

## Book Review

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James N. Green. 2018. *Exile within Exiles: Herbert Daniel, Gay Brazilian Revolutionary*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

*Exile within Exiles* is an elegiac homage to Herbert Daniel, a gay revolutionary guerrilla fighter whose career encompassed and briefly extended beyond the years of the last Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985). Buttressed by archival materials in France, Portugal, and Brazil, as well as a wealth of interviews with many whose lives intersected with Daniel's, the book is a sympathetic and imaginative recovery of a figure whose importance, James N. Green argues, has yet to be recognized. Green artfully brings to life the history of a man on the margins who defied easy categorization, whether as a Marxist revolutionary, political exile in Europe, candidate for office in Brazil, or AIDS activist. Deploying the subject's own copious memoir writing, Green renders Daniel's life as if it were a matryoshka doll, with layers of complexities and contradictions embedded within each other. In the process, Green presents an innovative approach to grasping the imbrications of sexuality and politics in modern Latin American history.

Herbert Eustáquio de Carvalho, his baptismal name, was born in Minas Gerais in 1946 into a Catholic family that reflected the diversity of Brazil. His mother's parents were from Italy, and his father was partly descended from African slaves. Although considered working class, his family owned a television, a sign of relative wealth. A superb student in school and a devoted cinephile, Herbert had an insatiable thirst for reading and knowledge. Throughout his life, his intellectual range astounded those around him. Never fully comfortable with displays of masculinity, Herbert's exceptional acumen, Green observes, "compensated for what was expected of most boys" (21).

Coming of age in the 1960s in Belo Horizonte, Herbert experienced his first exile as an intimate one, into "an inner world where he kept his sexual desires a secret from those around him" (23). Dabbling in the gay culture of cruising, he maintained a "meticulously clandestine sexual existence," trading fake names and few personal details (22). His interest in politics was first piqued when he entered medical school in 1965, a year after the Brazilian military overthrew João Goulart in a coup. Herbert found the campus to be an intellectual "paradise" that bubbled with thrilling new

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Marxist ideas (26). His passion for politics began to supplant his interest in medicine or movies, and he eventually abandoned his studies to join his first revolutionary organization in 1967.

Herbert's foray into revolutionary politics prompted his second exile. In a Faustian bargain, Herbert suppressed his homosexual desires in the service of the revolutionary cause. As someone "timid, soft-spoken, and gay," Herbert did not fit the image of the guerrilla revolutionary who was to exude "bravo, self-confidence, and aggressiveness" (193). Since he longed to "make the revolution," he concluded he had to "forget" his sexuality (45). Although he remained celibate for four years, he fell in love more than once with straight male comrades, an unrequited yearning that led to severe bouts of depression. Fellow militants recalled how he performed his masculinity by telling "risqué faggot jokes" to signal he was just one of the boys. This was Herbert's most profound exile, one that he later described as "a silence. An exile... I wasn't a homosexual militant. I was an exiled homosexual" (106).

Green adroitly captures how the Cuban Revolution splintered the Brazilian Left. Whereas traditional Marxists promoted class consciousness among labor unions in urban enclaves, the Cuban model suggested that the revolution could begin among a "small dedicated group of revolutionaries" in the countryside (46). By 1967, the allure of armed insurrection was strong, and Herbert and his brethren believed that the rural conditions for revolution in Brazil were "ripe" (47). They felt an "invigorating urgency" that revolution was sweeping the globe, linking their cause to global 1968 countercultural protests (61). Green muses that their analysis was "remarkably optimistic" (57).

*Exile within Exiles* painstakingly reconstructs the quotidian struggles of the guerrilla revolutionary. With fly-on-the-wall precision, Green evocatively draws us into the underground world of revolutionary life, where code names and clandestine *aparelhos* (safehouses) were required to elude the government's torturers. Desperately in need of money to buy arms and train fighters, guerrilla fighters carried out a series of "expropriations," such as bank robberies, thefts, and kidnappings. Herbert, who donned the secret name Daniel after his name appeared on "Terrorists Wanted" posters, was paradoxically well-suited for this underworld, for he had long hid his sexuality in the proverbial closet. He participated in bank robberies and the high-profile abductions of the German and Swiss ambassadors, both of whom were exchanged for political prisoners.

But the revolution was over before it began. If abductions were spectacular events, they were also acts of desperation. They bespoke what Daniel dismissed as the self-destructive "dynamics of survival" that had overtaken the radical Left (130). In August 1971, he declared that armed struggle "is today dead in Brazil" (135).

Living in hiding on the outskirts of Rio at the end of 1971 and with his dream of revolution in shambles, Daniel serendipitously met his lifelong lover Cláudio. Neither had yet to come to terms with his own homosexuality. They spent hours in what Green calls their "information interactive therapy sessions" where they "worked out their repressed homosexual desires" (143). Daniel, the intellectual, and Cláudio, the artist, were opposites that attracted; their relationship bound them together until Daniel's death some twenty years later.

Still wanted by the authorities, Daniel fled with Cláudio and fake passports to Europe in September 1974. They landed in Portugal during the Carnation Revolution, a peaceful end to the fascist *estado novo* (new state) government. Exiled from the revolution he had hoped to achieve, Daniel lived through a revolution while in exile. Portugal was a turning point in his life. After years of platonic companionship, he and Cláudio consummated their relationship. Daniel's political vision also expanded. While working for a fashion magazine, he began to embrace feminist ideas, newly sensitized to how the Left subjugated women. In articles such as "The Time I Spent in My Mother's Uterus," he creatively wrote about reproductive issues and endorsed a women's right to choose (abortion was and is still illegal in Brazil).

After conservative forces gained power in Portugal, Daniel and Cláudio left for Paris in 1976. It was in Paris that Daniel fully immersed himself in gay culture for the first time. He began to work in the cloakroom of an upscale gay club and invested more time in his physical appearance, which improved his self-esteem. He continued to revise his political beliefs as he penned his first memoir, *Passagem para o próximo sonho* (Ticket to the Next Dream). Its first half is a searing indictment of the strategy of guerrilla insurrection. By then Daniel had grown weary of the "nebulous never-land" of left-wing politics, "where you discuss everything and decide nothing" (173).

The second half of *Passagem* is a voyeuristic ethnography and critique of gay sexuality. Daniel disdained the commodification of homosexuality in the explosion of sex shops, clubs, saunas, and stores. "Sodomy is a city," he writes, that is "Capitalist" (176). He inveighed against the gay "ghetto" and intellectual rationale behind homosexual rights, for both reified concepts that further marginalized gays from mainstream society. Daniel's analysis was more intellectual than pragmatic, as Green shrewdly notes, leaving little room for the important role of "safe spaces for people to affirm their homosexuality" (176).

In August 1979, the Brazilian Congress passed an amnesty law, but Daniel was excluded for two more years because it did not extend to acts of terrorism in which he had partaken. Returning home after seven years abroad in 1981, he was featured by the popular magazine *Veja* in a full-page article that lyrically labeled him the "last exile" (190). In affirming his homosexuality in the article, Daniel challenged prevailing stereotypes. He was singular: neither a macho revolutionary nor an effeminate homosexual. Daniel also started to work within the confines of electoral democracy in Brazil, which were rapidly expanding at the time. He helped elect a socialist with a radical ecological and antidiscrimination agenda to Rio's state legislature. In 1986, Daniel himself ran unsuccessfully for state legislature with the campaign theme, "There is no democracy if it stops at the factory gate or at the edge of the bed" (223). These moves testified to Daniel's evolving polyvalent politics. Whereas before he saw the world only through the lens of class, his vision widened in the twilight of his life to encompass a politics based on intersectionality.

Daniel's final and arguably most impactful imprint on Brazilian politics concerned his advocacy for persons with AIDS. In December 1987, he began to work at ABIA (the Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association), where he edited their newsletter. Daniel was recruited for the job precisely because of his fluidity with the written word and his prominence as a "public" homosexual.

A few months after he learned of his positive HIV status in early 1989, Daniel created the *Grupo Pela VITDA* (the acronym means “for life”). Rejecting how society categorized persons with AIDS as the “already *dead*,” Daniel countered that “Action = Life” (239). He was at the vanguard of the global response, arguing against discrimination and in favor of solidarity with those affected by AIDS.

In March 1992, Daniel died from AIDS-related causes. Two years later, after intentionally infecting himself with HIV, Cláudio died from a heart attack. Green contends that Herbert Daniel’s life is a “vehicle for rethinking the entire narrative” of modern Brazilian history (6). But we as readers are left to decide the contours of that new narrative. Green’s biography of Daniel, like Daniel himself, rejects simple answers about the world. In so doing, *Exile within Exiles* imparts a truly novel way of understanding the boundaries of the political and the personal in twentieth-century Latin American history.