
- 55 Ibid., 19.
- 56 Ibid. 25-27.
- 57 Daniela Alarcon, “Encontro de ex-moradores reaviva memória do CRUSP e da invasão militar de 1968,” *Revista Adusp*, no. 44 (March 2009): 57, <https://www.adusp.org.br/files/revistas/44/r44a10.pdf>.
- 58 ADUSP, *O livro negro da USP*, 37-50.
- 59 Ibid., 55-71.
- 60 Ibid., 54.
- 61 Camila Rodrigues da Silva, “Ditadura matou 47 pessoas ligadas à USP, entre alunos e docentes,” *Revista Adusp*, no. 53 (October 2012): 41, <https://www.adusp.org.br/files/revistas/53/mat05.pdf>. Out of the forty-seven assassinated or disappeared individuals affiliated with USP, eight were alumni and the other thirty-nine were professors and students.
- 62 Serbin, *Secret Dialogues*, 202.
- 63 Ibid., 206.
- 64 Ibid., 207.

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- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid., 208-209.
- 67 Castilho, “No taxi com Michel Foucault,” 22.
- 68 For an account of the rationale behind Herzog’s decision to join the PCB and the extent of his involvement in it, see Paulo Markun, *Meu querido Vlado: A história de Valdimir Herzog e do sonho de uma geração* (Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2015), 71, 93.
- 69 Ibid., 133-134.
- 70 Ibid., 145-146.
- 71 Ibid., 146.
- 72 Müller, “No caminho ao retorno,” 28.
- 73 Serbin, *Secret Dialogues*, 217.
- 74 *Ex*, November 1975, 2.
- 75 “Outras deliberações.”
- 76 Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 107, 127.
- 77 Margareth Rago and Heliana de Barros Conde Rodrigues, “Datas de Foucault no Brasil” (unpublished manuscript, May 30, 2010), Microsoft Word File.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 124.
- 80 Quoted in “O filósofo Michel Foucault se notabilizou por seus estudos sobre o poder e a sociedade,” Media Relations at the Federal University of Pará, November 29, 2004, accessed May 8, 2017, <https://www.portal.ufpa.br/imprensa/noticia.php?cod=223> (site discontinued). Though I have not been able to track down the original source for this quotation or ascertain the name of the author of the article, the statement itself is fully consistent with Foucault’s position on Herzog’s assassination. I have also learned that the author was a militant in the student movement who met Foucault at his hotel in São Paulo to discuss the assassination of Herzog. Ernani Chaves, e-mail message to the author, May 18, 2017.

- 81 “O filósofo Michel Foucault se notabilizou por seus estudos sobre o poder e a sociedade.”
- 82 Markun, *Meu querido Vlado*, 165.
- 83 Michel Foucault, “On Religion (1978),” in *Religion and Culture*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (New York: Routledge, 1999), 107.
- 84 Serbin, *Secret Dialogues*, 217; Clara Amanda Pope, “Human Rights and the Catholic Church in Brazil, 1970-1983: The Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission of the São Paulo Archdiocese,” *Journal of Church and State* 27, no. 3 (October 1985): 438.
- 85 Mariza Corrêa, e-mail message to Margareth Rago, June 18, 2010.
- 86 Caio Liudvik, “Foucault na USP,” *Cult*, no. 159 (June 2011): 42.
- 87 Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 123. Machado indicates that Foucault was in Campinas for his talk on October 27, 1975 but whether his talk actually took place on that date is unclear.
- 88 Victoria Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 27.
- 89 Margareth Rago, e-mail message to author, May 27, 2017.
- 90 Camila Rodrigues da Silva, “Razões de sobra para se criar a comissão da verdade da USP,” *Revista Adusp*, no. 53 (October 2012): 49, <https://www.adusp.org.br/files/revistas/53/mat06.pdf>.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 92 Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 220-221.
- 93 Castilho, interview with the author.
- 94 Armando Boito Júnior, e-mail message to Margareth Rago, June 1, 2010; Luiz B.L. Orlandi, e-mail message to Margareth Rago, June 14, 2010.
- 95 Boito, e-mail message to Margareth Rago. Of course, in the absence of any recordings or transcripts of Foucault’s talk in Campinas, it is impossible to know for sure what he said there. However, it seems highly unlikely that he would have imbibed the conceptual language of sexual repression without any further qualification. Quite apart from teaching a whole course at USP devoted to a critique of repression, Foucault had

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- voiced repeated doubts about this concept in his interviews in Brazil. In an interview with a Brazilian newspaper conducted within days of his talk in Campinas, Foucault went so far as to outright dismiss the view of Western civilization as a sexually repressive civilization. See Michel Foucault, “Michel Foucault. Les réponses du philosophe,” in *Dits et écrits 1954-1988*, Vol. 1, 1954-1975, 1682. On the dating of this interview just days after the assassination of Herzog, see Guilherme Freitas and Leonardo Cazes, “Uma entrevista com Michel Foucault,” *Prosa* (blog), *O Globo*, January 11, 2014, <http://blogs.oglobo.globo.com/prosa/post/uma-entrevista-com-michel-foucault-520469.html>.
- 96 Orlandi, e-mail message to Margareth Rago. Totalizing syntheses were certainly on Foucault’s mind in Brazil. For his critique of totalizing syntheses in an interview with a Brazilian periodical, see Foucault, “Asiles. Sexualité. Prisons,” in *Dits et écrits 1954-1988*, Vol. 1, 1954-1975, 1650.
- 97 Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 124.
- 98 Michel Foucault, “As obsessões de Michel Foucault,” *Invasão*, March 1977, 26.
- 99 Daniel Defert, “Chronologie,” 65.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Michel Foucault, “Schizo-Culture: On Prisons and Psychiatry,” in *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. Lysa Hochroth and John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 172, brackets added.
- 102 Ibid., 172-173.
- 103 Defert, “Chronologie,” 65.
- 104 Ibid. Strangely, Foucault was mistaken about the date of Herzog’s death. Herzog died on October 25, 1975, not on November 9 of the same year.
- 105 Michel Foucault, “Enfermement, psychiatrie, prison,” in *Dits et écrits 1954-1988*, Vol. 2, 1976-1988, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald with the assistance of Jacques Lagrange (Paris: Quarto/Gallimard, 2001), 345.

- 106 Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 132.
- 107 Foucault, “As obsessões de Michel Foucault,” 26.
- 108 Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 106-118.
- 109 On the origins of the expression “the years of lead,” see Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 249n8.
- 110 Parro and Silva, “Michel Foucault na Universidade de São Paulo,” 211; Marilena Chauí, Comments from a panel with Roberto Machado and Salma Tannus Muchail at the 1ª Jornada Michel Foucault: Foucault Filósofo, facebook video, 9:29, April 18, 2017, Posted by the Grupo de Estudos Espinosanos USP, April 19, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/espinosanosusp/videos/vb.691576157604966/1273844639378112/?type=2&theater>. In these same comments, Chauí insists that Foucault wrote an article against the imprisonment of USP students in 1974. She does not mention the title of the article but she elaborates that it was published in Italy and France before being translated into Portuguese and published in Brazil. Obviously, the existence of such an article would modify the timeline of my argument in this paper but I have not been able to track it down.
- 111 Parro and Silva, “Michel Foucault na Universidade de São Paulo,” 211.
- 112 Rafael Cariello, “Sócrates no calçadão: As viagens de Foucault ao Brasil,” *Folha de São Paulo*, May 21, 2011, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrissima/il2205201105.htm>.
- 113 Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 61.
- 114 Ibid., 23. In this regard, Conde wonders whether the mere title of Foucault’s lectures at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio) in May 1973, “Truth and Juridical Forms,” did not allude discreetly to the political situation in Brazil at the time.
- 115 Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 186.
- 116 Serbin, *Secret Dialogues*, 32.
- 117 Machado emphasizes this point in his own way, perhaps even with an allusion to the assassination of Leme. He stresses that Foucault’s lectures at PUC-Rio in May 1973 coincided “with the intensification of the violence of the dictatorship on account of the protests of professors

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- and students against the hardening of the military coup of 1964.” *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 33.
- 118 Conde, *Ensaaios sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 23.
- 119 Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 116.
- 120 Quoted in *ibid.*, 118, italics in the original.
- 121 Castilho, interview with the author.
- 122 Arbix, e-mail message to author.
- 123 Quoted in Cariello, “Sócrates no calçadão.” Conde corroborates a portion of Costa’s observation. She recounts that Foucault’s interlocutors in Belo Horizonte in May 1973 had been targeted for their opposition to the dictatorship. Conde, *Ensaaios sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 69.
- 124 “Livres noirs: terreur et torture au Brésil,” 19-34.
- 125 Quoted in Ludvik, “Foucault na USP,” 41.
- 126 *Ibid.*
- 127 For my own reflections on Foucault’s criticisms of the PCF in the larger context of an elaboration of his approach to the party form, see Marcelo Hoffman, “Sources of Anxiety About the Party in Radical Political Theory,” *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 149 (December 2016): 23-28.
- 128 Quoted in Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 203.
- 129 In a private conversation with the author in Rio de Janeiro on May 7, 2018, Rago expressed apparent misgivings about my argument in the preceding two paragraphs. She suggested that Foucault’s Brazilian interlocutors would not let him speak on his visits to Brazil in 1973 and 1974 simply because he would have been killed. However, rather than undermining my argument, her suggestion lends itself to my larger point about the importance of the collective character of silence that Foucault experienced in Brazil.
- 130 Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*, 217.
- 131 Markun, *Meu querido Vlado*, 68, brackets added.
- 132 Archdiocese of São Paulo, *Torture in Brazil*, 84.

- 133 Markun, *Meu querido Vlado*, 112-113, 117, 129.
- 134 Conde, *Ensaio sobre Michel Foucault no Brasil*, 107.
- 135 Chrispiniano, “USP parou em repúdio ao assassinato de Herzog,” 66.
- 136 Arbix, e-mail message to author.
- 137 Castilho, “No taxi com Michel Foucault,” 23. In a striking instance of this solidarity, two metalworkers delivered speeches at USP in 1977 to ask students there for help in protesting the imprisonment of students who had assumed identities as workers in the factories of Greater São Paulo. For a fascinating discussion of this episode, see Natan Zeichner, “Representing the Vanguard,” *Brown Journal of History*, Spring 2007, 17, <https://brownjournalofhistory.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/spring-2007.pdf>.
- 138 Machado, *Impressões de Michel Foucault*, 110-111. Not coincidentally, Machado reproduces this very image in his own book at the beginning of a chapter on Foucault’s political militancy.
- 139 Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth (The Government of Self and Others II): Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983-1984*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 283-285.
- 140 Quoted in Markun, *Meu querido Vlado*, 166.