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Who but a Woman? The Transnational Diffusion of Anti-Communism among Conservative Women in Brazil, Chile and the United States during the Cold War

MARGARET POWER*

Abstract. This article examines transnational connections among anti-communist women in Brazil, Chile and the United States from the 1960s to the 1980s. It explores the political beliefs and networks upon which these women drew and built in order to promote their role in the overthrow of João Goulart and Salvador Allende and to encourage other women across the Americas to join them in the fight against communism. This paper shows that these women reversed the flow of ideas, served as models for each other and for anti-communist women, and built gendered transnational networks of female anti-communist activists.

Keywords: Cold War, transnational, anti-communism, women, Brazil, Chile, United States

On the eve of the pivotal 1964 presidential election in Chile, three radio stations broadcast a virulently anti-communist message from Juana Castro, the renegade sister of Fidel Castro.¹ In it, she exhorted Chileans to vote against Allende. She warned the women of Chile, ‘The enemy [communism] is stalking, [it] is at your doors. Don’t let yourselves be deceived! Remember

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¹ The CIA encouraged her to defect from Cuba because she had great ‘value as a propaganda instrument’: Theodore Shackley, *Spymaster: My Life in the CIA* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005), pp. 77–8.

your families. Remember your children.² It is no coincidence that her taped message came to Chile via Brazil. The April 1964 military coup that overthrew the government of João Goulart not only ended democracy in Brazil, but also encouraged anti-communist forces throughout the continent and provided them with a counter-revolutionary model and stronghold.³

Much attention has been paid to how and why male institutions such as the military, politicians and economic elites in Brazil and Chile, with pivotal backing from the US government, worked to subvert and ultimately overthrow the governments of João Goulart (1961–4) in Brazil and Salvador Allende (1970–3) in Chile.⁴ More recent studies have shown that conservative women in both Brazil and Chile built highly visible and effective movements that mobilised thousands of previously inactive women in protests against the Goulart and Allende governments respectively.⁵ However, the scholarship has largely ignored the transnational relationships and networks that these conservative women built with each other in pursuit of their anti-communist agenda. This article redresses that omission by establishing that these women's impact extended far beyond their own nations. In fact, it argues, they were critical actors in the transnational diffusion of a gender-based anti-communist discourse and practice.

Far from challenging or defying essentialist notions of womanhood, these anti-communist women drew on them to explain and justify both their involvement and their success. The women routinely described themselves as apolitical housewives who acted to protect their homes, their religion and their nation. They appealed to women as mothers who needed to act to safeguard their children and their homes. They defined women not as

² Eduardo Labarca Goddard, *Chile invadido: reportaje a la intromisión extranjera* (Santiago: Empresa Editorial Austral, 1968), p. 73.

³ On Brazil's role in the Southern Cone, see J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 53; and Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), pp. 94–5, 184–5, 227–8, 273–4.

⁴ The literature on these topics is extensive. For Brazil and Chile, see William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions since World War II* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995). For Brazil, see Carlos Fico, *Além do golpe: versões e controvérsias sobre 1964 e ditadura militar* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 2004); and René Armand Dreifuss, *1964: a conquista do estado* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1987). For Chile, see Armando Uribe, *The Black Book of American Intervention in Chile* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1975); US Congress, Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Covert Action*, 94th Congress, 1st Session, 4 and 5 Dec. 1975; and Jonathan Haslam, *The Nixon Administration and the Death of Allende's Chile: A Case of Assisted Suicide* (London: Verso, 2005).

⁵ On Chile, see Lisa Baldez, *Why Women Protest: Women's Movements in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Margaret Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle against Allende, 1964–1973* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2002). On Brazil, see notes 15, 16 and 17 below.

autonomous individuals, but as gendered beings whose identity and moral rectitude stemmed from their roles as wives and mothers. Their domestic responsibilities and ties, they affirmed, were precisely the source of women's strength and the reason why they emerged victorious from the battle – and why they did so without losing their gendered essence as women. They were, in the words of *Reader's Digest*, 'feminine and formidable'.⁶

Anti-communist women in Brazil promoted themselves across the hemisphere as key protagonists in the movement to oust Goulart and as role models for other women who wanted to defeat communism in their own nations. They shared their experiences with anti-communist women in Chile and the United States, and these women, in turn, used their example and advice to encourage other women to join them in their fight against godless communism. However, they did not act on their own.

Powerful (male) forces among the Brazilian and Chilean elite, along with sectors of the US government, backed these women and encouraged the diffusion of knowledge about them. The image of thousands of Brazilian and Chilean women taking to the streets to decry the dangers and discomforts generated by their 'communist' governments had enormous political value. It offered the armed forces and their civilian backers a justification for their brutal seizure of power, and it provided the US government with an important propaganda tool (which is why the US government invited leaders of the anti-Goulart protests to tour the United States, as we shall see below).⁷ It also cemented in people's minds the image of women as anti-communist activists.

Even though each movement emerged from and was rooted in the specific conditions of its own nation, the conservative women considered themselves a key part of the global struggle against communism. While they privileged the nation as the primary site from which to battle the Left, their belief that 'atheistic communism' sought to dominate the world pushed them to develop allies beyond the nation. For this reason, they sought out, shared ideas with

⁶ 'The Country that Saved Itself', *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1964, p. 143. This is how the article, discussed below, described Amélia Bastos, the leader of CAMDE, one of the anti-Goulart women's groups.

⁷ The US government fostered the idea, endorsed by Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, that anti-Goulart women had built a climate favourable to his ouster. For example, a 1965 report from the US Embassy in Rio de Janeiro to the Department of State stated, 'It is now a matter of Brazilian political history that the Brazilian women played an important role in the ouster of Goulart. Through the political action groups such as CAMDE (Guanabara), LIMDE (Belo Horizonte), and their counterparts in São Paulo, Recife, and other major cities, the women helped to shape and crystallize public opinion against the Goulart regime, thereby contributing to the creation of an atmosphere favorable to the revolution.' Department of State, 'Survey of Group Attitudes Toward Castello Branco Government', AmEmbassy, Rio de Janeiro, RG 59, Subject-Numeric Files of the Department of State 1964–1966, Box 1937, National Security Archives, p. 34. I thank Carlos Fico for sending me a copy of this airgram.

and drew inspiration from women in other countries who shared their political beliefs.

Far from a unidirectional diffusion of ideas and resources from the North (the United States) to the South (Brazil and Chile), these exchanges of information and activists were multivalent and travelled from the South to the South (Brazil to Chile) and from the South to the North (Brazil and Chile to the United States), as well as from the North to the South. In other words, multiple actors, from different nations, on a variety of levels and using diverse methods, participated in the diffusion of knowledge about the anti-Goulart and anti-Allende women and contributed to building women's anti-communist networks.

This sharing of information, skills and resources allowed the activities and examples of the conservative Brazilian and Chilean women to become known and useful to each other and to conservative sectors in the United States and throughout the Americas.⁸ As a result, the activities, gendered imagery, political discourse and victories of the anti-communist women in Brazil became part of the political culture that Chilean women drew upon to build their anti-Allende movement. They also offered examples that conservative forces in the United States publicised to encourage US women to organise against left-wing and liberal forces.

For God, Nation, and Family against Communism: The Anti-Goulart Women's Movement in Brazil

A mere seven months after being elected president of Brazil in 1961, Jânio Quadros resigned and his vice president, João Goulart, became president.⁹ Although Goulart was neither a communist nor a revolutionary, he was a progressive nationalist who 'promoted a series of nationalist reforms, including a limit on foreign companies' profit remittances, and a modest land reform'.¹⁰ He came to power during the Cold War and after the Cuban Revolution, when politics in Brazil and the Americas were becoming increasingly radicalised and polarised. Conservative Brazilian women began organising against Goulart shortly after he assumed the presidency in 1961.

⁸ In her excellent study of the women who opposed Goulart, Solange de Deus Simões discusses the organisations they built and their contacts with other anti-communist women in the Americas: see her *Deus, pátria e família: as mulheres no golpe de 1964* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985), p. 132. This article builds on her study to explore these connections further.

⁹ After Quadros resigned in 1962, Goulart assumed the presidency, albeit with limited powers due to the military's suspicion that he had leftist sympathies. In 1963 a plebiscite gave him full presidential powers.

¹⁰ James Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 3.

The literature on anti-Goulart women's organising is fairly extensive. René Dreifuss' path-breaking study of the 1964 coup in Brazil details how the Instituto Brasileiro de Ação Democrática (Brazilian Institute of Democratic Action, IBAD) and the conservative think tank Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos Sociais (Institute of Research and Social Studies, IPES) generated support and resources from Brazil's corporate, financial, entrepreneurial, religious and media elite for the armed overthrow of the government of João Goulart.¹¹ Dreifuss discusses the anti-Goulart women's groups, which he characterises as little more than the creation of male ideologues in IPES.¹² Simone de Deus Simões agrees that IPES was critical to the formation of the anti-Goulart women's groups, but she notes that the women exhibited 'great political potential' and rejects the idea that they were merely the 'passive' recipients of instructions issued by men, including their husbands. Indeed, according to her, the women were 'engaged, even obstinate and voluntaristic'. Through their political involvement they 'transformed themselves from biological reproducers to ideological reproducers'.¹³

Other scholars have questioned Dreifuss' overly deterministic description of IPES and IBAD. Carlos Fico notes that by attributing such manipulative power to these groups, Dreifuss 'overestimates these organisations' capacity to determine the historical process' and mistakenly assumes that the middle classes (from which much of the leadership of the women's organisation was drawn) simply 'received passively Ipes/Ibad's ideological messages'.¹⁴ Sandra McGee Deutsch questions the degree to which men manipulated women and urges historians 'to study to what extent the female opponents of Goulart exercised agency'.¹⁵ Janaina Martins Cordeiro states that attributing women's political activity to men's machinations reflects certain gendered assumptions about women. She notes that the idea that women 'organized politically because they were manipulated by men ... assumes that men's place is in the public realm and that of women is in the private sphere'.¹⁶ In her study of anti-

¹¹ Dreifuss, 1964. IPES started in the late 1950s; once Goulart became president it worked assiduously to remove him. *Ibid.*, pp. 161–2. IBAD, which was funded by Brazilian businessmen, formed in 1962 to finance candidates opposed to Goulart: see Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930–1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 231. ¹² Dreifuss, 1964, pp. 291–9.

¹³ De Deus Simões, *Deus, pátria e família*, p. 138. ¹⁴ Fico, *Além do golpe*, p. 37.

¹⁵ Sandra McGee Deutsch, 'Christians, Homemakers, and Transgressors: Extreme Right-Wing Women in Twentieth-Century Brazil', *Journal of Women's History*, 16: 3 (2004), p. 132. For studies that explore these women's agency, see Denise Assis, *Propaganda e cinema a serviço do golpe* (Rio de Janeiro: FAPERJ/MAUAD, 2001), pp. 53–66; Janaina Martins Cordeiro, *Diretas em movimento: Campanha da Mulher pela Democracia e a ditadura no Brasil* (Editora FGV: Rio de Janeiro, 2009); Aline Alves Presot, *As Marchas da Família com Deus pela Liberdade e o golpe de 1964*, unpubl. Master's thesis, Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, IFCS, 2004.

¹⁶ Janaina Martin Cordeiro, 'Femininas e Formidáveis', *Revista Gênero*, 8 (2009), pp. 175–208.

Goulart women in São Paulo, Pérola Sestini identifies these female activists as dynamic political actors who ‘took over the public space in order to defend the nation against the “communist threat”’.¹⁷ Indeed, these women, like the anti-Allende women in Chile, challenged the dichotomy between the public and the private; they used the moral authority that women had accrued in the domestic realm to assert their political righteousness in the public sphere. These women were not pawns, organised by men to suit the latter’s objectives; they knowingly acted to safeguard what they perceived to be their economic, political and religious interests. Their efforts to remove Goulart from power demonstrate this, as does the work they carried out after the coup to propagate their success and to build anti-communist networks with like-minded women throughout the Americas, which I discuss below.

Spurred by their fears that the Goulart government was leading Brazil down the path to godless communism – a system that they thought would abolish their personal liberty, right to own property and ability to practice religion freely – they organised other women to join them in opposing the government. They worked with other anti-government forces to organise the massive March of the Family with God for Liberty against the Goulart government.¹⁸ The first such march, which took place in São Paulo on 19 March 1964, set the tone, symbols and discourse for similar demonstrations that followed, both before and after the overthrow of Goulart.

Two women’s organisations, the União Cívica Feminina (Women’s Civic Union, UCF) and Movimento de Arregimentação Feminina (Movement of Women’s Regimentation, MAF), headed the coalition of 34 organisations that planned the protest.¹⁹ Hundreds of thousands of women and men turned out for the demonstration.²⁰ Organisers distributed manifestos declaring that ‘the Homeland is in extreme danger’ because the Goulart government ‘lack[s] any piety or scruples’.²¹ Their flyers conflated defence of the nation with an affirmation of Christianity, which they defined as an essential element of national identity. They claimed that the Goulart government was opening the doors to atheistic communism, which threatened the Brazilian way of life.

¹⁷ Pérola Sestini, ‘A “mulher brasileira” em ação: motivações e imperativos para o golpe militar de 1964’, unpubl. Master’s thesis, University of São Paulo, 2008, p. 96. Other studies on these women include Heloisa Maria Murgel Starling, *Os senhores das gerais: os novos incondidentes e o golpe militar de 1964* (Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1986).

¹⁸ Opposition forces had originally called the protest the ‘March to Make Amends to the Rosary’. They changed it to the *Marcha da Família com Deus pela Liberdade* (March of the Family with God for Liberty) so as not to exclude non-Catholics. Ruth Leacock, *Requiem for Revolution* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), p. 193.

¹⁹ ‘Marcha da família com Deus pela liberdade’, *O Estado de São Paulo*, 18 March 1964.

²⁰ I have not been able to determine what percentage of the marchers were women.

²¹ ‘Auro na marcha pediu fé nas forças armadas’, *O Correio da Manhã*, 20 March 1964.

The women's organisations carried out a range of activities designed to mobilise public opinion in opposition to the Goulart government. Some of these actions relied on the unpaid, volunteer-intensive work of women and were precisely the type of activities later performed by anti-Allende women in Chile. For example, the *Campanha da Mulher pela Democracia* (Women's Campaign for Democracy, CAMDE) organised women to write letters to Congress (by hand) protesting Goulart's appointment of San Tiago Dantas as prime minister.²² In order to facilitate the effort, Amélia Bastos, the leader of CAMDE, claims she opened her house 24 hours a day and, as a result, the women of CAMDE sent 4,000 letters in opposition to Dantas' appointment. To reach more women, they participated in radio shows warning women about 'the dangers of communism'.²³ They employed friendship-based networks to expand the number of women involved with CAMDE and other anti-Goulart activities. Women who attended the CAMDE meetings were each encouraged to organise five to ten other women to participate in future activities, a tactic that apparently bore fruit as the number of women activists grew.²⁴

The defence of religion permeated their activities and protests; the women repeatedly claimed that the Goulart government threatened the Catholic Church and their freedom to worship, and, as a result, also endangered an essential aspect of what it meant to be Brazilian. In reality, Goulart, a Catholic, did not plan to curtail religious freedom and was not a communist. Nevertheless, these women equated him with communism and communism with atheism, which they defined as both a foreign and an anti-Brazilian ideology.

Female marchers handed out the 'Oração da Mulher Paulista ao Apóstolo Anchieta' ('Women of São Paulo's Prayer to Anchieta').²⁵ This prayer links the figure of Anchieta to the fight against communism: 'neither this nation nor its people will be transformed into a martyr nation, like those nations and those peoples who have been enslaved by atheistic communism'. They conflated their patriotism with their religiosity by singing the national anthem and *Ave Maria* and chanting, 'Green and Yellow [the colours of Brazil], Not the Hammer and Sickle', and (referring to Goulart) 'Resign or Impeachment'.²⁶

²² In his previous position as foreign minister, Dantas had 'defended Brazil's neutrality on Cuba, thereby provoking the ire of the right': Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil*, p. 218.

²³ Presot, *As Marchas da Família com Deus*, p. 21.

²⁴ 'The Country that Saved Itself', *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1964, p. 144.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Anchieta was a sixteenth-century Jesuit missionary in Brazil who sought to convert the indigenous population to Catholicism. These women defined Anchieta as the 'apostle of Brazil who defended native Brazilians against enslavement': Sestini, 'A "mulher brasileira" em ação', p. 86.

²⁶ 'Auro na marcha pediu fé nas forças armadas', *O Correio da Manhã*, 20 March 1964.

Eight similar demonstrations occurred in cities across the nation during the next few weeks. After the military ousted Goulart on 1 April, supporters celebrated his overthrow by organising 42 additional marches in different Brazilian cities between March and June.²⁷

CAMDE, the Rio-based women's group headed by Amélia Bastos, helped to organise one of the largest post-coup 'pro-democracy' marches, the Victory March, in Rio de Janeiro on 2 April – the day after the military seized power.²⁸ As was true in the São Paulo march, the women conflated nationalism with Christianity and freedom and charged that the communists were 'planning to submit Brazil to the enslavement of a backward, anti-human, and anti-Christ dictatorship'.²⁹

The anti-communist women's groups considered the ouster of the Goulart government and the installation of a military dictatorship – all done in the name of defending democracy – a victory, *their* victory, and they savoured their triumph. Many, perhaps most of them considered their work to be over and ceased to be part of this story. Some of the women, however, flushed with victory, were determined to continue the fight against communism.

Anti-Communist Brazilian Women's Transnational Connections

The anti-communist Brazilian women sought to promote their vision of how and why they had contributed to the demise of the Goulart government. Their interests coincided with those of the US government, which was eager to have them tell people in the United States what they had done to defeat communism in the largest nation in South America. Thus, in October and November 1964, a group of female anti-Goulart activists travelled to and around the United States to share their stories of how they had prevented Brazil from turning Red. The US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchange sponsored their visit through Leader Grants in conjunction with the Overseas Education Fund (OEF) of the League of Women Voters, which arranged many of their activities while they were in the United States.³⁰

²⁷ For a list of the dates of these marches and the cities where they took place, see Fico, *Além do golpe*, pp. 208–10.

²⁸ Eudoxia Ribeiro Dantas, *Voltando no tempo* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Sette Letras, 1985), p. 88.

²⁹ *Correio da Manhã*, 2 April 1964.

³⁰ The OEF also received funding from the Agency for International Development, Sears Roebuck, International Petroleum and the Rockefeller Foundation. Mrs Walt W. (Elspeth) Rostow and Mrs Rodman Rockefeller chaired the organisation in the early 1960s: 'The Overseas Education Fund', Oct. 1964, Overseas Education Fund Archives (OEFA), Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries, Box 22, p. 2. Also see Louise M. Young, *In the Public Interest: The League of Women Voters, 1920–1970* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), pp. 63, 153; and Nancy M. Neuman, *The League of Women Voters in Perspective 1920–1935* (Washington, DC: League of Women Voters, 1994), pp. 27–8. Elspeth Rostow had a personal connection with CAMDE. She met with members of the group in Brazil and

The League of Women Voters established the OEF in 1947 in order to disseminate 'practical knowledge and the underlying theory of how a democracy in a free country works'.³¹ Latin America had been the OEF's main focus since the early 1960s, and by 1964 it had already held several tours with women from Latin America.³² OEF board members believed, along with the US government and media, that women in Chile and Brazil, two countries of particular interest to them, were key political actors whose activities had had an impact on their nations' politics: 'The developing strength and vitality in the political parties and the important victories for the moderate constructive forces in Brazil and Chile have been encouraged and [in]fluenced by the active interest and participation of women through their civic organisations. The women of South America have been credited as being the decisive force in leading their countries toward democracy.'³³

The Brazilian women who visited the United States represented five of the different anti-Goulart women's groups: the Cruzada Democrática Feminina (Women's Democratic Crusade, CDF) in Recife, Ação Democrática Feminina Gaúcha (Gaucha Women's Democratic Action, ADFG) in Rio Grande do Sul, the UCF in São Paulo, the MAF in São Paulo, and the Campanha da Mulher pela Democracia (Women's Campaign for Democracy, CAMDE) in Guanabara.³⁴ They came in October and stayed through November so they could witness the presidential election, which is ironic given that they had just worked to overthrow their elected president.³⁵

In Washington, the Brazilian visitors participated in a series of seminars, one of which lasted two weeks and was entitled 'The Citizen in a Free Society'.³⁶ 'Specialists' conducted the seminars, which were held at the Brookings Institution.³⁷ Some of the group subsequently attended an OEF

spoke with them about how women could contribute to the fight against inflation. 'Sra. Rostow diz na CAMDE que a mulher pode ajudar na luta contra a inflação', *O Globo*, 28 Aug. 1964.

³¹ 'The Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Voters', Oct. 1964, OEFA, Box 22, p. 1.

³² 'Summary Statement re the Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Voters', undated, OEFA, Box 22, pp. 2-3.

³³ 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors', 8 Oct. 1964, OEFA, Box 10, p. 7.

³⁴ 'Participants Lists', undated, OEFA, Box 248. It is not clear who selected the women.

³⁵ Lydia Van Zandt, 'Brazilian Women Fight Communism', *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 Nov. 1964.

³⁶ CAMDE, 'Actividades', I Congresso Sul-Americano Da Mulher em Defesa Da Democracia, Archivo General de la Administración, Alcalá de Henares, Spain, Delegación Nacional de la Sección Femenina, Departamento de Coordinación (03)095, Box 5783 (hereafter AGA), Dec. 1964, p. 10. I thank Vanessa Tessada for sending me these files.

³⁷ 'Board Meeting Notes', 19 May 1964, OEFA, Box 223, p. 2. The OEF planned such tours well in advance. Later newspaper reports indicate that the Brookings Institution hosted the events as planned.

Institute at Wellesley College and others travelled to the West Coast, Arizona, Ohio, Tennessee and New York.³⁸ Eudoxia Ribeiro Dantas and Mavy Harmon, two CAMDE leaders, met with representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties in order 'to observe ... the process of national elections'.³⁹ Both parties organised programmes for the women to address, but according to Dantas, those sponsored by 'the Republican Party ... were of greater interest and importance'.⁴⁰

It is interesting to note that while the anti-Goulart women regularly infused their discourse with references to Christianity and religion during their activities in Brazil, they rarely did so in the United States, for reasons that are not stated.⁴¹ Instead of defining the enemy as godless or atheistic communism, as they routinely did in Brazil, on their US tour they simply talked about the dangers of communism. Much of the US media hailed Amélia Bastos, the leader of CAMDE, as the symbol of Brazil's anti-communist struggle. The *Reader's Digest* sponsored an event and press conference to honour Bastos, who told her audience that women had opposed Goulart by marching and carrying posters 'declaring that they did not want their children to live under communism'. She attributed their anger to 'the soaring grocery bills caused by inflation' and the likely 'communist conquest of our country', but made no mention of the threat that the Goulart government posed to religious freedom.⁴²

Although US media coverage of what the Brazilian women said lacks references to religion, scattered comments established the women as Christian, and in some cases Catholic. Most coverage identified their protests as the March of the Family with God for Liberty, so the religious connection was impossible to miss. The *Reader's Digest* article mentions that Bastos held meetings in 'church parish halls', and another article defines Bastos as 'a Catholic laywoman'.⁴³ The National Council of Catholic Women, a conservative organisation, invited her to attend its 32nd National Convention.⁴⁴ One Catholic newspaper credited her with 'saving Brazil from communism' and included an excerpt from the São Paulo women's declaration: 'This nation which God has given us ... Mother of God,

³⁸ Lydia Van Zandt, 'Brazilian Women Fight Communism', *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 Nov. 1964. ³⁹ CAMDE, '16/9/64 a 16/10/64, Conferencias', AGA, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Dantas, *Voltando no tempo*, p. 89.

⁴¹ Of course, it is possible that the women did talk about their religious beliefs and the US media chose not to include their comments.

⁴² Van Zandt, 'Brazilian Women Fight Communism'; Elizabeth Shelton, 'They're Wedded to the Freedom of Brazil', *Washington Post*, 11 Nov. 1964, Section E1 ('For and About Women').

⁴³ 'The Country that Saved Itself', *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1964; Shelton, 'They're Wedded'.

⁴⁴ CAMDE, '16/10/64 a 16/11/64, Conferencias', AGA, p. 8; Lydia Van Zandt, 'South America Takes a Long Look', *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 Oct. 1964.

preserve us from the fate and suffering of the martyred women of Cuba, Poland, Hungary and other enslaved nations.⁴⁵

Other members of the delegation also informed the US public about what they had done to fight communism and their plans to continue the struggle. Carmen Salazar Neves of the CDF announced: 'We are rid, at last, of those [Communist] officials and the Communist Party is outlawed, but we can't afford to stop working now. We must get the Marxist teachers out of the schools and help raise the standard of living through community welfare projects.'⁴⁶

These women went to the United States because they wanted to share the story of their victory with audiences there and to dispel negative perceptions of the military coup and government – goals which also benefited the Brazilian military. As the headline in one Brazilian newspaper read, 'The President of CAMDE [Amélia Bastos] is Going to the United States to Show Them What the Mulher Brasileira Did'.⁴⁷ The women apparently saw themselves as defenders, if not emissaries, of the military government. Both the US government and the Brazilian armed forces backed and benefited from this characterisation, since it effectively defined the anti-communist military rulers as democrats, not dictators.

When two other delegates returned to Brazil after the US tour, they announced that when they had first arrived in the United States, 'American women thought the April Movement was "a coup d'état of the South American type"'. However, by the time they had left, opinion 'regarding the April coup had started to change'.⁴⁸ An internal CAMDE report extolled the trip, which it summarised as 'an excellent opportunity to clarify the motives that led to the Revolution and the type of activities that we plan to carry out to fortify democracy in our country'.⁴⁹

Anti-Communist Brazilian Women's Connections across the Continent

The trip to the United States brought the Brazilian women into direct contact with conservative Chilean women. Maria Violeta Sousa Leite, one of the travellers, recounted that following their trip to the United States the president of Chase Manhattan Bank invited her and Ivete Silveira, both members of the UCF in São Paulo, to go to Venezuela to participate in a series of Voice of America radio programmes. They accepted, and when they were

⁴⁵ 'She Helped Save Brazil from Reds', *Catholic Standard*, 13 Nov. 1964. The article was printed immediately below one from the Archbishop of Washington, DC, welcoming women to the convention. ⁴⁶ Van Zandt, 'Brazilian Women Fight Communism'.

⁴⁷ *O Globo*, 9 Nov. 1964.

⁴⁸ 'EUA: mulheres achan que houve golpe', *O Correio da Manhã*, 13 Nov. 1964.

⁴⁹ CAMDE, '16/11/64 a 16/12/64, Conferencias', AGA, p. 10.

in Venezuela they met some (unnamed) Chilean women who wanted to 'learn how the Brazilians had politically mobilised women' so that they could apply the lessons in their own country.⁵⁰

The anti-Goulart Brazilian women wanted to build ties with anti-communist women across South America.⁵¹ To that end, CAMDE organised the week-long I Congresso Sul-Americano da Mulher em Defesa da Democracia (First South American Congress of Women in Defence of Democracy, hereafter I Congresso or the Congress) in Rio de Janeiro in April 1967. Representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and various cities in Brazil attended the conference.⁵² According to CAMDE, the women represented 'women's civic organisations from all the countries in South America'. The goal of the Congress was to enable the women to 'join together to constitute a continental force, in defence of our religion, our homes, our homelands'.⁵³

Chilean Olga Irrarrázaval, who was active in the anti-communist *Mujeres Acción de Chile* (Chile Women's Action), spoke at the conference 'in the name of the South American delegates'. The Venezuelan delegate, Magdalena Picón de Rodríguez, was named vice president of the Congress and delivered one of the keynote speeches at the opening plenary.⁵⁴

CAMDE emphasised the presence of foreign delegates and the continental reach of the Congress during the conference and to the media. For example, two major panels were titled 'Hemispheric Security' and 'Women in Defence of the Hemisphere'. Professor Jorge Boaventura from the *Escola Superior*

⁵⁰ Sestini, 'A "mulher brasileira" em ação', pp. 37–8.

⁵¹ In fact, CAMDE members' vision of the nature of the anti-communist struggle transcended the western hemisphere. In August 1967 they travelled to Madrid, where they met with women in the pro-Franco *Falange Feminina*, and to Lisbon, where the president of the *Movimento Feminino Nacional* welcomed them. 'Relatório de junho a setembro', Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (ANRJ), Fundo Campanha da Mulher pela Democracia, File 1.

⁵² See de Deus Simões, *Deus, pátria e família*, p. 133; and CAMDE, 'Relatório março–abril–maio, 1967', ANRJ, Fundo CAMDE, File 1, p. 7. I thank Pérola Sestini for sending me this information. The groups represented were *Acción de Mujeres Venezolanas*, *Comité Central de Ayuda Social* (Ecuador), *Unión Ciudadanas* (Colombia), *Acción de Mujeres de Chile*, *Confederación Nacional de Instituciones Femeninas* (Bolivia), *Consejo de Mujeres de la República Argentina*, *Ateneo de Montevideo*, *Consejo de Mujeres del Perú* and *Entidades Femeninas* (Paraguay). 'Esboçadas as primeiras resoluções no Congresso da Mulher Democrata', *O Globo*, 19 April 1967; CAMDE, 'Relatório março–abril–maio, 1967', ANRJ, Fundo CAMDE, Box 46, File 1, pp. 2–3.

⁵³ CAMDE, 'I Congresso Sul-Americano da Mulher em Defesa da Democracia, discurso pronunciado por Amelia Molina Bastos', PE.0.0.102/4, ANRJ, CAMDE Collection, p. 13.

⁵⁴ CAMDE, 'Boletim No. 1', AGA, p. 2; 'Aberto o I Congresso Sul-Americano da Mulher em Defesa da Democracia', *O Globo*, 18 April 1967. According to CAMDE, Magdalena Picón was 'the only Venezuelan deputy to vote against breaking relations with Brazil' following the overthrow of Goulart. CAMDE, 'Campanha del Mulher pela Democracia', AGA, p. 15.

de Guerra spoke, as did Professor Violeta Gamera from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica, who spoke in Spanish on 'Women in Defence of the Hemisphere, the Home, and Society'. Zuleika Teixeira Alves, who represented the Family Crusade sub-committee of CAMDE, spoke on 'Hemispheric Defence in Relation to Civic, Moral, and Spiritual Education'.⁵⁵

Brazilian newspapers repeatedly referred to the international delegates and the organisations and countries that they represented. Numerous news stories quoted the foreign delegates, and one lengthy article profiled Olga Irrarázaval and Magdalena Picón de Rodríguez.⁵⁶ Another newspaper interviewed Beatriz Aya de Cárdenas, the delegate from Colombia, who stated that one of the issues she opposed was 'the taboo' that prevented women throughout Latin America from 'participat[ing] in the political life of the nation'.⁵⁷

Powerful Brazilian figures and a variety of corporations supported the conference. For example, although President Costa e Silva did not attend, he did send a statement and his congratulations to the women, writing: 'In Brazil, women have been the unshakable mainstay of legitimate causes and the bulwark of civic transformations.'⁵⁸ The Hotel Gloria, where the conference was held, 'kindly gave us [CAMDE] the lodgings', while the air fares were 'obtained through an arrangement with Braniff'.⁵⁹

The conference, which went from April 16 to the 22, focused on four major themes: 'The spiritual and Moral Values of the Family', '[Political] Structures', 'Active Groups' and 'Socio-Economic Aspects' (Figure 1). Each of these included three subsets; for example, subset 2 of 'Active Groups' listed 'The behaviour of students in the contemporary world and the responsibility of intellectuals for children's education'.⁶⁰ The delegates expressed particular concern with education, students and young people.⁶¹

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ 'Mulheres em Congresso: defesa da democracia', *Diário de Notícias*, 23 April 1967.

⁵⁷ 'Mulheres democratistas defendem sua presença na vida política', *O Globo*, 20 April 1967.

⁵⁸ 'Esboçadas as primeiras resoluções no Congresso da Mulher Democrata', *O Globo*, 19 April 1967.

⁵⁹ 'Camde: um congresso só mulheres', *Jornal do Brasil*, 16 April 1967. Members of CAMDE met with US and Brazilian corporations and financial institutions such as Squibb, Union Carbide, 3M, Dupont, Johnson & Johnson, Sul America Seguros, Petrobrás, Coca-Cola and Volkswagen do Brasil to solicit financial support for the conference. However, the records do not indicate whether or not they received anything. CAMDE, 'Relatório', ANRJ, Fundo CAMDE, Box 46, pp. 8–9, 11–12.

⁶⁰ 'Mulheres democratistas defendem sua presença na vida política', *O Globo*, 24 April 1967.

⁶¹ 'Aberto o I Congresso Sul-Americano da Mulher em Defesa da Democracia', *O Globo*, 18 April 1967. For two articles that explore the right wing's focus on youth, see Benjamin Cowan, "'Why Hasn't This Teacher Been Shot?': Moral-Sexual Panic, the Repressive Right, and Brazil's National Security State', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 92: 3 (2012), pp. 403–36; and Victoria Langland, 'Birth Control Pills and Molotov Cocktails: Reading Sex and Revolution in 1968 Brazil', in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (eds.), *In*

Figure 1. *Themes of the 1967 Congresso da Mulher Sul-Americana em Defesa da Democracia*

CAMPANHA DA MULHER PELA DEMOCRACIA		
C A M D E		
Rua Visconde do Pirajá 351 - 6º andar - Ipanema -		
Rio de Janeiro, G.B., BRASIL		
CONGRESSO DA MULHER SUL-AMERICANA EM DEFESA DA DEMOCRACIA		
Grupo I.	Valores morais o espirituais da Família	1. O valor da comunicação entre as gerações 2. Processos para a unificação da família 3. Integração da família na comunidade
Grupo II.	Estruturas	1. Orientação e preparação para a cidadania na escola. 2. Conscientização e politização do homem no dorno 3. Características da Democracia Representativa (Executiva, Legislativa e Judiciária)
Grupo III.	Grupos atuantes	1. Guerra Psicológica-Mensagem escrita e falada 2. O comportamento do estudante no mundo atual e a responsabilidade do intelectual na formação da juventude 3. Importância e influência dos grupos femininos
Grupo IV	Aspectos Sócio-Econômicos	1. O papel do empresário no rumo social da coletividade (nordeste) 2. A liderança operária autêntica através de sindicatos livres 3. Fortalecimento da classe média.

Source: CAMDE, 'Recortes de jornais, textos, carta e recorte de revista sobre a Campanha da Mulher pela Democracia, destacando o primeiro congresso sul-americano da mulher pela democracy', ANRJ, PE 0.0 /34/113, part 3.

In addition to the panels and plenaries, organisers made sure the conference included a variety of social activities. Participants visited the planetarium, toured Guanabara in a 'Bateau-Mouche' and attended two cocktail receptions

from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 308-49.

held in their honour, one in the Panorama Palace Hotel and the other in the Jockey Club.⁶²

Amélia Bastos closed the conference by referring to the papal encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, which 'calls us to distribute extra money to aid the less fortunate'.⁶³ She urged conference participants to 'depoliticise the universities' and to 'plan actions in defence of democratic principles in all the countries of South America'.⁶⁴ In conclusion, she announced, 'the next meeting needs to take place within the next two years'.⁶⁵ In an internal summary of the Congress, CAMDE declared it a huge success: though it had 'seemed we were dreaming an unrealisable dream' when the Congress was first proposed, the event had 'surpassed all expectations'.⁶⁶

The conference built on connections that anti-communist Brazilian women had previously established with their Chilean counterparts, among others. For example, in July 1964, after the coup in Brazil and before the elections in Chile, Bebe Nogueira, a member of the UCF, wrote to Sophie Eastman, an anti-Allende activist. Her letter urged Chilean women 'to struggle for the victory of democracy in the upcoming [1964 presidential] elections'.⁶⁷ In June 1965 Olga Irrarázaval, the Chilean delegate to the I Congresso, visited with members of CAMDE.⁶⁸ Their exchanges continued after the conference. CAMDE leader Eudóxia Ribeiro Dantas met with a Chilean journalist who was visiting Brazil in 1970, shortly after Allende was elected president. During their conversation, the journalist complained to Dantas that 'We are suffocating with Allende.' Aware of what women in Brazil had done to oppose Goulart, she asked Dantas for 'instructions' on how to defeat Allende. For the next three days the (unnamed) Chilean woman made repeated visits to Dantas' house, where Dantas gave her all 'the documents I could. I taught her, she took notes on all this for them to use back there [in Chile]'.⁶⁹

Dantas celebrated the September 1973 military overthrow of Allende, just as CAMDE had rejoiced in the 1964 ouster of Goulart. According to her, the women were largely responsible for the removal of both governments: 'And they [the anti-Allende women's movement] did it! Allende fell.'⁷⁰

⁶² 'Representantes de 10 países para o I Congresso da CAMDE', *O Globo*, 15 April 1967.

⁶³ 'D. Amélia encerra congresso da CAMDE defendendo a distribuição do supérfluo', *Jornal do Brasil*, 23 April 1967.

⁶⁴ 'Mulheres democratas defendem sua presença na vida política', *O Globo*, 24 April 1967.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* It is not clear whether or not such a meeting took place.

⁶⁶ CAMDE, 'I Congresso Sul-Americano da Mulher em Defesa da Democracia', AGA, 16/22 April 1967, p. 1.

⁶⁷ De Deus Simões, *Deus, pátria e família*, p. 134.

⁶⁸ CAMDE, 'Junho, julho, agosto de 1965', AGA, p. 15.

⁶⁹ De Deus Simões, *Deus, pátria e família*, p. 134.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* The women did not act alone. For a discussion of contacts between anti-Brazilian men and their Chilean counterparts, see Dreifuss, 1964, p. 460 n. 41; and Marlise Simon, 'The Brazilian Connection', *Washington Post*, 6 Jan. 1974.

Promoting Women's Anti-Communist Activity

The transfer of knowledge about the anti-Goulart women's political activities was not a neutral process – but then, the transfer of knowledge never is. Information about the women's anti-communist activities served five purposes. First, it shaped perceptions in Chile, Brazil and the United States, and possibly throughout the hemisphere, of the meaning and importance of what these women did and represented.⁷¹ Second, it implanted in the public mind the image of supposedly apolitical and inexperienced housewives and mothers successfully fighting the evil communists. Third, it provided anti-communist women in Chile, the United States and elsewhere with concrete examples and inspiring role models in their struggles. Fourth, it encouraged women's public protests and anti-communist activities. And fifth, because women actively called for and supported the coup, it symbolically and pragmatically connected women with the military's illegal seizure of power and termination of democracy.

Accounts of what conservative Brazilian women did to oppose the Goulart government were conveyed by various routes, transmitted by different messengers and communicated through different mediums; they did not always follow the most direct route. What is particularly notable is that the transnational flow of information occurred in multiple directions, not just outward or downward from the United States to Brazil and Chile.

Anti-communist Brazilian women travelled to the United States to educate women about their successful anti-communist work. Some of these same women organised the 1967 I Congresso, designed to encourage other women throughout Latin America to follow their example. Some information about these women's activities travelled directly from Brazil to Chile; some knowledge arrived in Chile via the United States and Venezuela; some Chileans travelled to Brazil and took what they learned back to Chile. The Chilean, Brazilian and US media reported on the women's anti-Goulart protests, and Brazilian and US businessmen passed on information to their Chilean and US counterparts.⁷²

⁷¹ A Venezuelan newspaper published an interview with the two Venezuelan delegates after they returned from the Congress: see 'Despolitizar las universidades', *El Nacional*, 3 June 1967.

⁷² Leaders of the Chilean Right and businessmen, for example, met with 'exiles' in 'Bolivia and Argentina and travelled repeatedly and openly to the United States': see 'Green Light for the Generals', *NACLA's Latin America and Empire Report*, 7: 8 (1973), p. 4. Orlando Sáenz, the president of the National Association of Manufacturers, was a 'friend and admirer of [Brazilian] Roberto Campos', who was the Brazilian minister of economic planning; *ibid.*, p. 5. US businessmen learned what Brazilians had done by reading 'a story hitherto untold: how São Paulo businessmen conspired to overthrow Brazil's Communist-infected government': see Philip, Siekman, 'When Executives Turn Revolutionaries', *Fortune*, 70 (Sep. 1964).

Juana Castro's activities in Brazil and messages to Chile offer insight into the transnational networks that a variety of governmental and non-governmental players used to promote anti-communist sentiment in the Americas. According to her memoirs, Juana Castro began working with the CIA in 1961, when none other than Virginia Leitão da Cunha, the wife of the Brazilian ambassador to Cuba, recruited her.⁷³ She left Cuba on 20 June 1964, and two months later she went to Brazil; there, she stayed with her good friend Virginia Leitão da Cunha, whose husband Vasco Leitão da Cunha became Brazil's minister of foreign relations after the coup.⁷⁴

Juana Castro's visit to Brazil occurred less than a month before the 1964 presidential election in Chile. While she was in Brazil she spoke to different anti-communist women's groups and recounted to them the horrors of communism.⁷⁵ She spoke for two days at the end of August with members of CAMDE. CAMDE then sent copies of her presentations to a 'friend' in Chile so that 'they could be published in the Chilean press prior to the elections'.⁷⁶

Castro also taped a message to Chilean women, a portion of which is cited at the beginning of this article. At the time, Elena Larraín was an important anti-communist Chilean activist. In 1964 she founded Mujeres Acción de Chile, along with Olga Irrarrázaval, to mobilise women against the candidacy of Salvador Allende.⁷⁷ According to her, she played an important role in making sure that the Juana Castro tape was aired on Chilean radio: 'A very amusing thing happened. We knew a [Chilean] man who was friends with a very important man in the Brazilian government. We gave him money so that he could travel to Brazil to get the tape of Juanita Castro. He got it and brought it back to Chile.' Larraín used her personal connections with the managers of three radio stations in Santiago to convince them to play the tape just before the presidential elections.⁷⁸

The US government understood the practical and symbolic importance of women decrying communism in general and women's mobilisation against Goulart in particular. Lincoln Gordon, the US ambassador to Brazil, telegraphed the US State Department: 'The huge pro-democratic rally in Sao Paulo March 19, largely organized by women's groups, has provided an important element of mass popular showing, which reacts favorably in turn

⁷³ Juanita Castro (as told to María Antonieta Collinas), *Fidel y Raúl, mis hermanos: la historia secreta* (Mexico City: Santillana Ediciones Generales, 2009), pp. 274–7; 'Castro's Sister: My Work with the CIA Didn't Threaten Brothers' Lives', *Miami Herald*, 27 Oct. 2009.

⁷⁴ 'Cuba Claims Confession; Retired Exile Spills All', *Miami Herald*, 27 Jan. 1965.

⁷⁵ 'Juanita Castro contou para as senhoras da CAMDE todos os dramas de Cuba comunista', *O Globo*, 25 Aug. 1964.

⁷⁶ CAMDE, 'CAMDE', AGA, p. 6.

⁷⁷ For more on Larraín, see Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, pp. 75–6.

⁷⁸ Interview with Elena Larraín, Santiago, 16 March 1994.

on Congress and the armed forces.⁷⁹ His and other US officials' reports, along with the print media's coverage of women's anti-Goulart activities, help to explain the US State Department's decision to invite the Brazilian women to visit the United States. The US government hoped that the example of the anti-Goulart women could be replicated in Chile, as its sponsorship of the anti-Allende Scare Campaign in the 1964 and 1970 presidential elections makes abundantly clear.⁸⁰

Chilean and US Media Coverage of Anti-Goulart Activities in Brazil

Coverage in the conservative Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* alerted anti-communist sectors in Chile to Brazilian efforts to oust Goulart. Although the articles did not mention women's role in the marches, they did highlight the Catholicism of the protestors and emphasised the joy Brazilians felt after the military had overthrown the Goulart government.⁸¹ One article on the São Paulo march reported, 'among the protestors were many Catholics and anti-communists, protesting the leftist policies of the Goulart government'.⁸² Another article in *El Mercurio* described the demonstrators as 'a half-million Catholics, praying in the streets in defence of democratic institutions'.⁸³ After the Brazilian military ousted Goulart, *El Mercurio* described the 2 April demonstration in Rio de Janeiro as 'a huge celebration of the military victory'.⁸⁴

The US media did, however, frequently mention women's participation in the anti-Goulart protests. A *New York Times* article reported, 'Women in Brazil's towns and cities have been organizing anti-Communist demonstrations. In Belo Horizonte last month, women carrying rosaries led a demonstration that broke up a leftist rally' where Leonal Brizola, the pro-Goulart governor of Rio Grande do Sul, had been scheduled to speak. The article highlighted the close connections that existed between the anti-Goulart women and the Catholic Church: 'Priests at Easter masses in churches here today said "women are the only force that can save Brazil."'

⁷⁹ 'Telegram from the Ambassador of Brazil (Gordon) to the Department of State', 28 March 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, vol. 31 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), pp. 412-18, emphasis added.

⁸⁰ See Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, chaps. 3 and 5.

⁸¹ To date, I have not been able to determine why the women's role was not mentioned. I suspect that the Chilean Right did not yet understand the value of projecting women as central figures in the anti-communist struggle. However, this was a lesson it learned rapidly. By May and June 1964, women figured prominently in the anti-Allende propaganda disseminated in the pages of *El Mercurio* and elsewhere: *ibid.*, chap. 3.

⁸² *El Mercurio*, 21 March 1964.

⁸³ *El Mercurio*, 25 March 1964.

⁸⁴ *El Mercurio*, 3 April 1964.

Calling on parishioners to march, they said: "We want liberty and democracy."⁸⁵

A *Fortune* magazine article, 'When Executives Turned Revolutionaries', focused on the men who worked with think tanks like IPES.⁸⁶ However, it also had a special section on Brazil's conservative women activists. Inaccurately quoting Goulart as saying that 'women with beads in their hands' would not stand in his way (a reference to his comments about the female opposition's use of rosaries and religion to criticise his government), the article effusively praised the women of CAMDE and their work against Goulart, referring to them as 'the girls from Ipanema'.⁸⁷ Since most of the leaders of CAMDE were matronly and more than likely did not sun themselves on the beaches of Rio in skimpy bikinis, the dizzying juxtaposition of these two dichotomous images of Brazilian women reveals much about US stereotypes. Brazilian women were either the bad but sexy beach bunny or the good, pious, religious woman.

Some of the US media disseminated the notion that women had 'saved Brazil'.⁸⁸ In November 1964 *Reader's Digest* published a special feature on Brazil titled 'The Country that Saved Itself'.⁸⁹ And who, according to the article, was particularly responsible for saving the country? The 'feminine and formidable' women of Brazil. *Reader's Digest* invited five female representatives of the different anti-Goulart women's groups to attend the launching of that issue of the magazine.⁹⁰ (Amélia Bastos spoke at this press conference, as mentioned above.) The special feature, which was written by Clarence Hull, a senior editor of the magazine, drew on interviews conducted with leading activists from the women's anti-Goulart movement. As *Reader's Digest* rapturously reported, "To the women of Brazil belongs a huge share of the credit for stopping the planned Red takeover. By the thousands, on a scale unmatched in Latin American history, housewives threw themselves into the struggle and, more than any other force, they alerted the country."⁹¹

⁸⁵ 'Goulart to Face Navy Critics', *New York Times*, 30 March 1964.

⁸⁶ Dreifuss, 1964, pp. 291–9.

⁸⁷ Siekman, 'When Executives Turn Revolutionaries', pp. 215–16.

⁸⁸ Not coincidentally, after Salvador Allende was elected president the Chilean opposition parties defined anti-Allende women as the saviours of the nation.

⁸⁹ In the 1950s and 1960s, *Reader's Digest* was widely read, influential and anti-communist, both in the United States and in other countries. It reflected and reinforced Cold War antagonism toward the Soviet Union and communism and assumed and generated an image of the United States as morally, culturally, economically and politically superior to the rest of the world. For a penetrating discussion of the ideological impact and values of the magazine, see Joanne P. Sharp, *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 2000).

⁹⁰ Dantas, *Voltando no tempo*, p. 91. Dantas writes that *Reader's Digest* treated the women well. It lodged them in the Saint Regis hotel, 'one of the most famous in New York', and provided them with a limousine 'night and day': *ibid.*

⁹¹ 'The Country that Saved Itself', *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1964, p. 143.

The *Reader's Digest* article set the tone for much of the media coverage of the Brazilian women's role in the anti-Goulart protests. It defined women, the 'housewives', as the sole protagonists of the marches. Although both men and women organised and participated in the march, the article claimed that 'hundreds of housewives [in São Paulo] rushed to their telephones to begin organizing' the demonstration, as soon as they heard reports of the 13 March 1964 demonstration in favour of Goulart. The article later characterised the protest as 'the São Paulo women's march'.⁹²

The Portuguese edition of the article, 'A nação que se salvou a si mesma' ('The Nation that Saved Itself'), was published in *Seleções do Reader's Digest* in Brazil in November 1964. The Spanish version was published in Mexico in December 1964 for distribution throughout Latin America.⁹³ According to General Castello Branco, the military president of Brazil, 'the publication of this article was among the major contributions [made by] the press to the movement to restore democracy to Brazil. *Seleções do Reader's Digest* should be justifiably proud of having carried to millions of readers around the world the faithful account of the political events of 1964 in our country.'⁹⁴

Coverage of the anti-communist women in Brazil was not limited to major media publications. Small-town newspapers across the United States carried a surprising number of detailed articles and syndicated columns extolling the women who had contributed to the overthrow of Goulart.⁹⁵ For example, syndicated columnist John Chamberlain wrote numerous columns praising Brazilian women's determination to fight communists, using language such as: 'The women's performance [in opposing Goulart] recalled that

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 147–9.

⁹³ For a reproduction of the cover page published in Brazil, see Presot, *As Marchas da Família com Deus*, p. 321. The special feature was also published in Australia, Canada (in both English and French), India, Italy, Japan, Portugal, South Africa and the United Kingdom: Ann DiCesare, head librarian, Editorial Research Library, Reader's Digest Association, personal communication, 26 Sep. 2006. *Seleções do Reader's Digest* was not a disinterested party; it contributed to IPES, as did many other Brazilian banks, financial interests and companies: see Dreifuss, 1964, p. 638.

⁹⁴ Jan Knippers Black, *United States Penetration of Brazil* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), p. 107. Castello Branco's comment reflects the high regard that sectors of the Brazilian public had for US culture. For background on Brazil's acceptance of US cultural influences, see Antonio Pedro Tota, *The Seduction of Brazil: The Americanization of Brazil during World War II* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009). I thank Ben Cowan for this reference.

⁹⁵ For a fuller discussion of US newspaper coverage, see Margaret Power, 'Transnational Connections among Right-Wing Women', in Kathleen M. Blee and Sandra McGee Deutsch (eds.), *Women of the Right: Comparisons and Interplay across Borders* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012).

strong women all over the world are called Amazons, after Brazil's own great river.⁹⁶

One contribution that the Brazilian women stressed and which the US media seized upon was the story of the iron rings. As many US articles recounted, Brazilian women had 'contributed their gold wedding rings and other jewelry to the democratic Brazilian cause, after the Communists had been driven from the country, reportedly taking most of the national treasury with them'. Amélia Bastos, like many of the anti-communist Brazilian women, had replaced her gold ring with an iron one. During one meeting with the press on her US tour she proudly displayed the iron ring. She 'stopped several times during her talk ... to show it off'. The legend inside the ring stated simply, 'I gave gold for the good of Brazil'.⁹⁷

The View from Chile: Conservative Women and Brazil

In September 1970 Salvador Allende ran for the Chilean presidency again and won. On 1 December 1971 anti-Allende women led the first significant demonstration against his government, the March of the Empty Pots. Some 5,000 women marched through downtown Santiago, beating empty pots and pans, and denouncing the government. Early in 1972 they formed Poder Femenino (Feminine Power), which organised women against the Allende government. Over the next year and a half the group published announcements and articles denouncing the government, held anti-government demonstrations, supported anti-government strikes, organised women to beat pots and pans nightly to express their repudiation of Allende, and encouraged the military to overthrow Allende.⁹⁸

Carmen Saenz was a member of the Chilean upper class, a vice president of the right-wing National Party and a leader in Poder Femenino.⁹⁹ In one interview she stated, 'I believe that in Brazil there was a march of the pots, a day they beat the pans.'¹⁰⁰ In a later interview she noted, 'the idea [for the March of the Empty Pots] came from Brazil, where women in a small town had used pots and pans to demonstrate [against the Goulart

⁹⁶ John Chamberlain, 'Brazilians Upset Castro's Applecart', *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, 15 April 1964.

⁹⁷ Daisy Cleland, 'Gold Rings Against Reds', *Washington Star*, 11 Oct. 1964.

⁹⁸ Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*.

⁹⁹ The National Party formed in 1964, after the election of Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei and the defeat of Socialist Salvador Allende. Since neither the Conservative nor the Liberal party, the traditional parties of the Chilean Right, had generated the support needed to defeat Frei or Allende, conservative forces created a new party that they hoped would be more successful. See Sofía S. Correa, 'La derecha en Chile contemporáneo: la pérdida del control estatal', *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 11: 1 (1989), pp. 5–19.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Carmen Saenz, Santiago, 27 Dec. 1993.

government]'.¹⁰¹ While Saenz's memory may be fuzzy on this point, what is clear is that she was familiar with the Brazilian women's protests and that she considered them significant enough to link Chilean women's marches with them.

She was not the only anti-Allende female activist to link Chilean women's protests to those of Brazilian women.¹⁰² Women in Rancagua, a city south of Santiago, cited the anti-Goulart women as a model for their work against Allende. Rancagua is the closest city to El Teniente, the site of one of Chile's largest copper mines. During the Allende presidency miners and employees of the mine went on strike to demand higher wages. Conservative women, some of whom were members of Poder Femenino, along with other members of the opposition, mobilised behind the strikers and against Allende.

El Rancagüino, one of the main local newspapers, supported the strikers and the anti-Allende women who rallied to their cause. It published an article, 'Speaking of Courageous Women', which encouraged Chilean women to emulate the example of Brazilian women: their bold actions, their anti-communist fervour, their religiosity, and their success. After praising the actions undertaken by anti-Allende Chilean women, the article lauded 'the efficacious and courageous participation of women in other cases similar to our own'. It mentioned the March of the Family with God for Liberty; Amélia Bastos; the loud prayers of women in Belo Horizonte that drowned out Leonel Brizola, the pro-Goulart governor of Rio Grande do Sul; and the incident in which women stretched out on the airport runway at Belo Horizonte to prevent a delegation of trade unionists and Leonel Brizola from landing. The paper even printed the entire prayer that the anti-Goulart women recited during their march. In an unmistakable suggestion that Chilean women should follow the example of their Brazilian counterparts, the article ended by asking its readers, 'Isn't this completely applicable to our country?'¹⁰³

*Anti-Communist Chilean Women and the United States Following
the 1973 Coup*

In September 1973, the Chilean military overthrew the Allende government. In the nine years that had elapsed between the coup in Brazil and the ouster of Allende, the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War had undermined many US citizens' belief that their government was on the side of democracy. US

¹⁰¹ Interview with Carmen Saenz, Santiago, 4 Jan. 1994.

¹⁰² The Chilean Left charged that the activities of the anti-Goulart women in Brazil served as a model for the anti-Allende women in Chile. 'Imperialism is putting the "Plan Goulart" into practice since the same demonstrations are taking place in our country as those that preceded the overthrow of the constitutional President in Brazil': 'Plan Goulart, March of Empty Pots and Pans', *El Siglo*, 3 Dec. 1971. ¹⁰³ *El Rancagüino*, 23 May 1973.

involvement in the overthrow of the democratic government of Allende further angered many in the United States. As a result, a solidarity movement with Chile emerged and an important segment of the US public, along with some US officials and media, criticised US government involvement in the overthrow of Allende.¹⁰⁴

Nonetheless, much of the US media reported positively on the Chilean women who had opposed Allende and supported the military.¹⁰⁵ All the major national newspapers, and many local ones as well, carried favourable stories about the December 1971 women's march against Allende.¹⁰⁶ The positive portrayal continued after the military overthrew his government. One article, titled 'Spunky Women of Chile Honored', injected a feminist note into the description of the anti-Allende women. It claimed that 'On a continent long known for its "machismo" or manliness, Chilean women have elevated woman power to heights never seen before in South America.'¹⁰⁷ In an article headlined 'Women Played a Big Role in Defeat of Allende', David Belnap wrote: 'The hand that rocks the cradle rocked the ship of state of Chile's late Marxist President Salvador Allende until it overturned and sank.'¹⁰⁸ (Many male journalists of the time were apparently unable to write about women without evoking gender stereotypes.)

In addition to the print media, pro-military Chilean women spoke directly with audiences in the United States. In October 1974, Carmen Puelma, a Chilean journalist who had worked as the press and cultural attaché in the Chilean embassy in Washington, DC, following the coup, spoke at a conference in Madison, Wisconsin. Dismissing questions about the political prisoners in Chile, she said, 'I do not talk about the numbers any more because I am tired of it.' Instead she focused on the female activists who had opposed Allende and the 'heightened political consciousness' they gained as a result of their work.¹⁰⁹ Puelma praised the women who had struggled against Allende and lauded the 'empty pots and pans marches'. To highlight the significance of women's role against Allende she added, 'Even the wives of generals came out into the street to ask for the resignation of the commander in chief [Allende].'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ See Margaret Power, 'The U. S. Movement in Solidarity with Chile in the 1970s', *Latin American Perspectives*, 36: 6 (2009), pp. 46–66.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, 'Chilean Police Tear-Gas Protesting Women', *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 Aug. 1973; 'Corn Pie Plot', *Los Angeles Times*, 31 Jan. 1974.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Juan de Onis, 'The Ominous Pounding of Pots', *New York Times*, 5 Dec. 1971.

¹⁰⁷ *Daily Review* (Haywood, CA), 19 Sep. 1974.

¹⁰⁸ *Star-Los Angeles Times*, 6 March 1974.

¹⁰⁹ Lew Sword, 'Chile's Problem: A "Human" Question', *Harrisonburg Daily News Record* (Virginia), 18 Oct. 1974.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Anti-Communist Women in the United States

Anti-communist women in the United States held up the women in Brazil and Chile as role models for conservative women in the United States. Phyllis Schlafly is a member of the Republican Party, a leader of the Eagle Forum and the single person most instrumental in the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment.¹¹¹ Beginning in the late 1950s she established study groups to educate people about the dangers of communism and the need to mobilise against it. One idea that she made sure to communicate to participants was what conservative women in Brazil and Chile had accomplished in their fight against the 'communist' governments of João Goulart and Salvador Allende respectively. 'I promoted knowledge of those [Brazilian and Chilean] women to get Americans to believe we could be successful. The people who attended study groups would have known and admired the South American women and have looked to them for encouragement.'¹¹² Although her Catholic faith framed much of her political beliefs, Schlafly did not highlight these women's religious beliefs. Instead, like much of the US media, she focused on their anti-communism and their effectiveness.

Schlafly was a prolific writer whose articles and editorials were published in US newspapers and the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* newsletter. Her writings on Chile frequently extolled the work of anti-Allende women. To counter negative coverage of the Chilean military regime in the US media, she focused on the actions of women who protested 'the disaster of the Allende years'. These women, she claimed, 'initiated the overthrow of Allende' when they 'staged an impressive demonstration called the March of the Empty Pots'. She added, 'the women kept up their demonstrations until, finally, the men had the courage to act and, in a nearly bloodless coup, took control away from Allende, who then committed suicide'.¹¹³

Schlafly's projection of the anti-communist Brazilian and Chilean women as role models reverses the more typically held assumption that women in Latin America (and around the world) should learn from the example of US women. Instead, she offered these women as examples that women in the grassroots, right-wing movement she was building in the United States should follow. In her book *The Power of the Positive Woman*, Schlafly writes: 'Brazil offers an outstanding example of how women can save a nation from

¹¹¹ Phyllis Schlafly started the Eagle Forum in 1975 as 'the alternative to women's lib': see Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 221. For Schlafly's work in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment, see Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

¹¹² Phyllis Schlafly, email to author, 22 Oct. 2009.

¹¹³ Phyllis Schlafly, 'Chile's Unheralded Gift to the West', *Aiken Standard* (South Carolina), 16 March 1977.

Communist takeover ... It is primarily the women who deserve the credit for the overthrow of the Communist Allende in Chile ... Anything that Brazilian and Chilean women can do, positive American women can do.¹¹⁴ Her words simultaneously praise the work of the Brazilian and Chilean women, suggest that US women should follow their example, and, in conclusion, urge her female followers not to let themselves be outdone by South American women.

Schlafly was not alone among conservative US women in her admiration for the Brazilian and Chilean activists. Among the others was Beverly LaHaye, a Christian evangelist who founded Concerned Women of America with a small group of conservative women in 1979. They sought to mobilise like-minded women to oppose the Equal Rights Amendment and the 'liberal women's movement' and to 'represent conservative women in the emerging "culture wars"'.¹¹⁵

Like Schlafly, LaHaye wrote books. In 1984 she wrote *Who but a Woman?*, which she hoped would inspire conservative women to 'take a stand'.¹¹⁶ The opening chapter, 'The Power of Courageous Women', recounts the efforts of the Brazilian women who sprang into action in the early 1960s, when 'Brazil teetered on the brink of communist revolution'. LaHaye begins by noting, 'several years ago I read an account of what the women of Brazil did to save their nation from a communist takeover ... I've been wanting to share it ever since then, because it shows so clearly what Christian women can accomplish if they will just work and pray together for a common cause.'¹¹⁷

The source from which she quotes extensively is none other than the *Reader's Digest* article mentioned above. LaHaye, like Schlafly, draws on the example of the anti-communist women of Brazil to inspire conservative women in the United States: 'Through the courageous actions and prayers of hundreds of thousands of women in Brazil, that nation was saved from a bloody Communist revolution. Who but a woman could have led such a successful educational campaign against Marxism? Do you see the potential that the women of America have for bringing about a restoration of our nation to moral sanity?'¹¹⁸

Conclusion

Anti-communist women in Brazil and Chile mobilised by the thousands and thousands to oppose the democratic governments of João Goulart and

¹¹⁴ Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman* (New York: Jove, 1987), pp. 221–3.

¹¹⁵ Jill A. Irvine, 'Exporting the Culture Wars: Concerned Women for America in the Global Arena', in Blee and Deutsch (eds.), *Women of the Right*, p. 37.

¹¹⁶ Beverly LaHaye, *Who but a Woman?* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1984), p. 14. I thank Jill Irvine for bringing this reference to my attention.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9. ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Salvador Allende. They took to the streets, claiming to be apolitical Christian housewives and mothers who were so disturbed by the impending communist takeover that they were willing to engage in atypical activities to prevent it. This image of conservative, morally righteous women defending their homes, families, religion and nation against the evil, insidious forces of communism was a powerful one; it transcended borders and influenced women throughout the Americas. It also served the propaganda interests of the Brazilian and Chilean dictatorships and the US government, all of which promoted the image of apolitical housewives protesting the 'communist' governments of Goulart and Allende.

These anti-communist women played an active role in disseminating their ideas and successes. After they helped to secure the overthrow of Goulart, Brazilian women encouraged other women throughout the hemisphere to oppose leftist or progressive governments and forces in their nations. They travelled to the United States to tell women (and men) how to successfully resist an attempted Red takeover. They met with anti-communist women from Chile and elsewhere to share with them what they had done to oppose the communists and to stimulate like-minded women to follow their example.

Phyllis Schlafly and Beverly LaHaye considered the Brazilian and Chilean women such significant role models for US women that they both wrote about them. They believed that the stories of what these women had done would encourage US women to step up their involvement in the anti-communist crusade. Anti-Allende women in Chile also drew ideas and inspiration from the activities of the anti-Goulart women in Brazil. They recognised that Brazilian women had played a significant role in the ouster of Goulart. Their success and the praise they received for their work surely inspired Chilean women's desire to play a similar role against Allende.

Understanding the transnational connections among and between these women is important. Certainly, men planned and carried out the military coups that overthrew Goulart in Brazil and Allende in Chile. However, anti-communist women enthusiastically provided much of the public, supposedly apolitical face of civilians encouraging, even pleading, with the military to act. They offered the armed forces moral justification for their seizure of power. Once the military was in power, these women provided the generals with a significant base of support that contributed, in part, to the latter's ability to stay in power for so long.

News of what the women in Brazil and Chile did and thought was communicated throughout the Americas. The women contributed to the transnational diffusion of information about what they had done, why they did it, and what they accomplished. These women reversed the more typical flow of information from North to South; they travelled to the United States to share their stories with women and the general public. They spoke with and

wrote to women in Chile about their plans and successes. They organised a conference for other anti-communist women from throughout the continent in 1967. They understood the important role they had played in defeating 'communism', and they were eager to impart what they had learned and to encourage women in other countries to follow their example.

These women were significant actors in the overthrow of democratic governments in Brazil and Chile and in the transnational anti-communist movements of the 1960s and 1970s (as well as before and after). Their similar ideas about gender and politics allowed them to extend beyond the nation and to form a gendered transnational network of female anti-communist activists.

Spanish and Portuguese abstracts

Spanish abstract. Este artículo examina las conexiones transnacionales entre mujeres anticomunistas en Brasil, Chile y los Estados Unidos de las décadas de 1960s a 1980s. El trabajo explora las creencias políticas y redes sobre las que estas mujeres edificaron sus ideas con el fin de promover su papel en el derrocamiento de João Goulart y Salvador Allende y que animaron a otras mujeres a lo largo de las Américas a unírseles en su lucha contra el comunismo. El material muestra que estas mujeres revirtieron el curso de las ideas del momento, se apoyaron como modelos entre sí y entre otras mujeres anticomunistas y construyeron redes transnacionales, basadas en sus conceptos de género, de activistas femeninas anticomunistas.

Spanish keywords: Guerra Fría, transnacional, anticomunismo, mujeres, Brasil, Chile, Estados Unidos

Portuguese abstract. Este artigo examina as conexões transnacionais entre mulheres anticomunistas do Brasil, Chile e Estados Unidos entre as décadas de 1960 e 1980. Exploram-se as crenças políticas e redes de contatos nas quais estas mulheres basearam-se de modo a promover seus papéis nas golpes contra João Goulart e Salvador Allende e para encorajar outras mulheres ao redor das Américas a juntarem-se na luta contra o comunismo. Este artigo demonstra que estas mulheres reverteram o fluxo de ideias, servindo como exemplos umas para as outras e para mulheres anticomunistas, além de desenvolverem redes transnacionais de ativistas anticomunistas femininas.

Portuguese keywords: Guerra Fria, transnacional, anticomunismo, mulheres, Brasil, Chile, Estados Unidos