

The *Tempo Brasileiro* Argument

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IN THE early 1960s, a climate of unrestrained turbulence took hold of Brazil's public scene, pushing us towards Manichaean options — limited choices that were too ideological to be truly political. A life and death struggle had begun between what I chose to call empty labels: obtuse and anachronistic to the Right, predatory and fundamentalist to the Left. It was then that I felt we needed an emancipated, receptive and proactive platform, immune to the ideological pressures of unbridled capitalism and the Marxist vulgate alike.

It was on a spring afternoon in Rio, in the studio of the poet and painter José Paulo Moreira da Fonseca, a dear friend, that I sketched out a first blueprint of our journal. Its title was chosen by common agreement between José Paulo and myself. Its concerns were consistent with the reflective framework of the First Brazilian Congress of Literary Criticism and History which, thanks to the sensitivity and support of Dean João Alfredo da Costa Lima, was held at Recife University. Among its many national and international guests were Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir on their first and only visit to Brazil. The creation of the journal was also in tune with the critical and associative purposes of the Brazilian Institute of African-Asian Studies, a body established under the Brazilian President's Office, which I was tasked with presiding.

Colleagues and friends like Vamireh Chacon, Roberto Pontual, Félix de Athayde, José Roberto Teixeira Leite, and José Paulo himself have been with me constantly since the inception of *Tempo Brasileiro*. They were soon joined, more or less assiduously, by Emmanuel Carneiro Leão, Geraldo Holanda Cavalcanti, José Guilherme Merquior, Luiz Costa Lima, Chaim Samuel Katz, Francisco Antonio Doria, Muniz Sodré, Márcio Tavares d'Amaral, Alfredo Marques Viana, Cyro Kurtz, Naume Ladosky, Estella Glatt, and Henrique Carlos Escobar. As we used to say, the role of *Revista Tempo Brasileiro* (Tempo Brasileiro Journal) was to reflect on the Brazilian reality, “in a carefree way”, and if Caetano Veloso will allow me, walking firmly “against the wind”, or swimming against the current.^{TN} We made it clear from the first issue that, since that reality was

^{TN} The words in quotation marks were taken from the song “Alegria, Alegria” (Joy, Joy) — an illustrative example of the relationship between counter-culture and political resistance, written by pop musician Caetano Veloso during the dictatorship period in Brazil. The word “carefree” is a free translation of the phrase “sem lenço e sem documento”, literally “without a handkerchief and ID”

dynamic we would seek to be faithful to this dynamism. Thus, we would never hesitate to be our own critics and to question our own views. We did not want to become institutionalized. We therefore accepted all the contributions we could get, provided that they were categorized; we wanted broad dialogue; we needed constructive criticism. All we were doing was launching an ample national debate. Any reader honestly interested in the problems of the country could always find a space in our journal, even to disagree with us whenever appropriate. Our mailbox was and is permanently open.

We have never been short of cooperation from major national figures like Jorge Amado, Gilberto Freyre, Alceu Amoroso Lima, Afrânio Coutinho, Adonias Filho, Clarice Lispector, Cassiano Ricardo, Ignácio Rangel, Roberto Alvim Corrêa, Maria Yedda Linhares, José Leite Lopes, Carlos Chagas Filho, Guilherme Figueiredo, Guerreiro Ramos, Josué de Castro, Jarbas Maranhão, Wanderley Guilherme, João Cabral de Melo Neto, Carlos Guilherme Mota, José Mauro Gonçalves, Jorge Serpa Filho, Fernando Gasparian, Antônio Houaiss, Roberto da Matta, Mário Chamie, and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira.

The starting point of *Tempo Brasileiro* is reproduced verbatim below.

It is a collective effort to promote objective, free, and informed reflection on and for Brazilian development. This is not just another journal. It is an organ of militancy, strictly committed to the human condition and the cause of Brazil. With them, wherever they may be at stake. It is a tribune for responsible intellectuals who do not intend to shirk ; but, on the contrary, strive to remain strictly faithful to their responsibilities; and are convinced that the less developed their country is, the greater the journal will be. It is therefore a journal for here and now. But according to the way we are, dynamically speaking, what we seek is not the snapshot of the camera. It is just the Brazil of 1962: we will be a path.

Brazilian intellectuals have an important role to play in the solution of national problems. They must learn to repudiate the Pontius Pilate syndrome. They must not hesitate to get their hands dirty in the fight for development; they must assemble body and soul in this trench which is the fate of us all. They will never find an ethical purpose for their creative undertaking that is not intrinsically related to the urgent issues of their country; a country steeped in underdevelopment, dominated by an obstinate social order that generates injustice. We live in subhuman conditions. Underdevelopment produces the infra-man. It prevents him from fully enjoying the human condition. Being primarily an economic phenomenon, it naturally promotes non-economic results: a gloomy repertoire of human, moral consequences. We have reached our humanism. We refer not to men seen in the abstract, but rather concretely, positioned. Human life is enjoyed through a dual process divided between the effort to survive and the quest for intensification. Underdevelopment encloses men in the bubble of simple and tragic subsistence. That is why men in a developing country find themselves arbitrarily and violently in-

scribed in the subhuman category. We have to shake the lethargy to step out of it. Transform into action all that is power.

Tempo Brasileiro is not just a journal. It is a calling. We call on the young and those who have not aged, those who have not surrendered to the urgency of the Brazilian historical process, to develop with us an authentically Brazilian perspective or point of view, capable of catering to our current needs. Brazil will only be solved from Brazil's perspective. This is our true option: Brazil and anti-Brazil. That is how the problem presents itself. But this nationalism, which should be a line of defense, a front, cannot be a limit. Turning it into a driving force for action calls for its immediate 'disintellectualization'. We will only create a Brazil that is legitimate in style, thought, or action, if we are able to rely on our true circumstantial conditionings. Such is our commitment.

That is the cause that *Tempo Brasileiro* proposes to serve: the one which corresponds to our needs.

The journal soon expanded into a publishing house: *Tempo Brasileiro* publishes authors who are representative of Brazil and of — mainly — contemporary thought, steering clear of any ideological bias, from Martin Heidegger and Ernst Bloch to the Frankfurtians Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse. To date, we are the main Brazilian publishers of Jürgen Habermas. The French were also present through Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gaston Bachelard, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Abraham Moles, Michel Foucault, Maurice Godelier, and Roland Barthes. We have always profited from the collaboration of Brazilians like Jorge Amado, Adonias Filho, Afrânio Coutinho, Pedro Paulo Montenegro, Vamireh Chacon, Geraldo Holanda Cavalcanti, José Guilherme Merquior, Marcilio Marques Moreira, Abdias Moura, Pedro Demo, Antonio Paim, Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, Ana Maria Martins (currently Machado), and Helena Parente Cunha.

When we published the Portuguese version of Herbert Marcuse's *The Foundation of Historical Materialism*, prepared and translated by Professor Vamireh Chacon from the University of Brasília (UnB), we officially opened the College of Brazil, with three monographic courses by Emmanuel Carneiro Leão on contemporary thinking, introduction to Herbert Marcuse by Vamireh Chacon and Theory of Literary Communication by Eduardo Portella. A few days later Gustavo Corção wrote an article in the *Diário de Notícias* newspaper, accusing us of promoting the "resurrection of the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies – ISEB" (in the Portuguese acronym). Immediately a group of fanatical military officers dropped a bomb on the facade of the building, destroying part of our headquarters. The media rushed to the scene and were received by actress Norma Blumm, who collaborated with us in disseminating the courses. I was very ill with the flu when I was called in and gave a press conference naming Gustavo Corção as the intellectual author of the crime. Years later, talking

with Helio Jaguaribe, whom I had known as a political thinker and then had the chance to meet as a good-humored interpreter of the Brazilian tragicomic political scene, he told me: “Anger is great for the flu”. And he was right.

The 1960s were not easy for the Tempo Brasileiro publishing house. We came across so many obstacles that we began to lose some of our original purity.

My unforgettable brother Franco Portella, who managed our press, was arrested twice by the military: one in the early morning at home, and another at the office. He was arrested and hooded for alleged subversive acts, which were soon demoralized. It was the CCC ^{TN}, which left its scars.

Several of our publications were removed from bookstores. The journal was briefly discontinued, then resumed on a quarterly, instead of its prior bi-monthly, basis. In the editorial of its reinstatement we quoted a remark made by Friar Luis de Leon upon returning to his chair at the University of Salamanca after inquisitorial punishments: “*Como decíamos ayer*” ^{TN}. We also reaffirmed our program in the editorial of issue No. 7 of the journal, with the collaboration of Joaquim Cardozo, Pierre Furter, Jean-Paul Sartre, Kostas Axelos, Tristão de Ataíde (for amnesty), the usual accomplices and those who were just joining us like Ana Maria Machado, Arlindo Gómez de Sousa, Raymundo de Araújo Castro. The 1965 editorial read:

As we were saying, yesterday... With that sentence Friar Luís de Leon returned one day to his chair at the University of Salamanca to continue his extraordinary pedagogical work. He had been removed from office, persecuted, put under arrest for five years by the Inquisition. But he never felt the need to retreat, to justify the change. He returned to his lectern whole, unwavering, the same man. And he started working by uttering that famous statement. The weapons of prepotency are less powerful than the reasons of knowledge.

Our journal’s path was disturbed by April’s bleak contingencies. In opting for an open and free understanding of beings and the world, we committed to a struggle which is governed by a set of values that is in no way sectarian or dogmatic. The rigorous exercise of critical activity inevitably disturbs institutionalized pretense. The widespread and categorical use of critical insight was at some point mistaken for divisiveness. We have never believed in a collective force that results from individual weaknesses. It will be more of a force and more collective if it is the sum of strong units. That is why we rebelled against orthodoxy, in the name of Brazil’s national interest. It is from the perspective of Brazil’s historical and cultural specificity that we have prepared our testimony.

An episodic change has occurred in Brazil’s political scene since our last issue. The characters and the cause have changed. But the machine that destroys reason has only moved forward in its eagerness to demolish.

^{TN} Portuguese acronym for Communist Hunt Commando.

^{TN} As we said yesterday...

A warlike or 'Pentagonized' conception of universal coexistence insists on enlisting us in the Cold War platoons. Our economy, domestic affairs, Brazilian culture find themselves lined up on the Western side at the service of catastrophe. We are subject to *not-being* before *being*. Therefore, *Tempo Brasileiro*, which was not born in a small factory of untouchable truths, which refused to be a diverted Bible or a sub-code, now becomes a center of resistance. We know we are on a contradictory course. What we want is to emphatically ask questions and provide answers about Brazil. We are critics of ideas and not of facts. Facts interest us to the extent that they are carriers of ideas.

During that period of interruption, the books that we published in difficult days and times sustained our action and ensured our permanent presence. Our only commitment is to the human cause and the effort of national construction. Our authority comes precisely from this freedom. We want to bring our struggle to the higher task of man's freedom. It is what we said yesterday and what we reaffirm today.

The *Tempo Brasileiro* argument was supported by a tripod that was constantly under threat: the journal itself, the *Tempo Brasileiro* press and the College of Brazil. There was even a theatrical drift with the creation of the Repertory Theatre, which successfully staged Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Unburied Dead*, translated into Portuguese by Jorge Amado with the active participation of Luís Carlos Maciel, Paulo Afonso Grizoli, Tite de Lemos, José Mauro Gonçalves, and Odilon Ribeiro Coutinho. Grizoli's direction and the excellent cast of the play were a huge success among the public and critics when it was staged at the Arena Theater in Rio de Janeiro. The themes were: resistance, torture and collaborationism, which were so present in that gagged Brazil. On the other hand, the contagious enthusiasm of Alfredo Marques Vianna opened another *Tempo Brasileiro* front and staged the play *O berço do herói* (The Hero's Cradle), by his friend and playwright Dias Gomes, which was shut down on the day it premiered by the police of the Carlos Lacerda government. Even so, against all odds, we managed to continue our somewhat turbulent journey and, in 2012, God willing, and if the crazy Left, the truculent Right and the lazy Center do not get in the way, we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary without resorting to life-supporting devices.

The *Tempo Brasileiro* press has published three important books by Alceu Amoroso Lima, a mandatory reference, which are unretouched pictures of those closed times: *Revolução, reação ou reforma?* (1964), *Pelo humanismo ameaçado* (1965) and *A experiência reacionária* (1968). The first release was at the main office of *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper, in a foggy and tense evening. Alceu's bright smile was a breath of fresh air. The wisdom of José Paulo Moreira da Fonseca never failed us in those unwise times.

The accusations of Gustavo Corção, a paladin of the blind Right, a predictable or even bureaucratic writer, grammatically correct although devoid of any originality, were totally unfounded. They were mere angry attacks, quite lacking in human magnitude. We had never had anything against ISEB. We even recognized its specific contribution to the understanding of developmen-

tal Brazil. But we had a different, perhaps more academic, position, which, in any event, was quite free of any ideological *parti pris*. Because the ideologization, the stingy mask of reality, quickly becomes synonymous with idiotization. We were beneficiaries, rather, of our exchanges with Guerreiro Ramos, Álvaro Vieira Pinto, Paulo de Castro, Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos.

The encouragement and support of Jorge Amado, Alceu Amoroso Lima, Ernesto Guerra da Cal, Gregory Rabassa, Afrânio Coutinho, Eduardo Prado Coelho, Carlos Bousoño, Rafael Gutierrez Girardot, Juan Rulfo, Isaac Akcelrud, Barbara Freitag, Sérgio Paulo Rouanet, César Leal in this daring journey were infallible. Jorge Amado, upon introducing the issue commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the journal (No. 71), said:

I have been following the journey of *Tempo Brasileiro* since its first issue released twenty years ago. During this long time the presence of Eduardo Portella's journal has been a factor of indisputable relevance in Brazilian cultural life.

Both in the survey and discussion of national problems and of serious international problems, particularly those affecting and afflicting the third world.

Founded under the sign of the democracy and progress which are essential to Brazilian life and of the struggle for peace, against colonialism and prejudices of all kinds, *Tempo Brasileiro* has fought the good fight, clarifying and guiding, becoming a broad and passionate forum for the analysis and study of the problems of Brazil and the world. Problems of all kinds: political, social, literary, artistic, human.

The pages of the journal are repositories of ideas of extraordinary value. By congratulating *Tempo Brasileiro* and the dedicated team which, under the command of Eduardo Portella has lent so much brilliance to its trajectory, I wish to express my satisfaction for belonging to the group that started its publication and remained faithful to the democratic and progressive concept of its manifesto.

The issue celebrating the 40th anniversary of the journal, coordinated by Professor Paulo Roberto Pereira, has become a landmark in the critical evaluation of our journey. It brings together various texts, pointing to different paths. The ethical commitment — and only then the political commitment — rely on openly interdisciplinary critical and hermeneutical instruments.

Its time and space have been Brazil and, increasingly, the world — dialogues and conflicts, intercultural links, a quest for a new humanism that is neither nostalgic nor philanthropic, but is certainly activist and hopeful, rooted and cosmopolitan.

Tempo Brasileiro celebrates its 48th anniversary true to its original commitment: to raise reflection on and for Brazilian development which, with due regard to its endogenous form, were inscribed in a universal horizon.

The journal has continued to introduce national and international names, promoting the open circulation of contemporary ideas, seeking to work with memory and hope, insisting on reconciling disciplines which are usually distant.

Tempo Brasileiro's 48 years of activism – of tense confrontation with Brazilian, Latin American and contemporary realities – represents the reflective, open and free effort as well as the desire, often found at the core of post-metaphysical thinking, to broaden the horizon of thought.

Tempo Brasileiro has been building new solidarities in all corners of the world. And these solidarities, which often rest on complementary differences, are at the root of its reconstructive work.

Its journey is already a long one, but the journal, the publisher and the College of Brazil (in their order of appearance on the scene) are present to keep the contents and momentum of *Tempo Brasileiro* open to critical reflection, committed to the knowledge to come, assertively plural, in pursuit of the cosmopolitan city. Issue 158 of our journal presents an assessment of 1964, “1964 visto de 2004” (1964 seem from 2004), in a collection of qualified and reputable collaborations about the military coup. With a glance at the list of contributors one can already recognize the strength of *Tempo Brasileiro's* testimonies and journey: Vamireh Chacon, José Murilo de Carvalho, Celso Furtado, Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos, Maria Aparecida de Aquino, Carla Reis Longhi, Admar de Souza Mendes, Walter Cruz Swensson Junior, Leticia Nunes de Moraes Góes, Maria Yedda Leite Linhares, Janice Theodoro and Rafael Ruiz. Today the journal relies on the dedication of the poet and essayist Marco Lucchesi, its editor-in-chief.



Cover of issue 151 of *Tempo Brasileiro*.



Cover of issue 158 of *Tempo Brasileiro*.

Courtesy of the author

Maybe it is just a sort of stubbornness, fueled by the dreams of yesteryear. But in any case it has been and still is an ethical commitment that never gave in to the hoaxes of our political history.

The rest is this strange taste, as the poet Manuel Bandeira would say, of an entire life that could have been but was not. We keep insisting that it can still be, if we are able to make up for the time lost. This is the *Tempo Brasileiro* argument.

ABSTRACT – Description and definition of *Revista Tempo Brasileiro*, as well as sister entities Edições Tempo Brasileiro and College of Brazil. It tells of a reflective journey that was never negotiable, not even in the years of military dictatorship. A quarterly journal of culture, strongly interdisciplinary, it is the scene of intellectual matches and mismatches of our time. It has always aspired to be an unbiased forum for discussion of the challenges and possible solutions to the problems of our day and age. In 2012, it celebrates fifty years of life; a rugged life, but still a life.

KEYWORDS: Democracy, Reflection, Repression, Resistance, Argument.

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