

The campaign for Amnesty in pictures: Present Time, photographs and political repression ¹

Abstract

The main objective of this article was to analyze a report produced by the National Information Service (SNI), on March 28, 1978, during the campaign for Amnesty. The opening to consultation of the collections of the entities of control and repression of the military regime in Brazil, produced during the years 1964-1985, allowed access to thousands of documents and photographs.

Keywords: Amnesty; Dictatorships and Dictators; Brazil – History – 1964-1985; Photographs.

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A campanha pela Anistia em imagens: Tempo Presente, fotografias e repressão política

Resumo

O principal objetivo deste artigo é analisar um informe produzido pelo Serviço Nacional de Informação (SNI), em 28 de março de 1978, durante a campanha pela Anistia. A abertura à consulta dos acervos dos órgãos de controle e repressão do regime militar no Brasil, produzidos durante os anos de 1964-1985, permitiu o acesso a milhares de documentos e fotografias.

Palavras-chave: Anistia; Ditadura e Ditadores; Brasil - História - 1964-1985; Fotografias.

Present Time and its possibilities

The 20th century was marked by a series of events that reordered the foundations of society. Events like the two World Wars, the atomic age, the conquest of space, the Cold War, the events of 1968, the collapse of Eastern Europe, the end of dictatorial regimes in South America, for example, impacted the main paradigms of History established in the first scholarly manuals of the field, produced by Charles Seignobos and Charles Victor Langlois, which bear the original title *Introduction aux Études Historiques*, dating from the 19th century.

This whirlwind of events had effects on the theoretical and methodological bases of the History field, especially among French historians. According to Rioux (1999), the very notion of Time would start being questioned. In this sense, to the researchers of the post-1945 generation, this concept acquired a renewed sense, original and unique, i.e., History could be written by the characters who were experiencing these facts themselves.

From the second half of the 1950s, many historians began to express their views on immediate events using the media, especially newspapers, radios and television. Technological advances have provided an intense approach between historians and the analysis of the present facts.

However, it was with the movement of “resumption” of Political History, during the 1970s, that the theoretical bases of the History of Present Time arose. This movement had its peak in 1978 when it was created – under the direction of François Bedárida – the *Institut d’Histoire du Temps Présent* (IHTP). Initially, this space had to “defend its scientific legitimacy”, mainly regarding questions about its temporality, objectivity and relationship with the sources. Several researchers took part in this epistemological construction, such as: Henry Rousso, Michel Pollok, Denis Peschanski, Pierre Laborie, *Jean-François Sirinelli*, Paul Ricouer, Pierre Nora, Philipi Joutard, Sege Berstein, among others².

During the 1980s and 1990s, seeking to enhance their scientific principles, studies were carried out on testimony, journalism and history, images, oral history, collective memories, trauma, celebrations and political uses of the past. There was an accumulation of studies on the so-called “major events”, such as the post-World War II World, the processes of decolonization, the collective memories about the traumatic pasts.

These studies – added to the context of the end of the regimes of the Soviet bloc, the *Apartheid* in South Africa and the dictatorships in South America – reverberated in society broadening the interest on the issues of the so-called Present Tense. Definitely, from the early 1990s, effective and symbolic actions (amnesties, establishment of repair laws, building of monuments, opening of memory centers etc.) began to compose the political day-to-day in many different continents.

In that same sense, in several countries, the destination, the safeguarding and use of documents from the files of the former political polices has led to decrees, laws, movements, anyway, to a series of initiatives to preserve these document collections considered “sensitive”. Contact with such sources has intensified since the 1990s.

³ DELACROIX; DOSSE; GARCIA, 2012.

During this decade, in different parts of the world that had gone through authoritarian regimes, various sectors of society – relatives of dead and missing people, historians, archivists, jurists, among others – pressured Governments towards the opening of the so-called “files of dictatorships”³. This movement allowed that document collections of several countries, which had gone through dictatorial experiences – from Eastern Europe, Francoist Spain and South American military dictatorships – formerly secret, went through modifications regarding access laws, organization and utilization of document collections. For the field of History of Present Time, this documentation represented an unprecedented event: the contact with a set of documents that came from the files of the former repression entities.

In Brazil, especially in the last two decades, the controversies over the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985) rekindled with the 50 years anniversary of the 1964 coup. The recollection of this period was punctuated by a series of initiatives within the Government and civil society, including: installation of truth commissions, increased volume of scholarly studies, celebrations and adoption of a new legislation on access to information.

In Brazil, one of the impacts of this new demand was the access to an unprecedented document collection about this traumatic period of recent history, including the photo sets produced by the information community. The presentation of the theoretical concepts mentioned above was important, because the sources that will be analyzed from now on have direct connection with the recent past of Brazil.

The set of documents that will be analyzed is part of the collection of the National Information Service (SNI)⁴. This entity, created just a few months after the 1964 Coup, materialized the political repression during the Military Dictatorship. Only in 2012, after decades of revindications from relatives of people who suffered political deaths and disappearances, historians, archivists and society in general, a significant part of the collection of the SNI was released for research, from the implementation of the Law of Access to Information (Act No. 12,523/2011).

³ KECSKEMÉTI, 2015.

⁴ For more information on the SNI, see: ISHAQ; FRANCO; SOUSA, 2012.

Definitely, the sanction of Law nº 12,527/2011 along with Law No. 12,528/11 (creating the National Commission of Truth), both in May 18, 2012, were the strongest actions of the Brazilian State on the demand for the opening of sensitive files produced during the Dictatorship in the country in decades. The greatest of expectations rested on the possibility of “... consulting an extensive document mass that informs not only about activities of persecution, social control and political repression, but also about the different spheres of activity of left-wing groups”⁵.

In this new context, the contact with the set of documents analyzed in the article happened in 2014, during a survey conducted in the collection of the former SNI, which is currently held at the National Archives, in its headquarters in Brasília and Rio de Janeiro. The document analyzed was Information no. 029/116/ARJ/78, which contains information on a public act performed at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC/RJ), in March, 1978. Although the final part of the document reports that 13 photographs and a cassette tape containing audio from the event were attached to it, in the collection of the National Archive (AN), only four pictures were found with the referred document. Next, before analyzing the pictures, the historical context of the so-called Brazilian Political Openness will be presented.

The Controlled Openness and mobilizations for the Broad, General and Unrestricted Amnesty

During the second half of the 1970s, after nearly a decade in power, the military government, installed after the 1964 coup, showed its first signs of exhaustion. This period was marked by contradictions and political and economic crisis. There are many factors that marked the breakdown of relations between the military regime and civil society. Among these factors, we can mention: the result of the elections of 1974 – widely favorable for the *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (MDB); the end of the so-called “Brazilian Miracle” and the consequent developments in the economic sphere, such as inflation growth; the constant reports of cases of torture, death and disappearance –

⁵ For more information on the Law of Access to Information, see: JOFFILY, 2012.

with emphasis on the case of journalist Vladimir Herzog. As a whole, these factors served to erode the support of significant contingents of society in favor of dictatorship.

In an attempt to get around and control the “Openness tensions”⁶, the military leadership initiated a series of actions aiming at a slow, controlled and safe distension. The first movement of the Military Government, in this sense, took place shortly after President of the Republic general Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979) took office. However, according to Kinzo (1988), that moment of “Distension” was marked by a “Controlled Openness”.

The performance of the military leadership as the “central actors” in the political project is highlighted by the memory of the very participants of the governments of generals Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979) and João Baptista Figueiredo (1979-1985). According to them, the success of the political openness – despite the untimely interference of the civilian leaders – is due to the performance of the duo Ernesto Geisel-Golbery do Couto e Silva. Even from this interpretation, both would have coordinated the dispute against the so-called “hard-line” of the military – represented by the Information Community: The *Centro de Informação do Exército* (CEI), the *Centro de Informação e Segurança da Aeronáutica* (CISA) and the *Centro de Informação da Marinha* (CENIMAR), *Destacamentos de Operações de Informação – Centros de Operações de Defesa Interna* (DOI-CODI etc.)⁷ and returned to civil society the Rule of Law (D’ARAÚJO, 1995).

For these military sectors, the fundamental tasks of the project were initiated, coordinated and controlled by those at the top, without the intervention of the civil groups, not even of parliamentarians of the *Aliança Renovadora Nacional* (ARENA). Thus, from the point of view of the military, a “slow and safe” process of openness controlled by those at the top was clearly intended, from which would be excluded the opposition forces (D’ARAÚJO, 1995).

On the other hand, this period also had several episodes marked by the use of force – of the law and of weapons – against the opposition sectors. Among them we can

⁶ KINZO, 1988.

⁷ For more information, see: ISHAQ; FRANCO; SOUSA, 2012.

mention: the final operation against the Araguaia guerrilla; the wave of repression against the leadership of the *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* (PCB); the episodes of the deaths of Vladimir Herzog (1975) and metallurgist Manoel Fiel Filho (1976); the slaughter of Lapa that, in December 1976, victimized the leaders of the *Partido Comunista do Brasil* (PCdoB) who were gathered in São Paulo; the forfeiture of office of several parliamentarians of the MDB; the closing of the National Congress and the edition of the “April Package”, both in 1977⁸.

However, it is necessary to differentiate the Amnesty Law from the so-called “movements for amnesty” because, despite all the efforts of the Military Government, the opposition also acquired organizational strength at that moment. Emphasis on the performance of the progressive wing of the Roman Catholic Church, representatives of the “new syndicalism”⁹ and, as we will see below, on the militants of the student movement. One of the defining moments of this period was the creation of the *Movimento Feminino pela Anistia* (MFPA), at the end of 1975 (DEL PORTO, 2002).

The emergence of the MFPA coincides with the celebration of the International Women’s Year (1975) and with the celebrations of 30 years of political amnesty after the end of the dictatorship of the New Estate (1937-1945). Led by Therezinha Godoy Zerbini, a group of women in São Paulo founded on June 23rd 1975 the first core of the entity. The appearance of the MFPA highlighted the female pioneering in the campaign for Amnesty in Brazil. (BARRETO, 2011).

In the following years MFPA cores were created in several states, such as: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Ceará, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, among others. Among the activities of the entity’s militants were mobilization activities, public acts, release of manifests and even the editing of a newspaper, in 1977, called *Maria Quitéria*. Through the participation of Therezinha Zerbini in events about human rights in other countries, the MFPA managed to spread internationally the campaign for Politic Amnesty.

⁸ For more information on the “new syndicalism”, see: SANTANA, 2001.

⁹ For more information on the crisis of the Opening process, see: SILVA, 2003.

Another milestone in the mobilizations in favor of broad, general and unrestricted Amnesty was the emergence, on February 14, 1978, of the Brazilian Committee for Amnesty (CBA). From the creation of the CBA, a nationally articulated movement started being structured, through committees in support of Amnesty, in almost all states of the country and even in other countries, among them: Portugal, Italy, France and Belgium. To aggregate all sectors in the mobilizations, the CBA cores enabled the participation of relatives of dead and missing people, students, journalists, those from the religious sector, trade unionists, human rights activists and several other sectors of society involved in the campaign for Broad, General and Unrestricted Amnesty.

Among the various leaders that attended the CBA can be included: Helena Grecco (CBA/Minas Gerais), Iramaia de Queiroz Benjamim (CBA/Rio de Janeiro), Luiz Eduardo Greenhalg (CBA/São Paulo), and Diana Cunha Mendonça (CBA/Bahia). Between 1978 and August of 1979, month of processing and approval of Law No. 6683/79, in the National Congress, these committees held meetings, manifestations, conferences, seminars, in short, a set of activities that had as their main motto Broad, General and Unrestricted Amnesty (GRECCO, 2003).

That was the political scenario during the initial months of 1978, when most Brazilian student entities started their more effective participation in the mobilizations for the Broad, General and Unrestricted Amnesty. As we will see below, March 28 of that year meant a landmark during that political process.

March 28 represents one of the most important political calendar dates of the Brazilian Student Movement. On this day in 1968, high school student Edson Luiz Souto was murdered in Rio de Janeiro, during a protest at the student restaurant *Calabouço*. After this tragic event, the student entities transformed this date in a symbol of the student struggle in defense of Democracy. A decade later, student leaders chose that date to conduct the first large public demonstrations of the student movement with its new watchword: Broad, General and Unrestricted Amnesty.

Activities led by the Student Movement (ME) occurred in various parts of the country, as emphasized by the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*¹⁰. On the first page of its edition of March 29, 1978, the newspaper displayed a small photo with the following caption: “no incidents in São Paulo”. The image was of the ecumenical ceremony that would have brought four thousand students to the front of the School of Medicine of USP, in homage to Edson Luiz and Alexandre Vannucchi Leme, a student of the Geology course (USP), killed in 1973 by the political repression.

The content of the story highlighted the national character of the manifestations organized by the *Comissão Pró-União Nacional dos Estudantes* (CP UNE). CP UNE emerged as the main deliberation of the chaotic *Encontro Nacional de Estudantes* (III ENE) in September 1977, at PUC/SP¹¹. Even suffering from strong repression by the security forces of São Paulo, student representatives from various parts of the country were able to approve the creation of the CP UNE. The entity included representatives of several *Diretórios Centrais dos Estudantes* and *Unões Estaduais de Estudantes* (DCEs and UEEs).

CP UNE had two priorities. Firstly, the rearticulation of the Brazilian ME towards the reopening of its more traditional general entity: the UNE. Secondly, unifying the political actions of the student activists around the mobilizations for the broad, general and unrestricted Amnesty.

Despite the existence of various political forces and trends within the student movements, there was a massive adhesion of student entities during the mobilizations around March 28, 1978. It is noticeable how newspaper stories reported that in all manifestations the reading of the manifesto of CP-UNE took place. Thus, this date was characterized by the greatest mobilization – after many years – of the Brazilian ME around an unified watchword: Amnesty. As will be highlighted below, this change in the level of organization and political stance of student activists also caught the attention of the media.

Still according to *Folha de São Paulo*, the *Centro Acadêmico* (CA) held a series of activities at the Law School of USP in August 11th. Throughout the whole day, students

¹⁰ *Folha de São Paulo*, March 29, 1978, p. 1 and 17.

¹¹ To learn more about the PUC/SP invasion, see: CANCIAN, 2010.

promoted debates, paid visits to classrooms, read motions of support and made several speeches in a space the newspaper called “*tribuna livre*”. On page 17, titled *Students speak out*, the text of the newspaper registers the fact that students were also in the streets defending Politic Amnesty. Proof of this was the round table attended by hundreds of students of the Polytechnic School of USP. Were also present and exposed their position on the subject Alberto Goldman – the deputy associated with the MDB – and Therezinha Zerbini – lawyer and leader of the *Movimento Feminista pela Anistia* (MFPA).

Throughout the whole act, demonstrating the politic breadth of and external support to the ME, manifests and notes of support from entities and organizations from various different sectors were read, among them the *Oposição Sindical dos Metalúrgicos de São Paulo*, *Comissão de Mães em defesa dos Direitos Humanos*, *Pastoral Operária* (PO), *Associação Nacional dos Médicos Residentes* and the *Oposição dos Professores do Estado de São Paulo*.

Without any photographs or headlines on the first page, the newspaper *O Globo*, of March 29, 1978, reserved for the ME activities a story on page 8 with the following title: *Students are back to promoting manifestations*. Are presented in the text the main activities of the students carried out at national level¹².

The story’s aim is to give a report on the performing of the various types of activities (reading of manifests, concentration of students, round tables, discussions, theatrical performances etc.) that took place in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Brasília, Vitória and Porto Alegre. The greatest highlight of the story was about the act held at PUC/RJ which, like the event at the Polytechnical School of USP, had as its central theme the campaign for Politic Amnesty. The reunion brought together hundreds of students and lasted approximately 2 hours. The newspaper reports that, among the many banners displayed at the university, one claim distinguished itself from others: Amnesty.

It is important to report that the act was initiated with a cry of the watchword by those present: *Amnesty: broad, general and unrestricted*. The activity also included

¹² *O Globo*, March 29, 1978, p. 8.

theatrical performances, speeches, reading of notes of support and distribution of a list with 161 names of people who suffered political deaths and disappearances. As in acts at other universities, in the one at PUC/RJ the manifesto of CP-UNE was also presented.

With the headline “Students show respect for colleagues with appeal for Amnesty, the *Jornal do Brasil*” (JB), of March 29, 1978¹³, had a story on the events of the previous day across the country. Still according to this newspaper, hundreds of students of the School of Communication of UFRJ held a banner with the words: *Comrade journalist Herzog, present!*. During the events at the UFRJ, still according to the JB, were read motions of repudiation and support notes in reference to various subjects on the agenda. Special attention needs to be given to the note of support to the Brazilians who were arrested for political reasons.

Demonstrating the articulation of the students and, especially, of the activities led by CP-UNE, with the main political mobilization of the country at the time, was present at the act Iramaia Queiroz Benjamin – representing the *Comitê Brasileiro pela Anistia* (CBA) – who, in the words of the JB, was “offering solidarity to the movement”. One of the symbols of the mobilizations for the broad, general and unrestricted Amnesty, Iramaia de Queiroz Benjamin was born on November 23rd 1923, in Rio de Janeiro. In 1978, she was one of the founders of the *Comitê Brasileiro pela Anistia* (CBA/RJ). She had two sons – Cesar and Cid Benjamin – who were in the list of those arrested for political reasons. She was ahead of the major initiatives in favor of broad, general and unrestricted Amnesty. Therefore, after the approval of Law No. 6683, of August 28th 1979, she became one of the greatest critics of the so-called Law of Amnesty. Still, she continued her activism in defense of human rights¹⁴.

After presenting a quick history of the CP-UNE, the newspaper reports that the manifesto was made by the organization to be read “in all manifestations of the country”. The story emphasizes the participation of the CP-UNE as the responsible entity for the organization and coordination of the activities conducted nationally. The same newspaper reports that the largest concentration of students in the State of Rio de

¹³ *Jornal do Brasil*, March 29, 1978, p. 16.

¹⁴ For more information on Iramaia de Queiroz Benjamin, see: BENJAMIN; AUTRAN, 1982.

Janeiro was registered in the act performed at PUC/RJ. This activity brought together something around 400 (four hundred) participants, among students, parliamentarians of the MDB – such as state deputy Edson Kler and Antonio Carlos de Carvalho –, representatives of the newspaper *Brasil Mulher* and of the newspaper *Em Tempo*.

Despite the extensive coverage by *JB* and *O Globo*, the images of the act at PUC-RJ which will be displayed below have not been published in any of these newspapers. The four photos that we will examine are part of a document produced by the *Agência Rio de Janeiro do Serviço Nacional Informação (SNI)*.

Information No. 029/116/ARJ/78, dated March 31st 1978, is part of the collection of the SNI. This document has a summary of the main activities that took place at PUC/RJ, for instance, the times of the beginning (12:30 pm) and ending of the activity (2:30 pm). It also reports that the concentration would have brought together approximately 400 people at the university headquarters' pilotis – a truly symbolic space of this educational institution. It also has the agenda of the event, divided like so: reports; reading of notes of support; speeches and reading of documents of relatives of those arrested for political reasons.



Photo nº1

Public act for amnesty at PUC/RJ. Rio de Janeiro, March 28, 1978.
 National Archives, National Information Service.



Photo nº 2

Public act for amnesty at PUC/RJ. Rio de Janeiro, March 28, 1978.
National Archives, National Information Service.

Photographs No. 1 and 2 feature a panoramic view of the event at two different times. Photo No. 2 was taken from an angle of the pilotis of PUC/RJ, probably during the speeches and readings of notes of support. It is possible to notice that most of the audience is standing. Although photo No. 2 has an angle similar to that of photo No. 1, this image registered another moment of the manifestation.

In photo No. 1, it is possible to see that the majority of the public, in bigger number than what can be seen in the following image, is sitting on the floor. Although most of the participants of the public act were students, the fact that there are banners that feature watchwords about Amnesty is brought to attention. In sequence, the information entity's document registers the involvement of student leaders from other institutions such as the representatives of the DCE/UFF Marcio Silveira Lemgruber and Luiz Carlos Azedo, and a representative of the DCE of the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro.

The presence of parliamentarians of the MDB was registered, among them: Edson Khair (state deputy), Coimbra de Melo and Antonio Carlos de Carvalho (councillors). Despite not giving names away, the presence of representatives of the Institute of Social Studies of the MDB, representatives of the Trotskyist organization Socialist Convergence and journalists of the alternative newspapers *Brazil Mulher*, *Movimento* and *Em Tempo* is also highlighted.

In photo No. 3, it is possible to see some banners with many different watchwords, including: For Democratic Freedoms – Amnesty, Broad and unrestricted; For a Government by the People; For the end of Torture and Against Dictatorship. At the top, it is also possible to see posters and panels affixed with newspaper clippings and pictures depicting the mobilizations of 1968. Still in photo No. 3 it is possible to notice that some of those present had their faces circled, probably with a ballpoint pen in black ink.



Photo nº 3
Public act for amnesty at PUC/RJ. Rio de Janeiro, March 28, 1978.
National Archives, National Information Service

The detailed description of the act at PUC/RJ, including identification of names of those present in an event that brought together hundreds of participants, indicates that the photographs produced and attached to Information No. 029/116/ARJ/78 had a very specific objective: to identify the so-called “subversive elements”. Such situation is more explicit in photo No. 4, mainly on the back of the photograph. This photo has the centralized image of the “board” of the public act, with an emphasis on the circles around the faces of five participants. In addition, all the faces of the members of the board were assigned letters (A, B, C, D and E), this time with a red ink ballpoint pen.

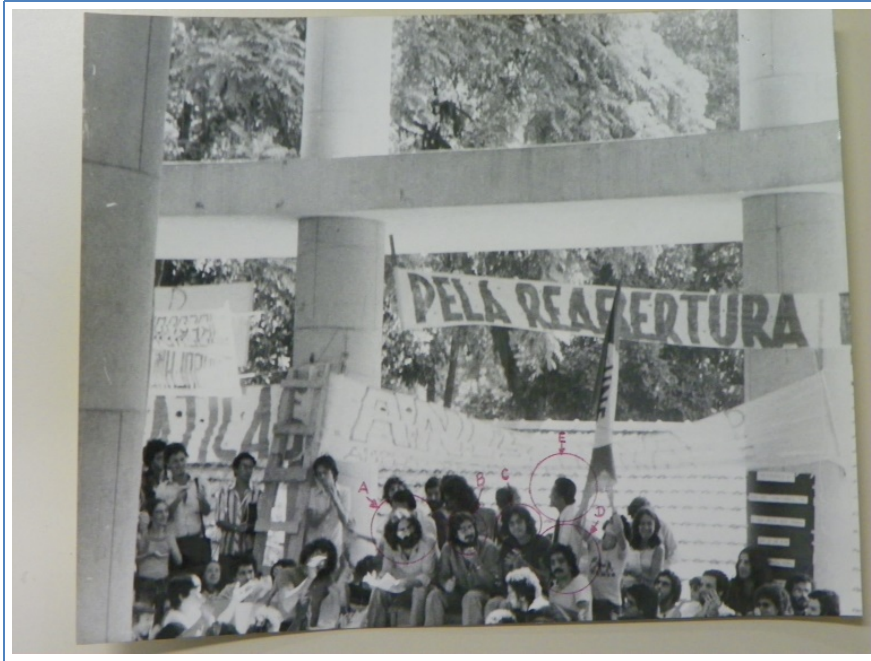
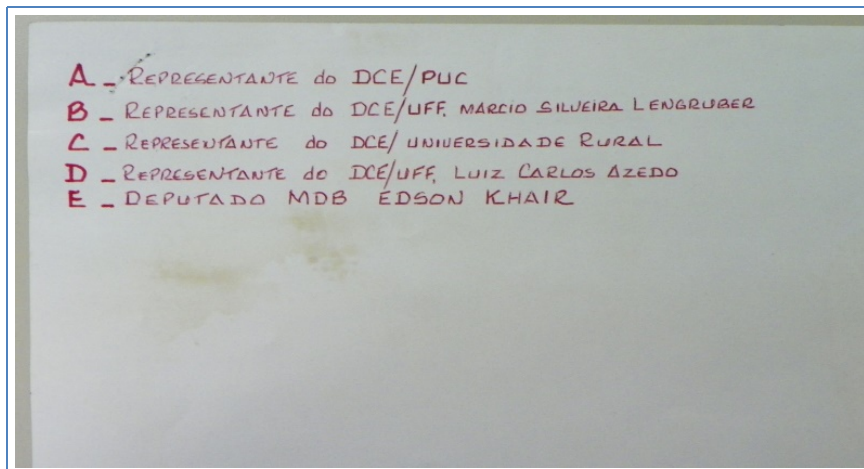


Photo nº 4

Public act for amnesty at PUC/RJ. Rio de Janeiro, March 28, 1978.
 National Archives, National Information Service.

On the back of photograph No. 4, it is possible to see something that says a lot about the practical purpose of the photographs for the agents of repression. On that space, the letters and respective names of the participants of the board of the public act to which they were assigned were written. Thus, it is possible to find out that the elaboration of Information No. 029/116/ARJ/78 followed the same sequence as the one registered on the back of photo No. 4. The analysis of the document set, report and photos, indicates that both served the same purpose: typify a political crime.



Back of Photo nº 4

Public act for amnesty at PUC/RJ. Rio de Janeiro, March 28, 1978.
 National Archives, National Information Service.

Photography and political crime

Apparently, during the routinely activities of the media, the production of photographs served for a fundamental task: identifying and typifying the “subversive elements”. However, it is necessary to contextualize the production of photography as something similar to the production of a text. Analyzing, thus, the many signs present in the photographs, means observing that some of these signs were on the gestures, attitudes, expressions, colors, special effects, anyway, every photo would be filled with certain meanings belonging to a certain social practice embedded in the specific historical context of their production (CAREY and MAUAD, 1997).

Nowadays, the analysis of the document set of the “Information Community” provides a new perspective for the discussion of the facts and events of the period of the military dictatorship. They are instruments that make it possible to observe how the agents of repression interpreted the activities, how they perceived these activists and how they used these informations in their surveillance activities. Nowadays, the use of such sources produces a series of questions: Who produced them? Under what conditions? For what reason? What do they report?

As has been said, the *Agência Rio de Janeiro do SNI (ARJ/SNI)* was the one responsible for having produced the document. It has also been noted that apparently none of the photographs attached to Information No. 029/116/ARJ/78 were published in the newspapers of the capital of the state of Rio de Janeiro. It is important to register that all the photographs are in black and white and measure 15 x 20 cm.

Considering the sharpness of the images, as evidenced by photo No. 1, it is possible to assume that the photographs were taken from a very short distance. Thus, the conditions indicate that an agent “disguised as a photographer” was responsible for the images. As emphasized earlier, the detailed description of the act at PUC/RJ evidences that the pictures produced and attached to Information No. 029/116/ARJ/78 had a very specific objective: identifying the “subversive elements”.

As stated by Kossoy (2003), during the activities of the political polices photography was one of the constituent elements in the preparation of records of

citizens' political activities. Thus, the act of registering a single face among the crowd could, in the future, serve as evidence of "political offense". In some situations, the "classic" portraits of police identification had as source an "involuntary portrait". As stated by the author, "as a register of Brazilian political memory, photographs occupy a special place in the police processes"¹⁵.

As has been indicated, one of the main purposes of photographs was to identify the activists of the opposition. This way, it would be easier to monitor the activities of these activists during the mobilizations for Amnesty. Similarly, the images would serve to identify the student leaders during the activities of the political agenda of the ME and other activists of the social movement.

Therefore, in order to fulfill this purpose, the social circuit of the photographs was the information community. Usually, the documents of information entities had a topic named "Dissemination". This was a standardized practice in all documents. In the case of Information No. 029/116/ARJ/78, the part relating to that topic would direct the document to the "Central Agency of the SNI".

Probably, the document and its attachments were reproduced and sent to the various agencies of "service" around the country. Thus, a database that socialized the information and, above all, pictures of "subversives" in any region of the country was produced. To reinforce this information, all that is needed is verifying that, according to the National Archives itself, only in the SNI database there are something around five thousand photographs¹⁶. This information demonstrates that the production of photographs held a privileged space in the *savoir-faire* of the agents of repression.

¹⁵ KOSSOY, 2003.

¹⁶ For more details on the disclose of these documents, see:
<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2012/07/1115936-fotografias-da-ditadura-sao-liberadas-para-consulta.shtml>

Final considerations

As has been emphasized, in the past, during the monitoring activities of the organs of repression, the production of photographic images held a prominent space among the activities of the agents of the information community. Nowadays, the reading of the documents from the archives of political repression provides the opportunity to see how the information community built political stereotypes that needed to be monitored. The purpose of the documents and of the photographs was to justify the need for permanent vigilance against the “communist infiltration”.

From that moment on, everybody started being typified as suspects for the agents of repression. Being photographed or having their name mentioned in these documents could mean that the citizen would be labeled as “subversive”. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that, initially, the collections of the information community (photographs and posters) were used by the repression to compose its gallery of “suspects”. However, nowadays, these same document collections are an important source for research on Brazil’s recent past.

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