

# ON THE LEFT AND ON THE RIGHT: OSCAR NIEMEYER AND MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN BRAZIL

IZQUIERDA Y DERECHA: OSCAR NIEMEYER Y LA DICTADURA MILITAR EN BRASIL

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**Abstract:** *Although Niemeyer is recognized as a celebrated and well-studied architect, passages of his professional career are yet to be explored. Without doubt, one of them is the relationship that the architect had with the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1985), an admittedly right-wing government. If, on the one hand, it is true that Niemeyer was a convinced and declared communist, it is also certain that he continued to work for the military throughout the 21 years of dictatorship that was established in Brazilian territory - even making projects that would be a symbol of Brazilian military institutions. This article seeks to delve into the architect's life and his relationship with this repressive political period in Brazil, presenting projects and situations that happened in Europe and within Brazilian territory. It gathers material disseminated in archives and elaborates a documented chronology to clarify events and debates.*

**Keywords:** *Modern architecture in Brazil; Latin American architecture; Oscar Niemeyer; military architecture; dictatorship.*

**Resumen:** *Aunque Niemeyer es reconocido como un arquitecto célebre y bien estudiado, aún quedan por explorar algunos pasajes de su carrera profesional. Sin duda, uno de ellos es la relación que el arquitecto mantuvo con la dictadura militar brasileña (1964-1985), un gobierno reconocidamente de derecha. Si, por un lado, es cierto que Niemeyer era un comunista convencido y declarado, también es cierto que continuó trabajando para los militares a lo largo de los 21 años de dictadura que se instauró en territorio brasileño, incluso realizando proyectos que serían símbolo de las instituciones militares brasileñas. Este artículo busca profundizar en la vida del arquitecto y su relación con este período político represivo en Brasil, presentando proyectos y situaciones que sucedieron en Europa y dentro del territorio brasileño. Reúne material difundido en archivos y elabora una cronología documentada para esclarecer hechos y debates..*

**Palabras clave:** *Arquitectura moderna en Brasil; arquitectura latinoamericana; Oscar Niemeyer; arquitectura militar; dictadura.*

Brazil experienced, as with most parts of Latin-American countries, a non-democratic political period in the second half of the 20th century. The Brazilian dictatorship, imposed by the military, lasted more than two decades and resulted in revoked rights, torture, physical repression and intellectual censorship.

Oscar Niemeyer (1907-2012) was a staunch communist, affiliated with the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) until the end of his life. Despite being left wing, he is, quite possibly, the reference of Brazilian architecture that maintained one of the most contradictory relations with the right-wing military group that had taken over the country. Here is the opportune space to debate Niemeyer's ties with the Brazilian military, with architecture, with his international clients since the coup and about his *political exile* in Paris.

Some references to this are mentioned with greater recurrence. Commented by the architect in interviews, but mainly in many of his memoirs,<sup>1</sup> is the episode of invasion and censorship of *Módulo magazine*, and the interruption of the contract, by the military, of Niemeyer's Brasília Airport. The decision to set up an office in Paris was to seek a sense of democracy and other clients outside Brazil, since, according to

the architect; new projects in the country became problematic with the installation of a right-wing government. Orders coming from the military government, however, present other perspectives and another side of Niemeyer's professional performance - that of continuing to build in Brazil over the 21 years of the military dictatorship. These contracts included, as will be discussed, projects that honored military presidents, that represented army institutions and that, as contractors, had the executive power - commanded at that time by the military.

This article is organized around topics that highlight Niemeyer's performance in Brazil and abroad during the military dictatorship in Brazil. It discusses the departure of the architect from the Brazilian territory, the beginning of contracts outside Brazil, the architect's version of events leading to the interruption of the contract for the airport of Brasília, the invasion of *Módulo magazine* and tries to explain some of the architect's projects carried out in Brazil between the years 1964 and 1985. Without a conclusive character, the text ends with some notes about the architect, his practice in Brazil and Europe and relationship with the military during these years.



FIG. 01



FIG. 02



FIG. 03

## PARIS, EXILE AND PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD

Oscar Niemeyer was an architect with an intense international presence since the 60's, receiving important commissions inside and outside Brazil from a large variety of customers. *Fundação Oscar Niemeyer*, the entity responsible for copyrights and the collection belonging to the architect's office, features 95 projects carried out by the architect that are located outside Brazilian territory.<sup>2</sup> They are works located in 31 different countries, on continents such as Africa, Europe, Asia, Central America, North America and South America. It is noteworthy, however, that a significant number of these projects were carried out during 1964 and 1985, the period of military dictatorship in Brazil. From this period, he and his office built projects that would be renowned all over the world, mainly due to the presence of the architect in important architectural magazines (such as *Domus*, *Casabella*, *The Architectural Review* and *L'Architecture D'Aujourd'hui*) that formed the architectural culture of the period.

In books published with his personal memoirs Niemeyer always highlights the moment of his *exile*.<sup>3</sup> This period was marked by the opening of an architect's office at *Avenue Champs Elysee*, number 90, where he had space to receive customers and develop commissions in other parts of the world. In a small text, Niemeyer recalls: "I decided to pack up my architecture and my hurt feelings and go abroad. Those who were trying to blackball me, without realizing it, had presented me with the greatest opportunity of my life: to practice my trade as an architect in the Old World and to have them learn to appreciate my nimble forms and curves."<sup>4</sup>

This moment in Niemeyer's career is unclear even to his family or by *Fundação Oscar Niemeyer*. The most famous books about architecture in Brazil or about the architect<sup>5</sup> deal very little in this period and is only more recently that we have research works that show interest in Niemeyer's activity outside Brazil.<sup>6</sup> Archives at the foundation show that the Paris office opened in 1972 and closed in 1981, but it is not clear, for example, how projects before this date were carried out, since Niemeyer started to work intensely outside Brazil before the Paris office. It is also not known, with greater precision, how it was structured. Consulted files indicate, however, that Niemeyer's office in Rio de Janeiro remained open during all or a significant part of the military period –and that both offices (Paris and Rio de Janeiro) worked together through letters and phone calls–. Files from the *Fundação Oscar Niemeyer* indicate, through correspondence from the office, that at the beginning of the activities in Paris both office branches were shown (Paris and Rio) on the letter stamps, as two addresses of the architect's office. At a certain moment, the Paris office started to be called *SEPARC –Société d'études pour les projets d'architecture d'Oscar Niemeyer*, a specific name given to the Paris office which means that at one point the French branch was set apart from the Brazilian one–. Future architectural research will help to understand the details of how this architectural practice worked.

Filled with doubts, it is clear, however, that Niemeyer's activity abroad resulted in good commissions. Algeria, a country newly independent of France and with Houari Boumediene (1932-1978) in the presidency, would become a place of new workst,<sup>7</sup> such as the projects for the University of Technological Sciences in Algiers in 1968 and the University of Constantine in 1969 (Fig. 01). France and Italy become the location for the most important customers for Niemeyer's office during the dictatorship years. In Paris, the architect built the headquarters of the French Communist Party,<sup>8</sup> a project in partnership with Jean Prouvé (Fig. 02). In France, in the following years, he carried out the Bobigny Labor Exchange (Fig. 03), the Le Havre Cultural Center and the Le Niemeyer Complex, made in 1982 at Fontenay-Sous-Bois. In Italy, in 1975, Niemeyer would make a low-rise, low-floor building for Fata Engineering. However, this is where publisher Arnaldo Mondadori would become Niemeyer's main



FIG. 04

client and would build his headquarters in Milan in 1968 (Fig. 04),<sup>9</sup> a project celebrated worldwide, and the residence for Nara Mondadori, the editor's daughter. In 1979 he also built the Mondadori Group's paper mill, located in San Mauro Torinese. During the period of the dictatorship, he also built a hotel and casino on the island of Madeira of Portugal in 1966, today a building that is quite uncharacterized by the administration of the complex and which also showed significant architectural changes during its construction.

These buildings show a *post-Brasília* period in the career of Niemeyer. Many of the formal solutions that made the architect known throughout the world remain in projects abroad, which could indicate that these clients outside Brazil were looking for new works that the architect had previously tested. The most relevant aspect of this topic is to highlight, however, that Niemeyer has worked on a significant number of projects abroad –which demonstrates the success of his office in France and activities outside Brazil–. It would be necessary to overcome the notion of a period of political *exile*, as there is certainly a lot of work and commissions. It appears not to be a sabbatical and with no difficulties in his professional life –the architect has new clients and developing projects on a global scale–.

A recovery in time may help to clarify the commissions inside Brazil that perhaps influenced the creation of this office in Paris and help to better understand Niemeyer's work during the period. One project is the Airport that the architect elaborates for the city of Brasília. This work was not completed and the situation created an awkward atmosphere with the government. The architect says: "I was indignant and determined to protest."<sup>10</sup> Another relevant situation is the invasion of the headquarters of the *Módulo magazine*, a periodical created in 1955 owned by him that is discussed in sequence. To better understand the architect's relationship with the military dictatorship, it is necessary to assess these events that take place a year after the military coup.

#### AIRPORT, MAGAZINE AND THE COUP

One episode of Oscar Niemeyer's career refers to the design of an airport for the city of Brasília. The new capital of Brazil, which had many symbolic buildings with a Niemeyer project,<sup>11</sup> did not have at that time an official airport version and, therefore, the architect was asked to commission a building carried out in 1965. This much talked about project has already been developed under military government. About this project, Niemeyer says: "The construction of an airport in Brasília is a major problem. It will undoubtedly be the entrance to the city and the first impression that



FIG. 05

remains –for visitors to this capital–. As Brasília is a modern city, and as such known worldwide, those who arrive here are more demanding, hoping to find new solutions that have promoted it so much. It is necessary to provide it with something different that harmonizes it with New Capital."<sup>12</sup>

The quote, written by the architect at the project presentation memorial, clarifies the relevance of the building architecture to the city. The capital, recently inaugurated, with only five years of use and with some important structures and buildings being made, and with a turbulent transfer process of the public administration from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília, would need an airport building *worthy* of the ambitions of the city built by the then President Juscelino Kubitschek (1902-1976).

The project that Oscar Niemeyer prepared for the airport never, apparently, passed a preliminary stage of development. A main core with a circular plan was planned. On the ground floor, main access, space for ticket windows and other airport activities. Going up on a circular staircase, it would be possible to find a mezzanine with an ameboid shape, space for shops and a café. The structure would be supported by pillars designed with an organic format, an experience already carried out in other projects in Brasília (like *Palácio do Alvorada*, *Planalto* and *STF*). The support system on the floor and roof would allow the internal space to be closed with glass. With many singularities, the most significant would certainly be the access system. Unlike many terminals, access to the departure terminal was planned to be, in Niemeyer's proposal, through underground tunnels.

Going beyond the details and characteristics of this project, the fact that it was never executed or commissioned. The project was given to Tércio Fontana Pacheco, an architect of the Brazilian Air Force Ministry, and the fact that he spoke about this event and possible resentments many times, is of interest here. About the episode, the architect says: "Brigadier Henrique Castro Neves, director of engineering at the Air Force Ministry, attempt to explain: 'in the future we will need to build extensions to the airport'. Their outdated solution, a rectangular shape, should have been rejected. The circular design was the right one. That is why, years later, Charles De Gaulle airport in Paris was built in a circular shape. Even in Brazil, the same people who had criticized me had a circular terminal built at Rio's Galeão International Airport."<sup>13</sup>

The architect also commented on a lawsuit filed by him against aeronautics. "The case was lost and a judge from Belo Horizonte –what a bastard he was! – Preposterously ruled that I should pay the trial costs of nearly six million cruzeiros."<sup>14</sup> It is understood, at least in the version presented by Niemeyer, that the Brasília airport project had been canceled

by the military without a technical justification and that, therefore, the discard of his project indicated a clash between him and the military who were not looking for an architect linked to the communist party and which was a symbol of Juscelino Kubitschek's government.

In that same year, another clash between Niemeyer and the military leadership took place. Oscar Niemeyer was the editor, patron and founder of one of the most important architectural magazines published in Brazil in the 20th century. The *Módulo magazine*, which had editions between 1955 and 1989, was a publication based in Rio de Janeiro and which presented and published countless projects, showed new perspectives for architecture, edited critical texts and placed debaters side by side. This personal development by Niemeyer, therefore, played a fundamental role in the consolidation of an architectural culture in Brazil. In an article by Aline Cortês and Claudia Cunha, published in 2016,<sup>15</sup> the authors defend the idea that *Módulo* was a fundamental tool for the dissemination of a preservationist ideal. Heliana Angotti-Salgueiro also writes her article about the magazine, aiming to see the relationships she creates with photography, especially through the lens of Marcel Gautherot. About the images of *Módulo magazine*, she says that it represented "A privileged space to celebrate the process of self-legitimization of Brazilian architecture, especially when publicizing the construction of Brasília, it includes articles on the other visibility strategies of this new architecture: congresses, book publishing, and exhibitions."<sup>16</sup>

The architect, then editor of *Módulo magazine*, realized one day that the magazine's office in Rio de Janeiro was looted and the censorship team would soon prohibit the editorial activities. According to Niemeyer: "I was in Europe when the coup took place and when the police searched my office and the *Módulo magazine* headquarters. The day I returned to Brazil, at the end of 1964, they took me to the army barracks to interrogate me."<sup>17</sup> *Módulo* was, in essence, an architectural magazine, which did not prevent the magazine's office from being looted and its circulation prohibited. It is possible to uncover the reasons for the magazine's clashes with the military. The repressive measures were possibly due to political ties to the left between the magazine's architects and editors.<sup>18</sup> More recent findings even claim that Niemeyer was at that time monitored by the military regime,<sup>19</sup> with evidence of telephone monitoring, seeking for opinions on interviews and movement of people in his office. The architect was also forced to give testimony to the police; he was never arrested or tortured, quite possibly because he was a publicly recognized personality in Brazil.<sup>20</sup> With Niemeyer widely targeted by the military, *Módulo* would only circulate again in 1975, still in the middle of the military dictatorship.

### BRAZIL: PROJECTS AND PUBLIC WORKS

Censorship interrupted the circulation of *Módulo magazine* and military decide to contract another architect to carry out the Brasília airport. Both events show that Niemeyer had confrontations with the high military leadership that ruled Brazil in the years of the dictatorship. As a result of these clashes of opinion, we see Niemeyer working outside the country, since his main client, the Brazilian state, would no longer hire him due to political positions.

However, this event never came to fruition. As already mentioned, his office was working and developing projects during the dictatorship. It is a fact that the official list of projects and works made by Oscar Niemeyer at *Fundação Oscar Niemeyer* presents many commissions in Brazilian territory during the military regime. At that time, public projects represent almost the totality of the production of the architect's office, and it is clear and surprising that the military government did not really prevent Niemeyer from continuing to receive new projects in Brazil. This topic seeks to



FIG. 06

highlight some of the projects of the period and ideological contradictions that are present in these contracts until today little clarified and explored.

In 1967 Niemeyer received a commission to develop a viaduct in Brasília connecting the sides of the city lake called *Paranoá*. Niemeyer's project builds a bridge with two single supports, with a design that delicately travels between the two banks (Fig. 05). Originally named *Ponte Monumental*, its construction began in 1973 and was inaugurated three years later, when it was renamed *Ponte Costa e Silva*. This is not irrelevant. Arthur da Costa e Silva (1899-1969) is the name of the second president of the Brazilian military dictatorship,<sup>21</sup> who ruled the country between 1967 and 1969 and stripped the political rights of Juscelino Kubitschek, the Brazilian president who built the city of Brasília and probably the most important formal patron of Niemeyer career as an architect. The structure was also inaugurated in person by Ernesto Geisel (1907-1996), a military man who was the president of Brazil during the inauguration of Niemeyer's project.

The year 1968 is decisive for Brazilians who have lived, since April 1964, under a military dictatorial regime. In December of the same year *Institutional Act Number 5* (AI-5), was established, the main catalyst for repression and torture during the dictatorship and states the definitive exit of Brazil from the democratic regime. This year also saw Oscar Niemeyer design a large complex for the Brazilian army in Brasília (Fig. 06). The architect creates an ensemble consisting of laminar buildings using prefabricated components that form a central void. Moving away from a cheaper and faster construction system, he plans, at one end of the ensemble, an acoustic shell and a reinforced concrete auditorium molded on the construction site. These two elements refer to several other previous works by Niemeyer who masterfully uses curvilinear elements in his projects. Referring to Army Headquarters, he says, "The idea is to create a unique, sober and monumental ensemble with the parade track and the Military Square."<sup>22</sup> The statement shows that Niemeyer was also concerned with the representation (power symbolism) of the project he carries out for the military.

At the beginning of the following decade Niemeyer received a commission to build a stadium in Recife.<sup>23</sup> He designs a space with an eye-shaped plan and a regularized structure that is repeated at the edges of the ensemble. These pieces, quite possibly with the same dimensions, have an organic format –and support the roof, the bleachers and some internal galleries–. The project, commissioned by the *Esporte Clube do Recife* would bear the name of the then president of Brazil: it would be officially called *Estádio Presidente Médici*. Emílio Garrastazu Médici (1905-1985) was the

president of Brazil between October 1969 and March 1974. He was one of the military men who fought intensely in repressive movements against the military in power. Torture, persecution and censorship have often occurred throughout his government. It would be important to understand the relationship between the city of Recife, the *Esporte Clube do Recife*, Niemeyer and Médici. Niemeyer, at a certain moment, declares: "It was during the Médici government, however, that the reactionaries decided to put an end to my work as an architect."<sup>24</sup> The phrase reveals a climate of antipathy between the architect and the president - which did not, in reality, prevent other works and contracts. The official residence of the vice president of the republic is one of the works that was planned and built; it seems, in 1973,<sup>25</sup> during the Médici government (**Fig. 07**). Niemeyer plans a terraced residence facing a lake. The floor plan maintains a centralized interior garden and the composition and materials reflect much of what the architect had been producing in the period. In the transition from the 60's to 70's the architect is also finishing important commissions in Brasília as Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty) and its Annex I (**Fig. 08**). *Fundação Oscar Niemeyer* declares that the beginning of this work took place in 1962, before the military coup. The work takes many years to complete, and since the higher military leadership did not interfere, he was able to work freely.<sup>26</sup>

Some projects are more emblematic of Niemeyer's possible ties to those responsible for the Coup d'état. They called attention to scale, budget, and representation honored military presidents. Other less important works would also be carried out and it is worth mentioning them briefly. Niemeyer creates extensions to different public departments in Brasília. In 1965, he made Annex II for the National Congress building, which in 1971 would need Annex III, also made by Niemeyer (**Fig. 09**). In 1978 Niemeyer's office carries out standard annex projects for ministries and Annex IV of the National Congress. Other public commissions in Brasília are also noteworthy: the architect carried out the headquarters of Telebrás (**Fig. 10**), a state-owned company, in 1973, a simple building, but with interesting proportions and very well designed.

In summary, we learned that Niemeyer continued to work arduously inside his own country. It is true that Niemeyer makes many annexes and buildings on a limited budget, and we see, perhaps as never before in his career, the realization of works that use cheap materials and easy execution (such as prefabricated components). However, it would be very careless not to recognize that the architect carried out some emblematic projects for Brazil during the period of the military dictatorship. Although many may recognize that the clashes with the military continued, which is almost certain, the situation never fully impeded the architect's work in his native land. Future research could try to better visualize this period, and it is possible that, with insufficient demand in Brazil, Europe was a space for better possibilities of professional work.

#### ON THE LEFT, BUT CIRCULATING EVERYWHERE

Connections of architects and architecture with politicians and other forces of power give rise to heated debates. From a certain point of view, some practices in architecture or some political positions may, at first, appear contradictory and this is the case of Niemeyer with the military.

It is essential to point out that many important projects made by the architect came, frequently, from direct relations with power, like friendships with politicians and personalities in Brazilian public life. Niemeyer did not hold competitions, but normally received projects from an internal network of influence. The coup could cast doubt on the request for his future services. The canceled project for the Brasília airport and the invasion of *Módulo* could signal to Niemeyer that he would no longer have space in the new government. With his professional experience and international recognition, the most plausible prospect was to look for clients outside



FIG. 07



FIG. 08



FIG. 09

Brazil since, in his native country; he was at risk of spending many years just making small private commissions. As we can have verified, the termination of the contracts did not take place. Even though he received projects that produced less impact (in scale and budget) than those offered by politicians like Juscelino Kubitschek, he continued to build in Brasília and throughout Brazil. Throughout the 21 years of dictatorship Niemeyer had not been discarded yet, as expected. With the Paris office receiving some clients, it was, quite possibly, interesting to work in Europe and Brazil –a multiple performance that, today we see, is far from a political exile–. The architect himself would constantly visit Brazil, visiting works and receiving clients in his office in Rio de Janeiro.

This mutual performance, which involved Brazil and Europe, was a possibility for few architects of the period –and Niemeyer knew this and took advantage of the situation wisely–. Since the Brazil Builds exhibition held at MoMA in New York in 1943, he had become a household name and, after the inauguration of Brasília, became a true global star of architecture with the design and construction of the city –a project published and discussed in universities, in books and magazines around the world. In the early 1960s, therefore, he was not an anonymous architect, but a well-known character with a significant curriculum (which, by the way, few other architects of his generation were able to achieve)–. It was a possibility for him to venture into other territories.

This article is far from closing the subject matter. It is however, essential to highlight the importance of observing these events in greater depth. Taking a closer look at these relationships can contribute to a better understanding of the activities of architects. In a foreground, it speaks of the need and desires to build and see work done –which seems, in many cases, to be greater than the political convictions of the professional



FIG. 10

class–. In another, it also shows how the act of designing is, in most cases, directly related to instances of power. There is, with surprising recurrence, an association between great names in architecture with politicians and large companies. Researching facts and events contributes to a critical and disenchanting look at the possibilities of architecture in the 21st century.

#### Notes and bibliographic references

- <sup>1</sup> Niemeyer wrote many books throughout his life. Oscar Niemeyer, *The curves of time. The memories of Oscar Niemeyer* (London: Phaidon, 2000) is mainly used in this article since it discusses, in specific passages, the relationship between the architect and the military.
- <sup>2</sup> "Obra/Arquitetura," Fundação Oscar Niemeyer, accessed on July 5, 2020.
- <sup>3</sup> Niemeyer, *The curves of time*.
- <sup>4</sup> Niemeyer, *The curves of time*, 86.
- <sup>5</sup> This article evaluated works done on Niemeyer in different times and locations. The most relevant are (see bibliography): Underwood, *Oscar Niemeyer e o modernismo de formas livres no Brasil*; Fils, *Oscar Niemeyer: Selbstdarstellung, Kritiken, Œuvre*; Hornig, *Oscar Niemeyer: Bauten und Projekte* and Gilbert, *Oscar Niemeyer: une esthétique de la fluidité*. Important books written in Brazil on Brazilian architecture mention this period without much depth (Zein and Bastos, *Brasil: arquiteturas após 1950* and Segawa, *Arquiteturas no Brasil 1900-1990*).
- <sup>6</sup> As recently published book in France: Vanessa Grossman and Benoit Pouvreau, *Oscar Niemeyer em France. Um exil créatif*, (Paris: Éditions du Patrimoine, 2021).
- <sup>7</sup> About Oscar Niemeyer and Algeria projects consult: Jason Oddy, *The revolution will be stopped halfway: Oscar Niemeyer in Algeria* (New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2019) and Samia Henni, *Architecture of counterrevolution: The French army in northern Algeria* (Zurich: gta verlag, 2017).
- <sup>8</sup> To know more about PCF see: Vanessa Grossman, *Le PCF a changé! Niemeyer et le siège du Parti communiste* (Paris: B2, 2013).
- <sup>9</sup> Electa published a book that explains and shows in depth the work of Niemeyer on that project. See Roberto Dulio, *Oscar Niemeyer. The Mondadori building* (Milan: Electa, 2017).
- <sup>10</sup> Niemeyer, *The curves of time*, 85.
- <sup>11</sup> Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira (1902-1976) was the president of Brazil between 1956 and 1960. Democratically elected, he proposed the construction of a new capital in a central and deserted area of Brazil as a strategic and development label. The urbanism project, made by the architect Lucio Costa (1902-1998) was selected through a public competition. The most symbolic public buildings were commissioned to Oscar Niemeyer, who designed projects that became symbols of Brazil and of a country that aimed to achieve future and progress. For more information about the new capital see: Evenson, *Two Brazilian capitals* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973). To know more about the discussions and historiography of the city see: Fernandes, *Brasília, leituras e leitores. Arquitetura, história e política (1957-1973)* (São Paulo: Altamira, 2020).
- <sup>12</sup> "Aeroporto de Brasília," Fundação Oscar Niemeyer, accessed on July 5, 2020.
- <sup>13</sup> Niemeyer, *The curves of time*, 85.
- <sup>14</sup> Niemeyer, *The curves of time*, 86.
- <sup>15</sup> Aline Côrtes and Claudia Cunha, "A revista Módulo e sua contribuição no ideário preservacionista brasileiro das décadas de 1950 e 1960," *Anais do IV Enamparq.* (July 2016): 1-17.
- <sup>16</sup> Heliana Angotti Salgueiro, "Marcel Gautherot na revista Módulo – ensaios fotográficos, imagens do Brasil: da cultura material e imaterial à arquitetura," *Anais do Museu Paulista*, n. sér. v.22. n.1, (Jan-Jun 2014): 11-79.
- <sup>17</sup> Niemeyer, *The curves of time*, 85.
- <sup>18</sup> Another relevant event, which puts Niemeyer under military surveillance, is his resignation in 1965 together with another 200 university from the then newly created University of Brasília. The architect makes this decision to protest against the invasion of the institution. See "Oscar Niemeyer / Vida," Fundação Oscar Niemeyer, accessed on July 5, 2020.
- <sup>19</sup> "Curvas de Niemeyer dobraram a ditadura," *O Estado de Minas*, accessed January 31, 2021, [https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/politica/2012/07/22/interna\\_politica,307416/curvas-de-niemeyer-dobraram-a-ditadura.shtml](https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/politica/2012/07/22/interna_politica,307416/curvas-de-niemeyer-dobraram-a-ditadura.shtml).
- <sup>20</sup> This is an interesting quote from the period: "Indignity reaches unimaginable limits when Coronel Manso Neto finds a sketch with which he intends to prove that I copy Le

Corbusier. The plan continues and, at the city hall, copies are distributed to ministers and important people.” “Curvas de Niemeyer dobraram a ditadura.” According to the architect, the military even tried to accuse him of plagiarism in order to destroy his public reputation.

- <sup>21</sup> There are many books about this period in Brazilian history, discussing history, culture and repression: Fausto, *História do Brasil*; Schwarcz and Starling, *Brasil: uma biografia*; Ferreira and Delgado, *O tempo da ditadura: regime militar e movimentos sociais em fins do século XX*; Gaspari, *A ditadura escancarada*; Mendonça and Fontes, *História do Brasil recente: 1964-1980*; Schwarz, *Cultura e política, 1964-196*.
- <sup>22</sup> “Quartel-general do Exército,” Fundação Oscar Niemeyer, accessed on July 5, 2020.
- <sup>23</sup> Recife is the capital of the Brazilian state of Pernambuco, a place that was largely opposed to the Brazilian military government.
- <sup>24</sup> Niemeyer, *The curves of time*, 85.
- <sup>25</sup> The Oscar Niemeyer Foundation has two versions for the vice president’s residence, one made in 1967 (not built) and one built in 1973.
- <sup>26</sup> However, Eduardo Rossetti indicates that Niemeyer was not at the inauguration party, punctuating some possible disinterest or discomfort with the situation: “If it is uncertain whether JK visited Itamaraty, there is also no evidence of the presence of Lucio Costa, Niemeyer, Athos Bulcão or Milton Ramos at this inaugural party.” In: Eduardo Pierrotti Rossetti, “Palácio do Itamaraty: questões de história, projeto e documentação 1959-1970”, *Arquitextos* (São Paulo), ano 9, n. 106.02. (March 2009).

## Figures

- FIG. 01. University of Constantine. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 02. French Communist Party. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 03. Bobigny Labor Exchange. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 04. Mondadori headquarter. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 05. Ponte Costa e Silva. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 06. Complex for the Brazilian army in Brasília. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 07. Official residence of the vice president of Brazil. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 08. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Annex I. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 09. National Congress building Annex III. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.
- FIG. 10. Telebrás headquarter. ©Leonardo Finotti Archive.

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