

Chapter 3

“Ousar Lutar, Ousar Vencer”: Influences of the 1959 Cuban Revolution on Armed Resistance Against Dictatorship in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

*The 1959 Cuban Revolution had intense and long-lasting repercussions in Brazil. To highlight this, it is worth mentioning two recent events that occurred exactly 60 years after that revolutionary triumph: first, the release of the movie *Marighella*, directed by Wagner Moura, based on the life of the writer and former congressman of the Brazilian Communist Party (Partido Comunista Brasileiro, PCB) Carlos Marighella (1911-1969); second, the speech delivered by President Jair Messias Bolsonaro at the opening of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, with abundant distribution of insults to the Cuban government.*

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INTRODUCTION

The 1959 Cuban Revolution had intense and long-lasting repercussions in Brazil. To highlight this, it is worth mentioning 2 recent events that occurred exactly 60 years after that revolutionary triumph: first, the release of the movie *Marighella*, directed by Wagner Moura, based on the life of the writer and former congressman of the Brazilian Communist Party (Partido Comunista Brasileiro [PCB]) Carlos Marighella (1911-1969). Second, the speech delivered by President Jair Messias Bolsonaro at the opening of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, with abundant distribution of insults to the Cuban government.

Marighella, a party member since the 1930s and its leader in the late 1940s, led one of the main groups to take up arms against the civil-military dictatorship established in the country in 1964. In open dissent with the PCB, he participated in August 1967 in the First Conference of the Organization for Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) in Havana, Cuba, which brought together Latin American revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements (as well as assistants from Africa, Asia, and Europe)¹. As a result, he was expelled from the party, founding the following year the National Liberation Action (Ação Libertadora Nacional [ALN]), which became famous for actions such as the kidnapping of U.S. Ambassador Charles Elbrick, in support of the October 8 Revolutionary Movement (Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro [MR-8])². The hardening of the regime in December 1968, by suppressing parliamentary powers and several guarantees and rights, through Institutional Act No. 5, made him a prime target for repression, culminating in a deadly ambush that killed him in November 1969³.

The movie, which is an adaptation of the book *Marighella: o guerrilheiro que incendiou o mundo* [Marighella: the guerrilla man who set the world afire], by Mário Magalhães, has been facing major difficulties to be released in Brazil. It depicts the character as a passionate revolutionary man deeply committed to a social transformation capable of overcoming the huge (economic, political, cultural) inequalities that large portions of the Brazilian population undergo. According to critics of the genre, director's intent to reach a standard audience is clear, especially young people, thanks to an accessible language, an agile camera to capture shooting scenes and police chases, and a soundtrack that resorts to Brazilian rap songs. Thanks to this, *Marighella* would tend to be regarded sympathetically, as a fearless, visionary man who challenged the existing status quo, be it political repression or social exclusion.

In turn, President Jair Bolsonaro's mentions to Cuba at the opening of the UN General Assembly were targeted primarily at the Brazilian More Doctors Program [Programa Mais Médicos], launched by former President Dilma Rousseff, in 2013, under the supervision and mediation of the Pan American Health Organization

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