



**The Women's Movement  
for Amnesty in  
television reports of  
Rede Globo Minas**  
*O Movimento Feminino  
pela Anistia em  
reportagens da Rede  
Globo Minas*



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## Memory and audiovisual records

The military dictatorship that took place in Brazil between 1964 and 1985 comprises a peculiar period in the history of the country due to significant political changes that have occurred and their impact on the daily life of the population. This issue has been the subject of academic studies in several areas of knowledge, including research related to analysis of audiovisual records made at the time as well as the analysis of documentary and fictional films made afterwards and that address different aspects of the period.

In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, there are few spaces that keep and make available to the public audiovisual collections related to the memory and the history of the city. Between these spaces, the *Museu da Imagem e do Som de Belo Horizonte* (Museum of Image and Audio of Belo Horizonte – MIS/BH), body of the Municipal Foundation of Culture, is the museum whose mainly focus is on keeping and sharing audiovisual documents, in addition to housing the greatest collection of films and videos, totaling more than 50 thousand titles in several media types. It is a large and diverse collection. There are works that came from different sources, produced under various conditions, and with results also heterogeneous. There are fictional, documentary, journalistic productions, and family films, among others. Throughout the thematic diversity of the museum, we find the original records of journalistic materials produced by Rede Globo Minas between 1968, its opening date, and 1983, when the broadcast company stopped using films for producing its television reports.

The research that comprises this article addresses the survey on existing films within Fundo Rede Globo Minas that somehow refer to the period of the military dictatorship in Belo Horizonte. In these records, the military dictatorship emerges on the military participation in several events, arrests, movements for amnesty, actions off/in the Department of Political and Social Order (*Departamento de Ordem Política e Social* – Dops), issues related to freedom of the press, students' strikes, exiles, resistance newspapers, bombings, protests, discussions on the fall of the Institutional Act no. 5, plays performed in the period, among others.

Our focus in this article involves the analysis of how the Women's Movement for Amnesty (*Movimento Feminino pela Anistia* – MFPA) appears in five reportages made by Rede Globo Minas in Belo Horizonte between 1977 and 1979. To do so, we will briefly contextualize the MFPA in the state capital, in such a way to understand how the memory of the period is created in reports about the movement as those we present next.

## Women's Movement for Amnesty

The MFPA emerged in São Paulo in 1975, by the initiative of the lawyer Therezinha Zerbini. In other cities throughout the country, centers of the MFPA were created. In Belo Horizonte, the idea of the center gained momentum in 1977. In June 4, 1977, a strong police apparatus mounted in the capital of Minas Gerais prevented from holding the III National Meeting of Students (*III Encontro Nacional dos Estudantes*), which aimed to restructure the National Union of Students (*União Nacional dos Estudantes – UNE*), an event that would be held at the School of Medicine of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. More than a thousand students were arrested.

A few days later, a protest was organized on the School of Medicine against the actions of the Government towards the students. During the protest, the testimony of Helena Greco<sup>2</sup> was noteworthy, who until that moment had not been involved with political movements. People that were interested in creating the MFPA center in Belo Horizonte invited Mrs. Helena and other women attending the protest to a meeting that would be held on June 30. The MFPAMG was created during this assembly. In November 1977, the first administration was voted, and Helena Greco was chosen as the president.

Among the purposes of the movement, we may mention the fight for broad, general, and unrestricted amnesty; support for all movements in the struggle for democratic freedom; complaints of torture in prisons; struggle for freedom of expression; and the promotion and encouragement of political, cultural, and social participation of women.

The campaign for amnesty, by reorganizing its struggle for democracy and protests of the popular sectors, has become a symbol for different mobilizations. This campaign and the outbreak of public protests against dictatorship have enshrined rights, within the public scenario, have boosted hope concerning the potential of political actions of the society, and have praised full citizenship to all Brazilians as the paramount basis for democratic construction. (PAULA, 2014, p. 8) [free translation]

In 1978, the Minas Gerais center of the Brazilian Committee for Amnesty (*Comitê Brasileiro pela Anistia – CBA/MG*) was created, involving men and women in the struggle. Helena Greco became vice-president of this committee, assuming the presidency two years later. In April 1980, MFPA conducted a general meeting at which its incorporation to the CBA was decided. On the same occasion, it was established that women's interests would continue to be defended by groups related to the issue.

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<sup>2</sup>Helena Greco (Abaeté, MG-Brazil, June 15, 1916 – Belo Horizonte, MG-Brazil, July 27, 2011) has founded and directed the Women's Movement for Amnesty in Minas Gerais (MFPAMG). She was elected City Councillor in Belo Horizonte in the elections of 1982.

During its operating time, MFPA supported student's movements in the capital of Minas Gerais, supporting their claims, and was part of committees that fought for the freedom of political prisoners. In addition, it operated with workers' movements, supporting the strikes carried out by several categories between 1978 and 1980. It promoted discussions about amnesty and actions aiming to disseminate information to the population of Minas Gerais on the situation of political prisoners.

Due to her activities and representativeness, Mrs. Helena was the target of several threats and attacks in Belo Horizonte. Intimidations came as notes and anonymous letters addressed to her home or to the headquarters of the movement. She was also target of false accusations in press bodies and bomb attacks:

As a militant and president of the MFPA, Mrs. Helena has suffered numerous threats from extreme right-wing groups, such as the Anti-communist Group (*Grupo Anticomunista – GAC*) and the Anti-communist Movement (*Movimento Anticomunista – MAC*), which were opposed to her activities and used radical methods. The pressures and attacks suffered by her were of different kinds: notes, anonymous letters and phone calls, and bombs. (DELGADO, 2012, p. 3) [free translation]

To illustrate that her work was recognized, she was invited to represent Brazil at the Amnesty International Congress, held in Rome in June 1979.

### **MFPA in Rede Globo Minas reportages**

During its period of existence and activity, MFPA had outstanding participation in the social and political life of Belo Horizonte, reflected in the various references to the movement that appear in reports of Rede Globo Minas conducted between 1977 and 1979. Next, we mention a few examples of such television reportages.

The report *Movimento Feminista pela Anistia – Assembleia* [Women's Movement for Amnesty – Assembly] (October 27, 1978) shows scenes of a meeting of the movement and an interview with Helena Greco addressing the committee's plans. The tape *Movimento Feminino para Anistia – Avenida Afonso Pena – Pancadaria* [Women's Movement for Amnesty – Afonso Pena Avenue – Brawl] (January 5, 1979) presents images of protesters dispersing in downtown Belo Horizonte. There is no soundtrack, only recordings of the restlessness in the central area of the city with the ambient sound of the noise on the streets. The synopsis registered by Rede Globo for this movie is succinct: "Bombs and police repression on Afonso Pena Avenue."

The report *Movimento Feminino pela Anistia / Ato público com ex presos políticos* [Women's Movement for Amnesty / Public Act with former political prisoners] (April 19, 1979) comprises images of an activity in which former political prisoners speak to an audience. According to the catalog of the film, among the former prisoners are Cecílio Emigdio Saturnino and Cleber Maia. Cecílio reports having been forwarded to the Dops in Belo Horizonte, where he was tortured with *pau de arara*<sup>3</sup>, shocks, and beatings. Cleber Maia talks about the stages of torture, being the first of them when the police try to extract confessions from prisoners. The second moment would be when they identify prisoners as "dangerous people." Then, the former political prisoner Porfírio de Souza points out the names of the men who had tortured him during the time he was in jail, including the name of his torturer at Dops in Belo Horizonte.

The films *Exposição Presos Políticos* [Political Prisoners Exhibition] (October 22, 1977); *Movimento Anistia – Entrevista* [Amnesty Movement – Interview] (January 31, 1978); *Anistia de 45 – Reunião e bomba* [Amnesty of 45 – Meeting and bomb] (April 19, 1978); *Movimento Feminino Anistia – Desmentido* [Women's Movement for Amnesty – Retraction] (May 12, 1978); and *Helena Greco – Prisões estudantes* [Helena Greco – Students' Arrests] (March 15, 1979), objects of our article, will be analyzed in greater detail next.

### *Political Prisoners Exhibition (October 22, 1977) – Jornal Nacional (JN)*

- 16-mm film – Black and white (B&W) – Magnetic film
- Duration: 5 minutes and 11 seconds

The film "Political Prisoners Exhibition," of October 22, 1977, is one of the first records made by the the journalism of TV Globo Minas on MFPA actions in the state. According to the synopsis registered at the non-filmic documentation of Fundo Globo Minas: "Images of the work of political prisoners. Interview with Terezinha Godoi Zerbini<sup>4</sup>, one of the founders of the women's movement for amnesty..."<sup>5</sup>

The reel-to-reel tape of this reportage and of all others we analyze does not consist in the final piece. It is the movie in an intermediate stage, between what was actually recorded and what was possibly broadcasted on TV. There are cuts, since the

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<sup>3</sup>Torture device used in Brazilian dictatorship.

<sup>4</sup>Terezinha de Godoy Zerbini (São Paulo, SP-Brazil, April 16, 1928 – São Paulo, SP-Brazil, March 14, 2015) was social worker, lawyer, and human rights activist, founder and leader of the MFPA in Brazil.

<sup>5</sup>Synopsis of the reel-to-reel tape according to the non-filmic documentation submitted by Rede Globo Minas with the films that were delivered to the Audiovisual Reference Center (*Centro de Referência Audiovisual – Crav, current Museu da Imagem e do Som de Belo Horizonte*).

tape of the film have splices, but the material has no credits nor off texts<sup>6</sup>. In some of these tapes there are repeated scenes, passages (from the reporter to the camera), and interviews, which reinforces the notion of an intermediate stage of the reporting.

The tape begins with images of bags, paintings, and various handmade objects produced by political prisoners and that are displayed on tables in a location where they seem to be exposed, as in a market (Figure 1). People walk through the tables and take notes.



Figure 1: Objects displayed in the market of handicraft materials made by political prisoners. Source: MIS/BH collection. Frames taken from the movie “Political Prisoners Exhibition” (October 22, 1977)

There is a cut and, then, by a medium shot, we see Therezinha Zerbini sitting. In the background, there are several women gathered, also sitting, chatting around a table. The reporter is out of the frame. In the scene, we can only see her hand holding the microphone. The sequence already starts with the speech of the activist, who seems to respond to some question about the possible barriers that the movement would be facing:

*We haven't found any barrier. The only barrier was being a little scared. But the fear is being overcome by our need for the Brazilian peacemaking and by... and women are becoming aware of this need, because amnesty, most of all, is the need, when women realize the greatness of our mission, then the work becomes easy.*

<sup>6</sup> Outside the image frame.

With a shot outside the location where the objects are exposed, we see a car with the trunk open. In the background, we see the building of tower B of the Conjunto JK, on Raul Soares square, in the mid-southern region of Belo Horizonte.

The camera then films the space where the exhibition is taking place again. There is no sound in this sequence. Some women are standing; others, sat on the multiple tables arranged along the great hall which houses the event (Figure 2). There are shots of the exposed handicrafts in detail. The camera approaches and presents a small board on a vase, in which we can read: "Pottery 60.00 Sold" (Figure 3), which confirms that the objective of the exhibition is also selling handicrafts made by political prisoners and raising funds. Among the exposed material, there are many leather bags and paintings representing the leaders Mao Tse-Tung and Che Guevara. Along with some items, there is a poster of the MFPA, with a drawing of a dove, symbol of peace.

The film returns to the sequence of the interview. In a more open shot, we can see the reporter beside the interviewee (Figure 4): "*What does the Women's Movement 'for' Amnesty mean?*" the journalist asks. With a zoom, the frame focuses on the interviewee. "*It means that Brazilian women had amassed in a working class: the pacification of the Brazilian family,*" the activist responds. "*Was amnesty present in the international women's year?*", the reporter continues.

Therezinha then responds:

*Yes, amnesty was present in the international women's year, where it, uh... the only request of Brazilian women this year in the Congress of Mexico was political amnesty to all political prisoners worldwide, men and women. This was the position of Brazilian women in the Congress of Mexico.*

"*And what was the award you have won?*", the reporter insists.

*We didn't win any award. But, morally, this award given to the Amnesty International, that the Norwegian Parliament gave to the Amnesty International, morally, it is ours, because we're doing the same job they do out there, internationally, but our job is here, at home, because when you have no peace at home... Uh... Uh... [Zerbini looks at the journalist, hesitates, and decides to conclude – Figure 5]. Justice begins at home.*

When they looked at each other, the reporter must have done some signal to the interviewee: either for her to complete the speech due to the available time or for

her not to address certain issues, since, when speaking of “peace at home,” Zerbini was necessarily referring to the issue of the country’s politics.

The reporter also asks if there is a connection between MFPA and Amnesty International, to which Zerbini responds: “no, our movement is ‘tupiniquim,’ it is nationalist.”

The journalist, then, questions about what weapon is used by Therezinha to gather women to the movement. The activist responds:

*The movement for amnesty, we women believe that, uh... that it's paramount... that amnesty is an imperative of conscience. So we aim to gain consciences, wherever they are: in schools, factories, barracks, universities, that's our job. Our weapon is the truth, and we seek to gain consciousness.*



Figure 2: Hall housing the market.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frames taken from the movie “Political Prisoners Exhibition” (October 22, 1977)



Figure 3: Pottery sold during the market.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frames taken from the movie “Political Prisoners Exhibition” (October 22, 1977)



Figure 4: TV Globo reporter and interviewee, Therezinha Zerbini.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frames taken from the movie “Political Prisoners Exhibition” (October 22, 1977)



Figure 5: Zerbini perceives possible signs given by the journalist.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frames taken from the movie “Political Prisoners Exhibition” (October 22, 1977)

Finally, the reporter asks a question about the difficulties of the movement:

*Have you, particularly, been finding, lets say, many obstacles to take the movement forward or have other people embraced the idea? Has the women's movement "for" amnesty been confused with a communist movement?*

Zerbini is straightforward:

*No. No because we have partners. We have been through the entire Brazil. There is no amnesty center only in Amazonas, Belém, Maranhão, and uh... [other] territories. We are not being mistaken, no. Unless...*

The tape ends in such a way the viewer cannot hear Zerbini's conclusion. There is no way of knowing if the filming was interrupted in the middle of the speech or whether the cut was made in the first treatment of the raw material.

It is noteworthy that at the time of this reportage the Minas Gerais center of the MFPA was already formed. However, only in the following month, in November 1977, the first board of the MFPA/MG was elected, with Helena Greco as its president. In reports from 1978, Mrs. Helena Greco becomes the main representative of the Minas Gerais center of the movement. Her protagonism is reflected not only in her appearances as an MFPA reference, but also because she had become a target of several bombings.

*Amnesty Movement – Interview (January 31, 1978) – NE*

- 16-mm film – B&W – Magnetic film
- Duration: 3 minutes and 18 seconds

When films of the *Centro de Documentação da Rede Globo Minas* [Documentation Center of Rede Globo Minas] were filed, one or more catalogs (non-filmic documentation) were created, with information on the reel-to-reel tape such as title, synopsis, number of the box on which the report was filed, date of filming and display, sound type, feature, and total time. Catalogs were filled according to the analysis of the tape and information provided by the report team. They were organized according to an index, which is why sometimes the same tape had more than one catalog. For example, a reporting on the Women's Movement for Amnesty with two interviewees would generate at least three catalogs: one with the name of the movement, and two others referring to the name of each of the interviewees. Catalogs were typed

on typewriters, which is why there are grammatical mistakes and several caveats, as we can observe in the synopsis cataloged for the film analyzed in this section:

Women's movement for amnesty.

Synopsis

Interview with a participant of the movement. Alírio is the reporter. We have no data. Data have been collected: Interview with Mrs. Helena Greco, president of the Women's Movement for Amnesty, who talks about the group's support, strikes of metallurgy workers, and movements in general.

The film begins with a medium shot, in which Mrs. Helena Greco, president of the MFPA in Minas Gerais, and the reporter standing by her side (Figure 6). Both are sitting. In the background there are a few women gathered, contextualizing the space in which the reporting takes place, probably at the headquarters of the movement.



Figure 6: Helena Greco getting ready to being interviewed by the reporter of TV Globo Minas.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film "Amnesty Movement – Interview" (January 31, 1978)

When the journalist asks the first question, Mrs. Helena seems to read a paper she carries in her left hand. The reporter asks: "Mrs. *Helena Greco*,

what are the main goals of this movement?”, indicating that only then the MFPA actions gained visibility in the news broadcasted by TV Globo Minas, although the movement has been organized in the state capital since June 1977. In the interviewee's response, we understand what was the paper she was holding at the beginning of the interview:

*I... to answer this question I'll read the article according to our statute that clearly states our purposes: "To defend and provide support and solidarity to all those who were affected concerning their rights as men and citizens, guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed by our country, and to fight for comprehensive, and general amnesty aimed at the pacification of the Brazilian family; to promote the cultural, social, and civic promotion of women through courses, lectures, and development of their social and civic awareness, prompting and guiding them to the understanding of their responsibilities towards society; integrating family in social communion, always in accordance with democratic ideals."*

The camera is now closed in a medium shot of the president of MFPA. The reporter (outside the frame) questions to what extent would the movement support the political prisoners and metallurgic workers.

The activist explains that since the beginning of the movement the group has been greatly interested in both issues related to political prisoners and their families. According to the words of Helena Greco, the work was performed as follows:

*We seek to support... support... as much as we can. We seek to, uh... to give voice to their claims, writing pieces in this sense and being aware of their work, selling their handicrafts, being interested in the situation of their families out here, seeking to help them morally, mainly, legally supporting them or doing whatever we can in this regard. Now, as for metallurgic workers, it's not exactly about supporting them, because we act in accordance with the pieces we read in the press, and, as the case may be, we sympathize or report them. In the case of the steelworkers, particularly of metallurgical companies, there was a case that particularly interested us, not only because it concerns these workers for which... whose work interests us overall, but mainly because it's the first time that metallurgical women... the working women were speaking their minds, making their claims, and fighting against discrimination, the discrimination between...*

Before completing her speech, the audio was cut, probably a mistake – not during the filming, but during the first cut with the raw material of the

recordings, an action that can be verified in the vast majority of films belonging to Fundo Globo Minas due to the presence of splices with cellophane tapes in the reel-to-reel tapes. The cut in the audio comes with a cut in the image, which then frames a poster of the MFPA placed in one of the walls where the reportage takes place (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Poster of the Women's Movement for Amnesty in the room for group meetings.  
Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film "Amnesty Movement – Interview"  
(January 31, 1978)

With a panorama to the right, the camera leaves the poster and focuses on the table where several women are gathered. They were probably members of the MFPA. These are images with no sound, which in the final presentation of the report would probably be used along with the speech of the interviewee, or even of the reporter's. With the camera focused on the table and the support light on them, the women know they're being filmed. Some demonstrate their discomfort with the presence of the camera, turning their faces to the opposite side of the cameraman, or even covering their faces with their hands (Figure 8). Then, the tape brings images in detail shot of some women's faces, both of those who choose to show themselves and of those covering their faces. That is the end of the tape.



Figure 8: Members of the MFPA/MG during the meeting. Some women choose to cover their faces during the filming.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film “Amnesty Movement – Interview” (January 31, 1978)

### *“Amnesty of 45 – Meeting and bomb” (April 19, 1978) – JH<sup>7</sup>*

- 16-mm film – B&W – Magnetic film
- Duration: 5 minutes and 15 seconds

According to the synopsis cataloged in Rede Globo Minas, in this movie there are:

Shots of forensic experts arriving at Colégio Santo Antônio school and leaving with a defused bomb and cars found with graffiti, which were done by the anti-communist group. Interview with two women of the movement: Tereza Zerbini, president of the movement for amnesty, and Helena Greco, president of the Minas Gerais center. There was a meeting at the school, which was later transferred to the Federal DCE (Central Board of Students), since a bomb was placed in that school, which did not explode, but in the DCE it did.

This film begins with images of the number “865,” indicating the place where the facts will be presented (number of the building of Colégio Santo Antônio school, at Pernambuco street, Funcionários neighborhood, Belo Horizonte). Then, there are images of an artifact (a defused bomb) in the hands of a man who enters in a car of the forensic expertise of Dops. Shots of an internal environment feature a packed auditorium. All seats are taken and there are people standing in the background. After

<sup>7</sup> *Jornal Hoje* television news.

these images, the sound is heard in the film for the first time, during the interview of Therezinha Zerbini, president of the MFPA, and Helena Greco, president of the Minas Gerais center of the MFPA, who appear on the stage side by side (Figure 9). Zerbini is the first to speak: “*We have the conviction that until the end of the year we will have the long-dreamed Amnesty for all of us.*” Then, the reporter asks Mrs. Helena: “*What is the participation of the MFPA of Minas Gerais in the fight for the broad amnesty?*”. We can only see the reporter’s hand and the microphone he is holding. Now we have a close-up of Helena Greco. At the time, Greco was a 61-year-old lady. She used to be elegantly dressed, but shy in dealing with the camera and the microphone, considering the recent engagement in political life. But she responds assertively:

*We are continuing the work of... the work of Therezinha Zerbini. We are always fighting for broad, general, and unrestricted amnesty. A fight without barracks, without pause, until we achieve... until, together with the people, we can achieve this amnesty.*

After the speech, there are more images of the experts leaving with the defused bomb. Then, there is a shot of showing one side of a car, where there is a graffiti covering the entire door with the following acronym: GAC<sup>8</sup> (Figure 10)

The shot then focuses on Therezinha and Helena Greco once again: The reporter’s voice emerges again: “*Mrs. Therezinha, madam, as the national president of the Women’s Movement for Amnesty, do you believe this broad amnesty can be achieved?*”

Zerbini responds:

*We have certainty and conviction. The Women’s Movement for Amnesty is installed... It’s nationally structured. And we’ve chosen Minas Gerais, the “land of freedom,” for us to be here today because Amnesty is freedom. Amnesty and freedom are achievements of an organized people.*

Next, Mrs. Helena responds to a question about how the MFPA seeks its financial support. Then, the scenes show an excerpt of the speech given by Greco during the event for celebrating the amnesty of 45 political prisoners (Figure 11). In front of the table in which she is sitting, there are posters of the Amnesty campaign (Figure 12). The movie ends.

As reported in the book *Helena Greco, eu te batizo: anistia* [“Helena Greco, I baptize thee: amnesty,” free translation], by Ana Maria Rodrigues Oliveira (c1983), the scenes presented in the reporting of April 19 took place on the eve, on April 18. At that

<sup>8</sup>Anti-communist Group.

time there was a concentration of 1,500 people in the courtyard of Colégio Santo Antônio to the event for the celebration of the amnesty of 45 prisoners. Shortly after the beginning of the concentration, Dops agents arrived in the school claiming they had received a complaint about the existence of a bomb there. After evacuating the school, an explosive device was located inside a shoebox. According to the report in the book, before the event the location had already been inspected by Dops agents. In light of what happened, the concentration for the celebration was transferred to the cultural headquarters of the Central Board of Students from Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), which at the day had suffered a bomb attack, having its printing room destroyed.



Figure 9: Helena Greco and Therezinha Zerbini in Belo Horizonte.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film "Amnesty of 45 – Meeting and Bomb" (April 19, 1978)



Figure 10: Graffiti of the Anti-communist Group.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film "Amnesty of 45 – Meeting and Bomb" (April 19, 1978)



Figure 11: Mrs. Helena gives a speech at the event in celebration of the amnesty of 45 political prisoners.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film "Amnesty of 45 – Meeting and Bomb" (April 19, 1978)



Figure 12: Campaign poster for Amnesty.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film "Amnesty of 45 – Meeting and Bomb" (April 19, 1978)

Although there are information on the bomb and the graffiti in the synopsis registered by Globo, in the filed film the subject is not addressed in the speech of the reporter, neither the interviewee's. The activity of the movement is portrayed by the reporting, but there is no impact on the bombing suffered that day, attack that would become recurrent against the MFPA in Belo Horizonte.

*“Women's Movement for Amnesty – Retraction” (May 12, 1978) – JH*

- 16-mm film – B&W – Magnetic film
- Duration: 5 minutes and 14 seconds

In her book, Ana Maria Rodrigues Oliveira (c1983) also reports that Helena Greco and the movement were victims of false accusations in certain press bodies. In the movie “Women's Movement for Amnesty – Retraction,” of May 12, 1978, the activist talks about one of these accusations. According to the synopsis cataloged by Globo, in the tape we find:

Interview with the president of the movement in BH, Helena Greco, and with a participant of the movement who did not identify herself. They talk about the problem of pamphlets spread around the city on behalf of the movement. They also speak of the meeting with the Governor to achieve the transfer of political prisoners.

This movie was filmed in an enclosed space, which further will be identified as Helena Greco's residence. She appears sitting on a couch with the reporter, sitting beside her (Figure 13). The tape begins with the speech of the president of the MFPA/MG on the request that the movement had made to the Governor of Minas Gerais, Aureliano Chaves, regarding the transferring of political prisoners from Linhares (penitentiary located in Juiz de Fora-MG) to prisons in Belo Horizonte or Rio de Janeiro. In a few moments, we can perceive the little familiarity of Mrs. Helena with the interview procedure such as when she touches the microphone the reporter is holding. However, in the gesture of looking at the camera when answering the question, the activist demonstrates that she is gradually getting acquainted with TV lenses.

The intermediate nature of the footage material (not the raw material, nor the final reportage) is demonstrated in the construction of the next question, in which the reporter asks Mrs. Helena about how the defamatory pamphlets distributed throughout the city have impaired the movement. Before asking the question, the

camera had been moved to the side, in order to show the reporter facing the profile of the interviewee. Then, there is a cut and the camera is placed on the opposite side of the room, showing the interviewee facing the reporter. In the background, we hear the voice of a man saying: "Action!" Then, Mrs. Helena responds:

*I can't believe these flyers have harmed the movement, to the contrary. The fact that they were distributed in the amount it did, and against a group like ours, which is a group of women who are legally acting in defense of human rights, this only means that we are really affecting [them]. And what I think is that they [the flyers] constitute a great disrespect to people, because it was something so bad, 'cause if they think that the Brazilian people, especially workers and students, [categories] to whom, it seems, their propaganda was addressed, will believe in such a thing, this means they disregard their capacity of discernment.*

The camera makes a motion, zooming the interviewee, leaving her alone in the frame. "Do you have an idea of whom distributed it?", the reporter asks in off topic. Mrs. Helena continues:

*I do... I'm sure the groups that acted this time were the same ones that are acting lately, planting bombs, sending anonymous letters, giving threatening phone calls, not only towards the Women's Movement for Amnesty, but to all bodies that are dealing with the real people's rights and defending human rights such as the case, for instance, of CNBB [Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil – National Conference of Bishops of Brazil], of Dom Hypólito<sup>9</sup>, and that of the Women's Movement for Amnesty.*

Then, the scenes show another woman, member of the MFPA and of the Linhares Committee (*Comissão de Linhares*), indicated by Mrs. Helena Greco to talk about the transfer of political prisoners. The shot shows the face of the reporter, in front of the camera, and the back of the interviewee, who opted for anonymity, in a demonstration of fear of showing her face due to possible reprisals resulting from a direct exposure (Figure 14).

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<sup>9</sup>Dom Adriano Hypólito (Aracaju, SE-Brazil, January 18, 1918 – Rio de Janeiro, RJ-Brazil, August 10, 1996), then Bishop of Nova Iguaçu, city in Rio de Janeiro, was one of the exponents of the progressive wing of the Roman Catholic Church when he was kidnapped on September 22, 1976: "accompanied by a nephew and his bride, D. Adriano was intercepted by two cars, from which two armed men got off. In the tumult, the girl managed to escape. The nephew was also captured. The bishop had a hood placed on his head. His hands were handcuffed; the cassock, stripped by force. The captors attempted to force him to drink rum, he resisted, and was beaten. He was left naked, with his hands tied up, and his body painted with red paint on a street of Jacarepaguá, in western Rio de Janeiro" (COSTA; TORRES, 2004).

The activist talks about the progress of the process for transferring prisoners: “According to the auditor, who is the person that can decide their transfer, it depends on the Interior Secretary of Justice’s response concerning vacancies in penitentiaries in Belo Horizonte and its surroundings.” The conversation continues with no interruptions until the end. Reporter: “So what is in the way, is it bureaucracy?”. The anonymous activist responds: “Yes, it’s depending on a bureaucratic matter”. The journalist proceeds: “Why do you have this commitment in transferring the prisoners from there? How are they being treated?” The interviewee then explains:

*The main problem is the difficulty of families in providing assistance to the prisoners, due to distance, time... Consequently, the travel time and the financial situation of the families who face difficulties in traveling, you know, financial difficulties in these trips. In addition, the penitentiary regulation is also quite strict, especially with respect to censorship to publications, which are already censored in the country, there’s censorship to mail to the families, including to the authorities, and the isolation they live due to distance.*

The tape ends after this statement, which, due to the content and anonymity of the interviewee, reveals the fear of repression of bodies that routinely monitored and threatened members of movements opposed to the regime.



Figure 13: Mrs. Helena talks about the defamatory pamphlets distributed against the movement.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film “Women’s Movement for Amnesty – Retraction” (May 12, 1978)



Figure 14: Representative of MFFPA prefers not to be identified for the interview.

Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the film “Women’s Movement for Amnesty – Retraction” (May 12, 1978)

### “Helena Greco – Students’ Arrests” (March 15, 1979) – JN

- 16-mm film – B&W – Magnetic film
- Duration: 2 minutes and 24 seconds

According to information on the synopsis registered by Rede Globo Minas at the time of the reporting, this film concerns an “Interview with Helena, who speaks of the latest arrests of students in Belo Horizonte.”

The tape comprises a brief interview with Mrs. Helena Greco at the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais (Figure 15) due to the presence of the activist who was there to seek information about three college students recently arrested in the state capital.

Unlike the previous interview, held at the activist's home, this interviewed was filmed in an open space inside the Assembly. There is a lot of noise in the background and the atmosphere is of concern because of the absence of information about the detained students.

The reporter (who is out of the frame) asks: “*What's the point of these prisons?*”.



Figure 15: Helena Greco in an interview in the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais.  
Source: MIS/BH collection. Frame from the movie “Helena Greco – Students’ Arrests”  
(March 15, 1979)

Mrs. Helena seems anxious. The lack of justification for the arrests cause distress and makes the activist impatient, and she says: “*Yes, that's what... what we're most concerned about. No one knows why, what's the reason for these arrests.*” “*And what are the consequences, Mrs. Helena?*”, the reporter insists. The president of the MFPA/MG responds:

*No one knows it either. We know... all we know is that Fátima was last seen yesterday morning. And since she never misses her appointments and she never showed up and neither called as we agreed... because she had been threatened on the eve, then the commitment she was attending... this arrest was confirmed both by the Dops and the Federal Police.*

The reporter continues: *“That is why you are here?”*. *“I’m here solely for this reason. Surely I wouldn’t be here for the Governor’s inauguration, huh?!”*, Mrs. Helena responds already impatient because of the insinuation on the part of the journalist that she would be there for the inauguration of Governor Francelino Pereira, which was taking place that same day. After one last question about who would be sought by the activist in the Assembly, the recording finishes.

## Conclusion

The analyzed films show how the MFPA had a paramount performance among groups who fought for amnesty, which had its law promulgated on August 28, 1979.

The relevance of the MFPA/MG can be observed in the frequency with which the movement was the subject of reportages on Rede Globo Minas between 1977 and 1979, as well as in the notoriety and support that Helena Greco gained as president of the Minas Gerais center, becoming a reference in the fight for human rights in the country. Reprisals suffered by activist, in the form of notes, threatening phone calls, and even bombings demonstrate how her activities and work have gained visibility and became a nuisance to defenders of the regime. For our article, we selected five reports within a universe of at least 18<sup>10</sup> reportages addressing aspects of the struggle for amnesty in Belo Horizonte. The MFPA coverage began in 1977, the year of establishment of the Minas Gerais center of the movement. In 1978, the name of Helena Greco starts gaining prominence and she is the main reference in reportages on the movement ever since.

In the selected films we could observe the different approaches of the MFPA/MG and the support the movement and its main representative gained in the state in late 1970s. The tape “Political Prisoners Exhibition” (October 22, 1977) presents one of the goals of the movement, which is promoting market fairs for selling handcraft materials made by activists who were in prisons. In the report, it is Therezinha Zerbini, founder and president of the MFPA, who speaks of the exhibition promoted by the MFPA/MG. The regional center had already been formed in an assembly held on June 30, 1977, but its first board was elected only in November 26 of the same year, when Helena Greco was chosen as its president and then had become the main representative of the movement in Minas Gerais.

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<sup>10</sup> Reportages surveyed about actions for Amnesty in Belo Horizonte on the doctorate research *BH em movimento: registros audiovisuais do período da ditadura na capital de Minas* [BH in motion – Audiovisual records of the dictatorship period in the capital of Minas Gerais]. Until the conclusion of this article, 18 materials have already been found.

In the film “Amnesty Movement – Interview” (January 31, 1978), we see a meeting of women members of the MFPA/MG, in addition to an interview with Helena Greco. Actions for the amnesty were gaining greater visibility in Minas Gerais. From the context of the questions and answers, the reporting seeks to show what is the movement, and what are its objectives and main lines of action. In the meeting shots, the gesture of women hiding their faces reveals the fear of having their image associated with the group, which could be either due to the judgement on the part of their families, or due to the fear of threats and attacks that MFPA would start suffering.

In “Amnesty of 45 – Meeting and bomb” (April 19, 1978) we can see the attempt of the movement to organize meetings for discussions regarding advances and demands related to the amnesty and its expected approval by the Government. At the same time, the film shows some types of intimidation that the MFPA/MG had been suffering such as the the threat of bomb attack suffered during an activity in Colégio Santo Antônio school. Therezinha Zerbini and Helena Greco speak together about the movement, since the event held in Belo Horizonte had the participation of Zerbini as president of the national MFPA.

The reporting “Women’s Movement for Amnesty – Retraction” (May 12, 1978) addresses the role of Mrs. Helena and another activist of the MFPA/MG in relation to political prisoners. In the film an episode of defamation suffered by the movement is also reported, one of the forms of intimidation used by supporters of the regime. Before the suffered attacks, the posture of Mrs. Helena is confident and affirmative. But there were also those who fear the consequences of a public exposure, as in the case of another member of MFPA interviewed in this film, who chooses to grant the interview without showing her face.

On the other hand, the tape “Helena Greco – Students’ Arrests” (March 15, 1979) also broaches the political prisoners issue, but mentioning a recent case of arrest, in which there was not much information on who had been detained nor the reason for the detentions. Considering the way she reacts and responds the reporter’s questions, the interviewee suggests the urgency of the situation and anxiety for the clarification of the arrests before the facts could develop in worse consequences. The act of pronouncing the full name of the detained students was a way to identifying them publicly, exposing the arbitrary arrests, and blaming the State in case something happened to them while they were deprived of their freedom.

The five films represent the diversity of the MFPA/MG work, its struggles, and challenges. They portray a movement in which women exposed themselves and

took a change to oppose to the Government in force at the time, and who even in the face of difficulties managed to show decisive performance in the achievement of the Amnesty Law.

This text is part of a comprehensive survey, in which these and other issues will be discussed seeking to analyze how part of the story of Belo Horizonte emerges in audiovisual records.

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