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### **Queer Culture under Dictatorship**

Alternative media such as ephemeral tabloids were an important platform for the consolidation of an LGBT+ movement in Brazil. After the US-backed military coup of 1964, a strong censorship of anything deemed “communist” took hold of the nation. Homosexual men and women, as well as trans people, were often persecuted by the police, harassed on the street, imprisoned, and even tortured. Yet by the end of 1970s, various independent journals started being sold clandestinely at informal kiosks in response to the censorship imposed on the media by the dictatorship. A robust counterculture was making its way through the cracks of daily life.

From 1979 to 1981, *Lampião da Esquina* published work from different plastic artists and literary writers, turning into the first journal created entirely by homosexual men and addressed to a homosexual public in Brazil. Two of the original founders of this journal were the multi-disciplinary artist Darcy Penteadó (whose entire personal archive I visited) as well as the writer and journalist Celso Curi, who I was to meet in person during my stay. My field work started in Rio de Janeiro where I attended a museum exhibition called “Crônicas Cariocas” at the *Museo de Arte do Rio*, which focused on the peoples and influences that have convened in Rio since the mid-nineteenth century until today. The exhibition had a specific section dedicated to queer history, showcasing selected photographs, artworks, and ephemera. Not only were *Lampião*’s iconic covers exposed there, but also a detailed account of its ground-breaking importance for contemporary Brazilian queer culture. A local friend also made me aware of Renan Quinalha’s new book *Contra a moral e os bons costumes*, an excellent piece of scholarship that borrows its title from one of *Lampião*’s numbers and encloses a thorough study of its ground-breaking trajectory.

Among the founders of this underground journal, Celso Curi was probably one of the most persecuted by the military regime. The first number of the journal stated: “Celso Curi processado. Mas qual é o crime deste rapaz?” (Celso Curi processed. But what is the crime committed by this young man?) After more than forty years since the publication of this publication, I was able to contact him. We talked about another one of the founders of the *Lampião*, Darcy Penteadó, who died during the AIDS epidemic in the late 1980s. While in Rio I also visited the literary archive of the *Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa*, which gave me access to Penteadó’s illustrations, catalogues from his personal exhibits, and one of his hand-written letters.

One week later, I was visiting Penteadó’s hometown one hour away from São Paulo, in a population called São Roque. I partially understood why Penteadó’s work has not been thoroughly discussed in the scholarship: a long bureaucratic process is needed in order to access his archive. The person in charge was sick with covid, so it made it more unlikely to be able to access the archive during my stay. Nonetheless I received copious virtual material from the Centro Cultural Brasital in São Roque, for which I was extremely grateful.

During times of strong political repression, a journal-tabloid published some of the most daring pieces about homosexual desire, envisioning a new political collision between anti-racist, pro-indigenous and LGBT movements. The thirty-two numbers were devoted to stage and discuss an openly politicized sexual liberation movement: one that understood the cultural force of art and literature as instances for reinvention. This visit gave me the tools to be a step closer to understanding the dimension of this collective work which ignited the fight for LGBT rights in Brazil.