

Some Lectures Delivered in the U.S.

Brazilian left: from victory to defeat to victory again

By Olavo de Carvalho

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For fifteen years the Brazilian media refused to tell the public about the “São Paulo Forum”, the controlling center of communist and pro-communist organizations in Latin America, founded in 1990 by Fidel Castro and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Far from the public's eyes, the Forum has had time enough to prepare Lula's ascension to the Presidency as well as to articulate it with the simultaneous victories of the leftist parties in the neighbor countries and with the growing power of Colombian guerillas.

It has had also time enough to set up, under the protecting mantle of general silence, the gigantic corruption machine that has been giving financial support to the Brazilian Workers' Party and to other leftist organizations.

It is not at all a coincidence that the Workers' Party politician more directly involved in the recent corruption charges, Mr. José Dirceu, was precisely the one that has the closest personal links with Fidel Castro and with the São Paulo Forum. Corruption is deeply rooted in the Workers Party, not as a vulgar way for personal moneymaking, but as a technical instrument to erode the moral basis of capitalistic society and to fund the revolutionary strategy. These two objectives are closely intertwined. Funded by corruption, the growth of leftist parties strengthens the credibility of the attacks they make against society, as if capitalism were equally immoral without their own deliberate efforts intended to degrade the moral standards.

The articulation of a variety of leftist parties in the São Paulo Forum, added to the public's ignorance of the very existence of that organization, allows them to

follow a unified blueprint for the conquest of absolute power while at the same time simulating a pluralism of political discourses in a normal democratic competition.

This shrewd strategy got to isolate the conservative parties and to deprive them of any ideological substance, up to the point when they became inhibited to criticize the leftist ideology as such. Some degree of leftism became the first moral duty of every good citizen. Many conservatives turned into active allies of the government in order to ensure themselves a humiliating political survival. Those who had no stomach for that chose instead the strategy of passive adaptation. They made their best to hide their convictions and to pay large amounts of lip service to the honorableness of their adversaries' ideas. Consistently, they tried to limit any criticisms to precise points lacking any ideological relevance, chiefly those concerned with administrative inefficiency and corruption, hoping these charges would so not offend any ideological susceptibilities in the left and could perhaps obtain some support from the best men in the left itself.

This self-weakening strategy was condemned to failure from the outset. It got to destroy the conservative parties, but, when all seemed to be lost, it suddenly turned into a mortal poison inside the government's belly. This happened because a conservative ally of the Workers' Party, representative Roberto Jefferson, a strange and unpredictable character, decided to commit political suicide, confessing the crimes he and many other rightwing members of the Parliament had committed in exchange of government's bribes. By accusing himself, this ambiguous type, at once a swindler and a hero, exposed the huge government corruption machine in such a persuasive terms that nobody could any more deny its existence.

In the weeks that followed, the amount of attacks and evidences, including many murder charges, grew to astronomic proportions and the government's moralistic façade fell down at once.

Should we commemorate it? Of course not, because between Lula's election and the disclosure of the government's crimes the leftist apparatus had the time and the means to spread its agents everywhere, to tear down any consistent opposition, to take absolute control over the judicial system, to corrupt the media, to strengthen the Brazilian ties to Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro and to allow the Colombian narcoguerillas to act freely in Brazilian territory under semi-official protection. The Workers's Party may fall, but no conservative force will rise to its place. The sole beneficiaries of the main leftist party's disgrace are the lesser leftist parties of the São Paulo Forum, kept and protected as in a freezer during all these years and now ready to present themselves to the public as the new incarnation of the highest morality.

In order to grasp the real intentions of these parties, you should only know that the most promising one, the PSOL, is under the ideological guidance of Mr. Achille Lollo, an Italian terrorist who some years ago set fire to one of his political enemies' house in Rome, burning to death his two children. The spiritual highness of the master is the standard for the morals of the disciple. Look at Mr. Lollo and you will see the future of Brazil.

If now you are kind enough to hear me a few more minutes, I will tell you what all these things have to do with Americans.

Since the late Dr. Constantine Menges's warnings against the Lula-Castro-Chavez "little axis of evil" were published in 2002, I have been expecting the American government to take a firm stand against the rise of neocommunist parties in Latin America and especially in my own country. As I personally had been uncovering the growing tide of leftist arrogance, being the last and only conservative voice in Brazilian big media, I was candid enough to fancy that the powerful support my opinions were receiving from an outstanding Hudson Institute scholar might be the sign of some auspicious changing in the U. S. policy towards Latin America. Perhaps the "scoundrel times" when Clinton's Ambassador to Brazil proclaimed Lula to be "the Brazilian incarnation of the American dream" were at last approaching their end.

Instead, the American government went on and on dispensing a regular amount of flattering accolades to Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, treating him as if he were the very antidote to Hugo Chavez's revolutionary demagoguery and a champion of capitalist democracy in the continent.

At the same time, American official agencies and billionaire foundations continued to give full financial support to Brazilian leftists, allowing them to pose as harmless reformers and to deceive Brazilian voters.

Under the best of disguises, these people went on to implement the blueprint for general subversion designed by Hugo Chavez, Fidel Castro and Colombian narcoterrorists at the annual meetings of the "São Paulo Forum".

For Brazilian lovers of freedom, America 's unbroken support for Lula and his Worker's Party was superlatively disappointing. As the reality of a communist conspiracy in Latin America was concealed from the public opinion for more than a decade by Brazilian big media, the whole country fell under Lula's spell, believing him to be some kind of naïve Christian populist, too much unsophisticated to be conceivably mixed with a Machiavellian plot. The few intellectuals and journalists who knew the truth were isolated, powerless, unable

to spread it among the general public. I paid a high price for trying to do so as a press columnist, suffering insults and death threats for years and finally being fired from two newspapers and a magazine. The political inspiration of the dismissals was too visible to deceive my readers, who sent hundreds of letters protesting against the suppression of my columns. But the letters, of which I kept copies, were never published. The concealing of truth is never perfect unless it conceals itself.

Meanwhile, I and some of my colleagues did our best to use the internet as a means to fight the massive suppression of truth. But we were few and devoid of any financial support. We paid from our own pockets to keep the standards of real journalism alive, while a continuous cash flow from state banks and private corporations, both from Brazil and abroad, allowed communist and pro-communist websites, newspapers, magazines and TV shows to flourish everywhere. When, against all probabilities, our penniless electronic newspaper “Mídia Sem Máscara” (Unmasked Media) was chosen by popular vote to win the second prize in a national contest against its millionaire leftist competition, some of us could not avoid tears dropping from our eyes. But it was only a moral victory, with no practical results whatsoever. We were still so powerless that it was easy for our foes to deny publicly not only the communist continental strategy but the very existence of the “Sao Paulo Forum”. They were strong enough to triumph over truth even after we published in “Mídia Sem Máscara” the complete proceedings of the twelve meetings of the Forum, the full proof of the intimate connections between the Worker's Party and Colombian narcoterrorists.

Truth was everywhere downtrodden, derided, humiliated. Rejected and isolated in our own country, we turned our eyes to America, excited by George W. Bush's second electoral victory and by Dr. Menges's precise diagnosis of the situation.

America was our last hope, and America failed us.

Now that the deep corruption in Lula's administration became visible to the eyes of everybody and that Brazilian people are conscious of the awful trap set up to catch them, it is due time for the American government to reassess the gain it obtained from appeasing Lula and disregarding the true friends of America in Brazil. President Bush is now seen by every Brazilian voter as the main foreign supporter of the dirtiest and most despicable administration we ever had. Leftist parties, aware that it will be impossible to save Lula's reputation, are managing to associate the government debauchery to its American links, in order to blame the “right” for the crimes committed by the left. It is the most creative strategy of damage administration ever seen, and it is working. For a whole decade, many Brazilians hated America because they loved Lula. Now they hate America because they hate Lula.

Perhaps there is still time to change the course of events, but action must be quick. The crimes of the Brazilian government are neither isolated facts nor the late results of Lula's mythical "turning to the right", but the natural implementation of the Worker's Party plans for total domination, devised in close association with Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez. Why should America once more pay for the misdeeds of its foes? The American government has to choose between telling the truth and falling victim to a lie.

Towards a diagnosis of the Latin American political situation

By Olavo de Carvalho

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The study I have undertaken on the ascension of the Left in Latin America, especially in Brazil, is not the result of casual observation, nor the product of immediate circumstances, as pressing as they may seem to be. It is part of my broader work in Political Philosophy, and it may be harder to fully understand it, at least in its more profound intentions, if it is considered without any reference to the principles of theory and method that I have outlined in my courses “Being and Power” and “Method in the Human Sciences”, both taught at the Catholic University of Paraná, in Brazil, and which I hope one day to be able to translate into English.

One of these principles is what I call “methodological atomism”. It affirms that no fact of the political order must be explained through general concepts when such fact can, beforehand, be known in the concrete details of its origin and formation, that is, in the succession of individual actions that produced it.

“Social forces”, “tendencies”, “structures”, “ideologies”, “interests”, etc. do not have the magic power of acting upon society if not through individual and group agents whose intervention, depending on psychological and cognitive factors peculiar to each situation, may totally change the foreseeable course that would result from the mere logical deduction based on these concepts.

Another principle to which I attach special importance is that of the “means of action”. It affirms that no one can do anything for which one lacks the material means to do. It is something rather obvious that seems hard to be missed.

Unfortunately, in the study of the Latin American political situation, we find a predominance of analyses and diagnostics based upon general concepts such as “populism”, “national interest”, “regional blocks”, etc., or upon political conclusions obtained directly from the economic situation through a formidable logical leap.

When we abandon these generalities and begin to reconstitute the complete series of facts, we arrive at a view of the overall state of affairs in Latin America which is very different from the one presented by big media or by official speeches of the American Government.

From the outset, these analyses fail for not correctly identifying the agent behind the actions. The discipline of International Relations, as it has been taught by a tradition that goes back to Hans Morgenthau, is essentially the study of the relations among States. For this reason, it tends to assume that the States are always the principal agents in the process. One of the things I have found in my investigation about the *Sao Paulo Forum* is that the decades of solidarity within the Latin American Left, forged mainly in the fight against right-wing military dictatorships, have turned it into an integrated political force that transcends national boundaries and is situated today above the authority of any Latin American State. The first effort in this direction was the creation of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity, OLAS, by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in the 1960's. As a unified military force, the OLAS was already a seed for a unified continental government. Back then, the organization introduced challenges of a continental magnitude which, by surpassing the capacity of reaction of national governments, forced them to improvise a supranational defense organism, the "Condor Operation". But the Condor Operation dissolved itself as soon as its immediate military goals were achieved, while the OLAS just fell dormant, reappearing with incomparably greater strength in the form of the Sao Paulo Forum. Between those two periods, another factor of integration of the continental Left developed amongst the criminal organizations dedicated to drug-trafficking and kidnapping, mainly the FARC, the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (drug-trafficking) and the Chilean MIR, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (kidnapping). The degree of unification that was achieved may be measured by the continental scope of the mechanism for mutual protection among criminal gangs and legal political parties and mass organizations in different countries. Wherever an agent of the FARC or the MIR is arrested, there erupts an immediate mobilization of political parties, media, and judicial activism to free him or at least to prevent his confessions to be made public. The state apparatus of repression is impotent to deal with this machine. It is important to observe that since the 1950's the KGB has strived to control narcotraffic gangs in Latin America in order to use them as a source of finance for local communist revolutions, alleviating the Soviet Union from the burden of that expense. By an irony of History, that operation only produced its desired fruits after the end of the Soviet Union. Reading the minutes of successive gatherings and working groups of the Sao Paulo Forum, it is impossible not to notice the deep strategic unity between legal parties and the criminal organizations which today feed the Left with abundant money in the Latin American continent.

A document that must be examined before one pronounces any diagnostic on Latin America is the speech made by Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on July 2nd, 2005, Sao Paulo Forum's 15-year anniversary. In it he confesses, with that mixture of astuteness and mediocrity that is the hallmark of his character, that practically all important decisions of the several leftist governments in Latin America were taken in secret meetings between him, Hugo Chavez, Nestor Kirchner and other Latin American presidents, without any

notice to their parliaments or to the public opinion of each country. For a long time, so-called “national interests” do not mean anything in comparison to the superior interests of continental revolution. When president Evo Morales ordered the invasion of properties that belonged to the Brazilian state-owned oil company Petrobrás, old-fashioned nationalists – united to the ruling leftist party by the common hatred against the U.S., but excluded from the higher decision-making circles of the Sao Paulo Forum – were naïve enough to expect a patriotic reaction from the Brazilian government. With great surprise and scandal, they saw the opposite, Mr. Lula gently patting the head of Evo Morales, and they were evidently astonished, unable to explain an event that seemed so utterly odd to them. On that occasion, having read the documents of the Sao Paulo Forum, I was the only one to foretell that Lula would do exactly what he did. “National interests” may indeed exist, but they do not become engines of political action in the absence of organizations capable of bringing them together in a sound nationalist program. As these organizations do not exist and, to the contrary, the existing organizations are subordinated to the Sao Paulo Forum and dedicated to the integration of the continental revolution, no conflict of nationalisms is possible in the present condition in Latin America, except one that would oppose the Left to Colombia and Chile and maybe Paraguay, but then it would not be a conflict between nationalisms but rather between enemies and allies of the U.S. All nationalist discourse in that part of the continent dominated by the Left has become just a rhetoric tool at the service of anti-Americanism deprived of any autonomous political force.

According to the principle of the “means of action”, no-one can do what one lacks the means to do. As there are no nationalist mass organizations, but only leftist organizations with the means to direct all nationalism for their own profit, Latin American Nationalism can only operate against the U.S., but not as a force that causes conflicts between Leftist governments.

This general diagnosis may be confirmed through a meticulous mapping of hundreds of biographies of Leftist leaders currently in evidence in Latin America. A good source for this exercise is the book by Spanish reporter Luiz Mir, *The Impossible Revolution*, which outlines the courses of the lives of Latin American guerrilla fighters from the 1960’s who were later turned into leaders of legal political parties. It is periodically updated by the website www.ternuma.com.br, an initiative which counts on the participation of several retired agents of Brazilian intelligence services, who retrace the paths traveled by those same characters from 1970’s up to now. This kind of microscopic study is the indispensable vaccine against the generalizations I have mentioned above. It reveals that practically the whole generation of Leftist leaders presently in power in the continent is made up of more than just old friends. They are united by deep group solidarity in face of which borders and national interests melt away as mere formalisms before a much more rigorous human and vital reality. The generational solidarity amongst Leftist militants is the main factor behind the current state of affairs in Latin America. But how can we point this out to a

generation of scholars in International Relations educated in the school of Morgenthau?

Another element which along with this one seems to be totally ignored by conventional analysts is the psychology of older Leftist militants. These analysts, when they talk about Lula or Kirchner, seem to be talking about European Members of Parliament or State Department employees. For instance, they have no idea of how infinitely above any patriotic, moral or even practical consideration is the loyalty of these people to the Leftist movement. The psychology of Communism was well studied in the U.S. until the 1960's, but when the profile of the Soviet threat vanished amidst the apparent ideological confusion of the *New Left*, the psychological outline of communist militancy vanished with it. Two decades later, the very idea of an international communist movement had so completely disappeared from public conscience in the U.S. that it was as if the West had no enemies other than radical Islam.

Meanwhile, reinforced by the strategic contribution of Italian ideologue Antonio Gramsci, Latin American communism reorganized itself, employing a variety of techniques of cultural warfare and "occupation of spaces" that carried it to the spectacular victories of these last years, but without relinquishing the old communist *ethos* marked by internationalist solidarity and by a group attachment which people from outside the movement cannot even imagine. For the most part of Latin American Leftist politicians, Fidel Castro is much more than an ally or even a political mentor: he is a friend and personal guardian, a godfather, to whom one owes loyalty in life and death, as to a *capomafioso*. It is absolutely ridiculous to expect that abstract "national interests", with no channels for their expression, may overcome this powerful psychological factor as a causal force.

Leftist solidarity is reinforced by the material stimulus of fear. The Latin American Left is armed to its teeth. The FARC, which operate freely throughout the continent, have a larger budget than the Armed Forces of any country in Latin America. Everywhere they train and control delinquent organizations which operate in all criminal areas and keep whole nations under the rule of terror. Just in Brazil, where FARC agents provide technical assistance to outlaw gangs in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Amazonas and in the Triborder area, there are 50 thousand homicides per year, almost twice as much as the total death toll of the war in Iraq. No Leftist politician will dare to openly challenge this machine of war. Even if they did not feel intimately attached to continental solidarity, they would still continue to serve it out of sheer fear of being killed. The Sao Paulo Forum is the sole tribunal to arbitrate the divergence of interest that may occur between the legal parties and the criminal organizations that comprise its membership. It is the only factor that has, up to now, prevented that divergences turn into bloodshed among the various factions. The latest such bloodshed that is known of took place in Colombia over 10 years ago, when some socialist leaders, initially sympathetic to the narcoguerrilla, broke up with it and were all murdered at once, in a single night. Since then,

there are simply no more conflicts. Built upon love or terror, the solidarity of the continental Left, armed or disarmed, is complete and incontestable. The Sao Paulo Forum is the temple where it is worshiped, maintained and strengthened. There is no political, military or diplomatic instance above it. It is the true government of Leftist Latin America.

When American analysts believe that they can throw Lula against Chavez or, even worse, throw both of them against the residues of the communist dictatorship in Cuba after the death of Fidel Castro, the question one must ask is why they expect that these two Leftist leaders will sacrifice not only 50-year-old loyalties, but their very lives to American interests. When a country with the dimensions and prestige of the U.S. gambles its foreign policy in magic expectations, there are sufficient reasons to fear for the worst.

The very ascension of the Left in Latin America would never have been possible had the U.S. political and diplomatic intelligence not been anesthetized by the triumphalist illusions of capitalist globalism after the end of the Soviet Union. The forecasting errors made in the analysis of Latin American politics in this period were so monstrous that they ended up creating more favorable conditions in the continent for the seizure of power by the Leftist parties. Some analysts try to disguise the shame of their silly diagnostics by calling *populist*, instead of communist or neocommunist, the victorious movement of the Latin American Left. To their previous unpremeditated error they now add (the suspicious comfort of) voluntary blindness.

The principles of political analysis in American big media – which tracks the footprints of dominant cultured opinion – may be summarized as follows:

1. While global integration should be stressed in the economic news pages, political analysis should continue to focus on individual nations as if they were separate and independent unities, i.e., as if no transnational political organization could influence the course of events more effectively than the national ones. There are no political interests that transcend national interests; there are no political forces that transcend the boundaries of the national State.
2. Each nation should be viewed as if it were a business corporation, where the success or failure in maximizing revenue is the single most important factor in determining victory or defeat in the political dispute. Voters are shareholders who generally know how to choose executive officers according to their best economic interests.
3. Politicians, even when they are revolutionary activists or military dictators, should be interpreted as business administrators acting on rational economic grounds in view of the best results for their country as a whole. As there are no other political goals besides the fulfillment of national economic interests, there

are no secret or disguised political goals that can determine some different relation of means to ends. Whatever is economically illogical is not real.

Even in America, where politics is largely determined by business rationality, these principles only partially work. You know that there are powerful anti-American interests at work in America right now. If there are so many Alger Hisses here, why can't they also exist in Brazil or Mexico or in Argentina? Why it is so difficult for American journalists to understand, for instance, that for many Latin-American leftist politicians the interests of the continental communist movement are far above any national interest?

The health of language and social disease: On translating Rosenstock-Huessy into Brazilian Portuguese

By Olavo de Carvalho

International Conference
Planetary Articulation:

The Life, Thought, and Influence of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy
Allerton Park Conference Center, Monticello, Illinois, USA. 1-4 June 2002

Dear friends,

This conference was organized with the objective of discussing projects for the translation of Rosenstock's work into several languages. In the case of my own personal project, it is not a project anymore, but a reality. Here is the Brazilian edition of Rosenstock-Huessy's *The Origin of Speech*. This copy reached my hands from printing just a few days ago. Many other copies are now being distributed to Brazilian bookshops and libraries.

To understand the orientation I took in this translation, we need to examine some details on the general guidelines of this editorial collection, and on the pedagogical use I intend for the translation. Also, we need to understand the Brazilian cultural scenario into which this book will make an entrance.

In the first place, this translation is not my work only, but a collective work done by my philosophy students in City University Center of Rio de Janeiro (Centro Universitário da Cidade), the institution where I teach. This translation served to give my students the first feel of Rosenstock's work, and also as an occasion to make them aware of the current state of the Portuguese language, seen in the light of his teaching; in such a light we could measure the accuracy of Rosenstock's observations on the intimate relationship between grammar and society.

It was not only a pedagogical activity, but also an effort of truly investigative work, for there is still in Brazilian society very little discussion on the transformations suffered by our language in the last decades, and of the social crisis these transformations express. I can say this coordinated activity with my students was the first serious attempt to examine this question in Brazilian academe, and this attempt would have been impossible without the help from Rosenstock's ideas.

Created as the result of a court revolution in the fourteenth century, Portugal was the first nation-state in Europe, while the Portuguese language was the last Roman language to emerge in History. It seems the result from this strange

combination of the first with the last was such that, when Portuguese finally reached the state of a stabilized literary language with the great classics of the 16th and 17th centuries, the new language was closer to Latin than any other European language of the time, and it remained so until the twentieth century.

We can say that the only substantial difference separating it from Latin is the suppression of Latin declensions, efficiently substituted by a rich stock of prepositions. The most startling similarity is that the rich system of Latin verbal tenses remained practically the same in modern Portuguese, while it suffered drastic suppressions and modifications in other Roman languages. For instance, Latin's more-than-perfect tense, which signifies a remote past as viewed from a more recent past, is designated in French by the composed form: "Il avait aimé", English's past perfect, he had loved. In Portuguese, the contracted form of the Latin more-than-perfect tense remained intact, while at the same time the composed form – which is equally Latin in spirit – was also adopted, so Portuguese-speaking people from Portugal, Brazil and Africa have at their disposal two forms of the more-than-perfect, two ways of viewing the remote past from the standpoint of a more recent past. The contracted form ("amara", "louvara", he had loved, he had praised) is used in a pure narrative and casual way, while the composed one – *tinha amado, tinha louvado* –, inasmuch as it breaks the unity of the idea between the pure meaning of the main verb and the temporal reference given by the auxiliary one "ter" (to have), serves explicitly to stress the anteriority of the time one is referring to. A more precise idea of what this means in the practical use can be obtained by the following difference: a novelist or a journalist that simply reports the previous background of an event can at ease make use of the contracted form – "Ele fizera isto ou aquilo", he had done so and so – while an attorney at bar, who needs to stress the precise temporal sequence in order to obtain criminal proof will surely choose the composed time: "Ele tinha feito isto ou aquilo", he had already done so and so.

So fine a distinction (as many others of similar importance) can be found not only in the indicative mode but also in the subjunctive one.

The richness of the verbal system that Portuguese brought forth and developed from Latin allowed for the construct of very extensive sentences gathering together simultaneously several temporal dimensions, and a great variety of logical relationships, harmonically. – without loss of either unity nor clarity.

Rosenstock-Huessy says that the great pedagogical virtue of Latin is that every sentence exhibits in a transparent way all the fabric of social relationships existing in the context of speaker and audience. Much of this transparency was maintained in Portuguese, and that permitted the development of two social phenomena of great importance: first, Portuguese is the only language in which an almost literal translation of scholastic authors, such as St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scott, sounds very natural and requires little adaptation. Because of this, the fine terminology of scholastic thought could be absorbed and integrated

in a more modern philosophical language, in the work of the greatest Brazilian philosopher, Mario Ferreira dos Santos, opening to the Portuguese language the perspective of becoming a wonderfully proper language for philosophy. Second, the juridical tradition of Portuguese comes directly from Roman Law, and thanks to these properties of our language it kept great precision, together with nuances that took form in two outstanding pieces of Brazilian Law: the Brazilian Civil Code of Francisco Campos and the Philosophy of Law by Miguel Reale.

Thus, at first it would seem that a translation of Rosenstock into Portuguese was to find the best possible conditions to illustrate – through grammatical relationships – the structure of human society. However, what we found was precisely the opposite, for in Brazil the Portuguese language, in the last five decades, suffered a process of deterioration and decomposition comparable only to the one Karl Kraus, Eric Voegelin and Rosenstock himself saw taking place in the German language during the thirties. The difference being that the richness and the efficacy of the German language could be maintained by German authors in exile, while the losses suffered by Portuguese language in Brazil, if not altogether irreparable, will take many decades to be corrected.

To begin with, two verbal persons simply disappeared from use, first in popular intercourse, then in literary usage, and finally in grammar compendiums. Those grammatical persons are – or were – precisely the ones Rosenstock would consider essential to the clarifying of social relations, and the very forming of human consciousness itself. They are the second persons, singular and plural – tu and vós – corresponding to the English you. They were substituted by verbal compromises using the third person, derived from old respectful forms of treatment having lost all respectful content in modern usage.

Now, how is it possible to speak with a person without saying you? How to distinguish the property of one or the other, if we only have the possessive pronouns of the third person? The difficulties in the construction of certain sentences of modern Portuguese are astounding, what makes the learning of the language so hard a task that even the literate classes would tend to write and speak in an obscure and incorrect way. Please note I am speaking but of one of the many losses Brazilian Portuguese suffered in the last fifty years. I am not aware of a similar occurrence in any other language in the world, being at a loss to imagine any other language losing two verbal persons in so short a time. But thanks to this and other phenomena of similar kind, the distance between spoken and written language in Brazil deepened to such an extent that the former became exceedingly confused and obscure, while the second often manages to sound artificial to the risk of being ridiculously pompous. Such situation scarcely makes it easy the circulation of ideas, for on the one hand people close themselves in simplified slogans that do not demand thought, while intellectuals get trapped in an empty and excessively intricate speech presumably designed to give themselves an impression of thinking. During the last decades, intellectual decadence in Brazil has been so deep and extensive that gathering documents

about that process in the several fields of mental activity – I was led to compose two volumes of a work called significantly “The Collective Imbecile”, and have since gathered material for three more volumes. The state of gradual loss of intellectual consciousness among Brazilian literate classes is so serious that if I was to fully describe it here to you, I might be justly accused of making negative propaganda of my country abroad.

My own written work – twelve volumes up to now – is but a hugely exhausting effort to restore the nobility and communicability of the language, using on the one hand the constructions inherited from the classics, and on the other hand the popular arrangements that – born from the decomposition of the language – could be used in some way as a sort of vaccine against it.

In my classes I have the habit of explaining to my students the state of the language and my reasons for writing as I do. The work on the translation of Rosenstock is part of this effort to make a reflection on both the disease of the language and the possibilities of a cure.

The first time the name of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy was mentioned before a Brazilian audience was in 1946, in a brilliant essay on European Revolutions written by Austrian born Brazilian literary critic Otto Maria Carpeaux. Carpeaux was, like Rosenstock-Huessy himself, a Jew converted to Christianity. Fleeing from the Nazi invaders of his native country, he came to Brazil in 1939, mastered Portuguese with astounding speed and in a few years became the dean of Brazilian literary criticism.

He wrote many books and press articles and introduced a whole generation of Brazilian students to many authors they had never heard of. But that generation passed away before it was able to transmit to the next anything but a tiny piece of its rich human and intellectual experience. Carpeaux was forgotten, and so was his essay to make Brazilians read Rosenstock-Huessy. My own generation seemed interested in nothing more than Marxism. This kind of oblivion signals the phenomenon that Rosenstock-Huessy himself calls decadence: the older generation fails to transmit to the new one a set of values and a meaning of life. Decadence entails revolution.

Americans and other foreigners do not seem at all aware a revolution is taking place in Brazil. Many, misinformed by the media, believe that what is going on in Brazil is a simple democratic battle against corruption and poverty. But the campaigns against corruption never lessened corruption, having rather increased it, for they were simply used by the political left to destroy their adversaries, and not for a moral cleansing of the country. The fight against poverty is also more of a legitimizing slogan than a reality, for in no other country or epoch were so many people so rapidly removed from poverty by the mere spontaneous progress of economy. For instance, in the sixties more than fifty percent of our children had no schools. Today this number fell to two percent. People under the poverty

line – a number that three decades ago reached forty percent of the population – today are but eight percent. So much progress and prosperity do not justify a general revolt against social dereliction. And yet, this revolt is much greater today than three decades ago. If it was not created by the increase in poverty, one can only find its roots in cultural and psychological causes. But then we might ask a Rosenstockian question: if the language is in decomposition to the point that even the word you disappears from it, can we not also expect that the whole society has great difficulty in becoming conscious of its own state and lives therefore in a state of hallucination and self-deceit, to the point of no longer being able to name its own evils?

What is taking place in Brazil is a crisis of/in articulation. Wherever one looks, informal, inarticulate language proliferates in a hallucinating flowering of word plays of very short duration, untranslatable dialects that very soon are forgotten and are not understood by anyone. On the other hand, formal and articulate language holds on to repetitive schema and stereotypes that move further and further away from the possibility of expressing reality. From this comes the general complaint against hunger, precisely in the moment when poverty is fast receding. “Miséria” became only the conventional name of a diffuse evil whose nature no one can express. That is why, actually, the country’s region where there is the greatest rebellion and revolutionary spirit, especially in the rural areas, is the one with the most prosperous agriculture, and less incidence of poverty. Foreigners sometimes cannot imagine how cheap food is in Brazil. When I remember that one of the promises of Roosevelt’s New Deal was to ensure that every American family had the guarantee to eat a chicken a week, and notice on the other hand that in Brazil even the poorest family can eat a chicken a day, I know exactly why this sounds untruthful abroad, for everyone hears about the social agitation in Brazil, and hear the Brazilian intellectuals themselves say that it is caused by desperate poverty. People hear about, for instance, the rising criminality rates, and associate it with extreme poverty, for that is the easiest association to make, but the fact is that there is no criminality in the poorest regions of the country, and on the places where, on the contrary, criminality peaked, the quality of living of the population has increased significantly in the past decades. People hear, for example, of the slums. But the word that designates them in Portuguese, favelas, means a house made of cardboard, because in the past freed slaves having found refuge there lived in houses made of cardboard. In these regions simply there are no more houses made of cardboard. There are houses made of brick and mortar, often with a satellite dish on top. The prosperity of the small construction industry inside the favelas was so great that a friend of mine – civil engineer and constructor –, a Brazilian of Canadian origin called Donald Stewart Jr., made a study suggesting that the model of real estate negotiations on the favelas served as a model for the rest of the country. And it was precisely in the middle of this prosperity boom in the favelas that the development of criminality and drug-dealing activities found their customers and market share. Regardless of that, the association between poverty and criminality seems to have taken over the minds and hearts of Brazilians to

the point they do not see the peculiar characteristics of what is happening. People who cannot speak cannot think. The whole situation is a great hallucination, and I do not see another way to try to understand it and remedy it except through the Rosenstockian science of language.

Rosenstock saw his philosophy of language not only as a theory, but as a remedy for the suffering of society. More than ever, Brazilians need to learn how to speak, so they can tell each other what they are really going through in the experience of life. This dialogue is not the easiest task at the moment. All one hears are angered insults on the one hand, and abstract formalities on the other. When we thought of translating Rosenstock, our hope was that this helped us to heal our own speech, and that, once healed, we could maybe spread around a little health.

It would have been very difficult to express the fine print of Rosenstock's considerations on the diseases of speech in a language that is very ill itself. To translate *The Origin of Speech*, we had once too often to do violence to modern Portuguese usage in Brazil, including the reintroduction of the two lost verbal persons, in such a way that the translation work in itself became an exercise on the therapy of language, and therefore the reconquering of consciousness. Every individual that took part in this work was transformed and strengthened by it. I have the impression that the same, in a smaller scale, will happen to the readers. For instance, in the universities where there reigns a strict structuralist and Saussurean dogmatism, or else a Marxist one, certain affirmations made by Rosenstock, in themselves obvious and undeniable, will have the effect of an electric shock on a catatonic patient. The affirmation, for instance, of the anteriority of formal and solemn language over the informality of everyday urban language will suddenly show to many that they have been studying linguistics with the wrong material. In Brazil there is a dogmatic belief that grammar is an instrument of domination invented by the rich classes to oppress the poor, and owing to that each new decomposition of language is celebrated as a huge progress, no one realizing that this phenomenon corresponds to a loss of the expressive ability and the widening of the abyss between the classes, which makes it even more difficult for people of poorer origin to have access to the creations of higher culture. Rosenstock's book will help to build a bridge between those on the lower and those on the upper end of society.

One other aspect of this translation relates to the general editorial collection it is inserted into. Each book in this collection was chosen for the fact they had two characteristics. Firstly, it had to be a truly precious and rare piece of work. It is a collection on hidden treasures. Secondly, it had to be a piece of work that helped to rescue and salvage the Brazilian spirit. To enlarge the effect of each of these books, I added to each of them footnotes and comments that compared them to the other works in the collection, creating thus a dialogue between philosophers that, on most cases, never met. In such notes I try to articulate a debate and an understanding among these thinkers, as if they composed the staff of a single

university, in which the readers would be the students. I did this because, substantially, the universe of readers of the collection is the same as the students and audience of my courses and conferences. I have a few thousand ex-students spread all over Brazil, that follow with interest and often passion the activities of our circle of studies. It is my hope they would come to form the nucleus of a future Brazilian intellectual elite, in which – I pray – the heritage of the past centuries will be salvaged as a continuous line to help to build the future. Each work in this collection is integrated in this effort to unite different times through language. In my notes Rosenstock dialogues, for example, with the Basque philosopher Xavier Zubiri, the German Eric Voegelin, the Romanian Constantin Noica, and with other authors he never heard of and in which work we always find a wonderful convergence of an incredibly rich and varied human experience.

Our edition of Rosenstock is not, therefore, an isolated editorial product, but an organic component of a vast pedagogical effort directed to a very specific public, a public conscious of itself as having a unity and playing a historical role in the Brazil of the future.

Rosenstock himself never separated his scientific work from his effort in social and pedagogical causes. I believe that in this sense, we have worked in a line to which he would give his approval.

Thank you very much.