

quillity and order so that you can invest and produce.' A similar theme was presented to a select group of businessmen in São Paulo by General Dilermando Gomes Monteiro. He said: 'While you create wealth, the army creates security.' (Recent information suggests that General Dilermando Gomes did not, as reported in LAPR XI, 31, call for a return to the barracks at a high command meeting.) There is no doubt that many business leaders prefer the safety of the devil they know.

The campaign for civilian rule is nevertheless causing repercussions within the army. Evidence of this was the change in official Army Day rhetoric. There was scarcely a mention of either the 1964 'revolution' or Communist subversion, in marked contrast to the 31 March military celebrations (LAPR XI, 14). Army minister Silvio Frota described the army as a 'truly democratic institution' and directed an appeal for unity to 'the troops who perform the sacred duty of serving their country.' Most remarkable was his comment that 'revolutions contain within themselves crises of authority and liberate forces which their leaders are unable to dominate.' The first, army corps commander, General José Pinto de Araújo Rabello, referred directly to the internal military divisions created by the call for a return of the soldiers to their barracks.

Several sources have reported widespread political debate within the armed forces. The businessman and former governor of São Paulo, Abreu Sodré, had a meeting with the third army corps commander, General Belfort Bethlem, during a recent visit to Rio Grande do Sul, and lectured him for an hour and a half on the need to find a way towards civilian and democratic rule. Later that day General Bethlem, usually regarded in Brazil as a 'Prussian' hardliner, invited Sodré to repeat the lecture to his officers. Sodré was allowed to address a large number of senior officers, and, in the discussion that followed, some were opposed but most were apparently in favour. Sodré was impressed by the readiness of all the officers to discuss the issue seriously without preconceived ideas.

There is as yet no sign that the *civilista* movement poses a direct threat to the security of the military regime. Not only are the businessmen uncertain of their political options, but the opposition Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB) and, increasingly, the student movement, are also racked by division. However the campaign for civilian rule has notably increased the room for political manoeuvre. Many victims of political repression are filing complaints in the courts against their torturers, which would have been unthinkable in the *distensão* days of the present administration, and many observers believe this gain to be irreversible.

Puerto Rico: another postponement

The UN Decolonisation Committee has once more decided to postpone a vote on the question of Puerto Rico's status, giving the United States a surprisingly satisfactory result.

By a vote of 11-7 the United Nations Decolonisation Committee has decided for the third year running to postpone a vote on the Cuban resolution concerning Puerto Rico's colonial status. This decision, taken on 2 September, was the result of an all-out lobbying effort by the United States. This must be seen against the background of the United States's changed position on the issue. For the first time, Washington discussed the Cuban resolution.

The United States's bargaining position in this forum had appeared to be seriously undermined by the consensus among Puerto Rican delegates to this year's debate on the issue (LAPR XI, 33). Judging its chances of rallying support for an outright rejection of the Cuban resolution to be much less than last year, Washington first used the good offices of its allies, Australia and Norway, to propose a number of amendments which would have significantly weakened the Cuban resolution.

One such amendment, for example, would have removed the word 'independence' from the Cuban text, leaving the term 'self-determination' in its stead. Another proposed amendment added a reference to UN General Assembly Resolution 1541 wherever there was a reference to Resolution 1514. Resolution 1541 is mainly concerned with the obligation of nations administering colonies to send periodic reports on these territories to the United Nations. It also stipulates three possible alternatives to colonial status: independence, association, or integration. Resolution 1514, on the other hand, recognises the right of colonial territories to 'self-determination and independence'.

Faced with the probability that sufficient support could not be mustered to block the Cuban resolution through such amendments, the United States lobby decided to withdraw them, and again changed its tactics. Its last ploy was to propose a postponement of a vote on the Cuban resolution, and this procedural point carried the day. This procedural vote was a better result for Washington than last year, when the USA barely managed to stave off a vote, fearing it could not win (LA X, 36). Even in 1975 the vote was closer at 11-9.