

JULY 7, 1972

CPAO: Hans N. Tach

Memo of Conversation with Faiga Ostrower
July 6, 1972

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Tach

I met Faiga Ostrower, a well-known Brazilian artist and personal friend, at the opening of an art exhibit at the IBEU in Rio on July 6. I asked her whether she could tell me the circumstances of the arrest of her daughter last March about which I had recently heard. She explained that the arrest occurred while she was in the U.S. with an exhibit of her art which was being shown under the auspices of the Brazilian-American Institute in Washington. Her family did not tell her about the affair until after her return in April. According to Faiga, the daughter had feared an arrest for a number of days because one of her close friends had been arrested the previous week. The daughter herself was picked up as she stepped off a bus. Two men--one apparently following her on the bus, the other apparently following the bus in a car--approached her and identified themselves as DOPS officials, indicating that they wanted to speak to her for a moment. She said that she wanted to call her father but they insisted that she accompany them to the parked car since they only wanted to ask a few questions. When she was in the car a black hood was thrown over her head and she was taken away. (Faiga indicated that it was determined later that these were not DOPS officials but were "Aray" officers.)

In the prison (a place identified by Faiga as "Mesquita") she was put into solitary confinement. The room was a refrigerated enclosure. There she was kept for three days without food. She was not permitted to sleep. There was a constant alternation of extreme noise (including screams) and deathly silence. Interrogation took place periodically. Faiga indicated that apparently the officials had nothing on her daughter personally but thought that she might have some information about her friends who were under suspicion. Faiga indicated that the questioning was relatively unspecific.

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In the meantime Faiga's husband, Heinz, had no indication of the daughter's arrest until he came home on the evening of the day of the arrest and found three officials searching the apartment. They took with them some books in the daughter's collection, among them a book by Simone de Beauvoir and a book about the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. They apparently found nothing more incriminating. Attempts on Heinz's part to find out about the daughter's whereabouts were without result until the fifth day when he was called and she was released. She was told that she may be called as a witness at some time in the future. Faiga also indicated that her daughter's friends had also been released.

FAIGA LAW, AND OTHER ABUSES, CONTINUES AS VIRTUALLY STANDARD. Faiga stated that her daughter was not physically molested but received psychological shock treatment, including the refrigeration, lack of food, constant noise or silence, and interrogation.

FAIGA STATED, INCIDENTALLY, THAT UPON HER RETURN FROM THE U.S. SHE WAS AWARDED THE RIO BRANCO MEDAL AND RECEIVED AN INVITATION AND A TICKET TO COME TO BRASILIA TO RECEIVE THE AWARD. SHE SAID RATHER THAN MAKE A POINT OF REFUSING THE AWARD, SHE MERELY DECIDED NOT TO COME TO BRASILIA.

IN EARLY JUNE, THE FORTY-ONE BISHOPS OF SAO PAULO, ISSUED DECLARATION DENOUNCING INCIDENTS OF TORTURE, ARBITRARY IMPRISONMENT, AND OTHER INJUSTICES "FREQUENTLY TAKING PLACE HERE." (SAO PAULO 6748)

3. ALLEGATIONS OF THESE CHURCH AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN BORNE OUT BY OTHER SOURCES IN SOME SPECIFIC INCIDENTS, AND WE BELIEVE THEY ARE IN GENERAL WELL FOUNDED. SECURITY OFFICIALS TAKE VERY HARDLINE ATTITUDE THAT ANY MEANS JUSTIFIES END OF COMBATING SUBVERSION, AND WE BELIEVE THIS INCLUDES TORTURE AS ROUTINE METHOD OF INTERROGATION AT LEAST OF PRISONERS SUSPECTED OF TERRORISM. IT IS ALSO STANDING ORDER AMONG SECURITY FORCES THAT ANY SUBVERSIVES TRAINED ABROAD WHO RETURN TO BRAZIL WILL BE KILLED, AFTER INTERROGATION, IF TAKEN ALIVE.

- cc: The Ambassador
- The Minister
- Min. Boonstra
- Mr. Wheeler
- Pol
- Pol/R
- DAO

Classification:
 Authority:
 Review:
 Date: 02-11

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