

# Crusade for democracy: catholic activists in republican Brazil

*Cruzada pela democracia: militantes católicos no Brasil republicano*

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## RESUMO

A expressão ‘cruzada democrática’, utilizada por militares em 1964, demonstra raízes ideológicas no catolicismo e no discurso anticomunista norte-americano. Estudar a fundamentação desse uso na tradição do catolicismo brasileiro permite vislumbrar o modo pelo qual o ultramontanismo – o projeto antiliberal do papado católico romano desde o início do século XIX – se manifestou na política brasileira republicana até o período da ditadura de 1964.

Palavras-chave: cruzada democrática; ultramontanismo; militância católica.

## ABSTRACT

The expression ‘democratic crusade’, used by the military in 1964, shows ideological roots in Catholicism and in North American anti-Communist speech. Studying the reasons for this use in the tradition of Brazilian Catholicism allows glimpsing the way in which Ultramontanism – the anti-liberal project of the Roman Catholic papacy since the beginning of the 19th century – manifested itself in Brazilian politics from 1889 to 1964.

Keywords: democratic crusade; Ultramontanism; Catholic activism.

*This is the war – all out, permanent, global, apocalyptic – that appears already [in 1952] on the dark horizon of our turbulent era. And all we can do, nations in any corner of the world, is to prepare for it with determination, clear-sightedness and faith.*

Golbery do Couto e Silva (1967, p.12)

With the publication of the *Pastoral letter* of 1916 by the then archbishop of Olinda, Dom Leme – which we must see as supported by the political theory of the collective Pastoral of 1890 –, the “principles of the reunion of Church and State” were presented, in the opinion of Brazilianist Ralf Della Cava (1975, p.11); in that letter the bishop used “a noncritical, almost mythical interpretation of

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the Catholic Nation, an interpretation that is still widely disseminated today in ecclesiastical and secular circles”. For the prelate, “Brazil, by tradition, history and the faith of its people, is essentially Catholic”. The Republic of 1889 brought “to power an unbelieving minority, leaving the believers, who were the majority, without any power of decision about the nation’s problems”, and Dom Leme was seeking to “turn around this situation” by mobilizing “a crusade of Catholic activists in order to re-educate the country through its teachings and, basically, ensure that the Church received the legal acknowledgment of its legitimate position”. He proposed an action that should be different from that “of Father Julio Maria”, because “Leme was demanding that Brazil be ‘re-Catholicized’ ‘from top down’”. In other words, he was demanding a return to a past of privileges without the obstacles [defined by Regalism] imposed on the Church by the Empire” (Della Cava, 1975, p.11).

There are two points that can be mentioned on the basis of the comment on the exposition by the Catholic prelate who, from 1916 onwards, took unto himself the leadership of the implementation of ultramontane policy in Brazil: (a) the antagonism between the organic and contractualist views of society, referred to in the opposition between believers and non-believers, majority and minority, and also between Nation and Republic, respectively; and (b) the treatment of the topic of decision-making power regarding the problems of this society that had received the statute of a nation. The interpretation, called non-critical, almost mythical by Della Cava, was presented by Artur César Isaia (1998, p.72) as present also in the systematic elaboration by Dom João Becker, who considered it as an “idea” in the relationship with the “concern of Leo XIII’s pontificate in trying to place the Catholic doctrine above the contingencies of the forms of government”. The concern is based on the assumption that the “social collectivity chooses a form of power” supported by “two essential elements”: “the authority or right to direct the members of society in such a way that the social purpose will be effectively achieved and the force needed for this efficacy to be true and real”. The aim is to “obtain the common good”, for which “political power has a moral character. It was precisely the abandonment of Christian ethics as the principle that organizes society and legitimates civil power by liberalism that opened the way for chaos in the modern world and the crisis of temporal power” (Isaia, 1998, p.72).

The “legitimacy of civil power”, according to Dom Becker, came from adopting the organic view of society: it “was based on parameters that were very different from the idea of sovereignty of the majorities, or of liberal contractualism” (Isaia, 1998, p.72). One consequence of this foundation, laid to

sustain the notion of the exercise of power, was to enable the discussion of Catholics regarding the *legitimacy* of prevailing power. This was also repeated by army officers, Pedro Aurélio de Góes Monteiro and Juarez Távora. For the Catholic prelate, this “modern State, which dispensed with a moral base to guide its actions, easily fell into social anarchy”, and “laicism, releasing man from these moral principles”, made “‘the egalitarian Utopia’ based on ‘universal suffrage’ possible. The suspicion expressed by the archbishop [Dom Becker] regarding the institution of universal suffrage as a base for popular political participation and as an institution that can construct the ‘common good’” is affirmed and called an “‘egalitarian fiction’ based on individualism and rendered possible by universal suffrage, which confers the same political right on all citizens, ‘excludes any superiority and, consequently, any coercion of one over the other’”. Precisely this “egalitarian type of individualism” would allow, according to him,

the triumph of the much feared Communism. The neuralgic point of the ‘distortion’ of principles by laicism was not the institution of universal suffrage itself, but rather the absence of a moral justification that could be a reference for the institutions, which, according to Dom João Becker, would be structured simply on the basis of non-moral ideas such as contract and individualism. (Isaia, 1998, p.72-73)

This tension between the two views, pointed out by the members of the Catholic hierarchy, had broken out in Brazil in the form of the debate involving the Catholic Party in the context of the election of the 1890 Constitutional Assembly and it lasted throughout the 20th century, just as it was present in the history of the European national States since the 19th century. The topic gained specific characteristics according to the contextual and/or structural changes. The approach to the theme of the universal suffrage under the pontificate of Leo XIII appeared in Brazil not as a debate, but as a legal institution with the creation of a Catholic Party, in parallel with the publication of the documents issued under the guidance of the Primate of Brazil, Dom Macedo Costa, which were studied by Oscar de Figueiredo Lustosa (1990, p.59-63). The topic of the documents is the “Program” of the “Catholic Party” (published in *A Cruz do Sertão de Goiás*, March 10, 1890). Lustosa’s analysis is that the text signals that “the social consciousness of the Catholics, shaken by the shock of the Republican ideology, is aroused to the need of articulating the forces of the Church” and, as an “echo of what happens to a certain extent everywhere on

the national territory”, “calls the Catholics to political militancy, if possible under the control of the vicars on the one hand and, on the other, under the platform of claims and complaints that are the same as the ones postulated in the larger urban centers of the country”. The “program” approved by the “Central Directorate of the party”, reflected on “what to do in this concrete case, under this new regime, in this new *modus vivendi* ... imposed by the force of circumstances, during the period of disturbances and uncertainty that we are experiencing”; it goes on saying that in 1890 the “Christian duties of the new era which is opening for Catholic Christianity in Brazil” were based on the premise that “the Church is indifferent to all forms of government; at another point it adds the luminous *Pastoral* [from 1890]. It thinks that all of them can bring the temporal happiness of peoples, as long as the latter and those who govern them do not neglect Religion”. Under the inspiration of “love for the country, the Catholic Party will certainly continue to recommend to those elected through it a most accurate study and prudence in decreeing the laws that they consider compatible with the individual freedom that should be respected in democratic government”, a high “moral level, the greatness and material progress of the country; the greatest scruple, finally, in voting the budgets, both for the federal expenditures and revenue”. This Party has “a defined program, for the purpose of struggling within the legal terrain and in these two fields of action, viz. the Parliament and the press” (*A cruz*, quoted by Lustosa, 1990, p.61-62).

Under the pontificate of Pius X (1903-1914) and Benedict XV (1914-1922) two documents were disseminated by the “staunch Catholic and Republican” physician Joaquim José de Carvalho: (a) “a brief historical-philosophical study” on *Catholicism in the Republic* and (b) the “program” for a Catholic Center. The defense of the Republican regime presented in 1906 (Lustosa, 1990, p.103-119) argued in favor of the autonomy achieved by the Catholic hierarchy vis-à-vis the Brazilian government, and its purpose was to advocate against founding a Catholic newspaper and a Catholic Party, highlighting that the concern of the lay people and the clergy about the situation of the country should be aimed at a cooperative organization of agriculture. Joaquim José de Carvalho used the topic and terminology reproduced at a later period in the formulation of the political proposition of Juarez Távora, for instance. The physician’s position followed the guidance of the action plan of the Catholic hierarchy (Beozzo, 1992, p.210) and did not accept the creation of a Catholic Party. Another of the documents transcribed by Lustosa (1990, p.143-146) – the conference of Plácido de Mello about the Catholic Center in 1912 – indicated that the

opposition to the action of a *party* was not the only line of thinking at the time. This debate reproduced in Brazil the internal confrontation of the Church in Europe. During this political period, which José Murilo de Carvalho (1978, p.218) calls *Hermism* (1904 to 1922), in order “to get away from the already excessively discussed problem of creating a *Catholic Party*, which the Brazilian bishops did not accept, the CENTRO CATÓLICO [was founded] in Rio de Janeiro (1910/1911)”, forming “a corporation” to “educate an electorate made up of men who, professing Catholicism, exercise the right to vote in such a manner as to ensure in the elective positions and thus in the country’s political leadership the maintenance of principles, norms and practices in accordance with the teachings of the Church” (Lustosa, 1990, p.143).

As pointed out by Monica Pimenta Velloso (1978, p.144), the intellectuals – lay Catholics – wanted to apply in Brazil the North American constitutional experience and political practice; they wanted a *de facto* change in the situation legally instituted in 1891, safeguarding their interests: “For Protestants (says Carlos de Laet), all paths lead to Heaven; that is the vitiation that generates the American system. Not so, gentlemen, for Catholics who, intolerant as far as the truth is concerned, proclaim that there is no salvation outside of the Church.” Therefore, their intention was to “restore the rights of an essentially Catholic people by banishing atheism from the [Brazilian Republican] government”. As the claims of the laymen were essentially the same as the ones raised by the Catholic hierarchy, according to Carlos de Laet, it was appropriate to “reclaim ... the exercise of a number of clear or implicit liberal principles”, among which was the “adoption of public worship”, arguing that “Father Julio Maria has already asked for this from the pulpit of the Cathedral ... raising the idea of beginning among us the North American practice of Thanksgiving Day, by a decree that would name a convenient date for the official use, throughout the country, of thanksgiving to God for the benefits to the Republic”. This is because the form, i.e. “the decree, exclaimed the Father, does not violate religious freedom; all religions acknowledge God!” (Velloso, 1978, p.143-144). The conference of Plácido de Mello (Lustosa, 1990, p.146) designed to introduce the Catholic Center’s program of “Establishing Politics in Christ” closed with a call to follow the example of “the war cry of the Belgian Catholics”, with an appeal “against lay education”, and “claiming a subvention from public coffers to the schools founded by the private initiative of Catholics”. “Gentlemen!”, he said imperatively, “Let us raise fortress walls of hearts, because it is upon the hearts that the enemies of faith rejoice through neutral education. Let us supplant the avalanche. All sacrifices – here we have the

quick march of the Catholic Center of Brazil – everything, everything for Christian primary education.”

If, for purposes of analysis, we consider (a) this call by the Catholic Center, mirrored in the examples of the “subvention regime” of Holland, of England, and of the topic that was “the political key of Belgium”, arguing that they should “learn to govern and legislate in Belgium, the land of experience, the most prosperous country in the world” (Lustosa, 1990, p.146); (b) the study *Revolution und Kirche. Zur Frühgeschichte der christlichen Demokratie* [Revolution and Church: On the Early History of Christian Democracy] by Hans Maier for Europe; (c) the data concerning the formation of the Center Party in Europe; and (d) data on the beginning of the movement to catholicize the officers of the Brazilian army promoted at the beginning of the 20th century, it is possible then to sketch an initial understanding about the meaning of Dom Leme’s leadership in Brazil from 1916 onwards.

The context (1) shows evidence of the prelate’s effort to ensure the achievement of the ultramontane project in Brazil, i.e. the Roman anti-liberal project, in order to meet – by directing the action of a varied range of Catholic institutions established since then – the demand for influence in government decisions in the sphere of constituted powers in Brazil; and (2) situates the form of political practice founded on this project to deal with the materialist ideology of the first Vargas administration.

Historiography records that, in the 1920s, this topic was discussed by jurist Jonatas Serrano. The chapter “O Estado e a ordem econômica” [The State and the economic order] (in his book *Filosofia do Direito*, Rio de Janeiro, 1920, transcribed by Ana Maria Moog Rodrigues, 1981, p.155-165) discusses “The exaggerated doctrines”, including the study of the “General traits of socialism; Communism; Collectivism; Critique of Socialism; Social Catholicism; Leo XIII and *Rerum Novarum*; Professional Unions”. In an exposition that situates authors and analyzes the ideas prevailing at the time, based on the foundation of positive law and on the respective notion of the modern State – indicating how up-to-date Brazilian academic work was –, the jurist takes the following position in 1920: “There are authors who talk about *Christian socialism* and even *Catholic socialism*. Strictly speaking, there is an intrinsic contradiction in bringing these terms close to each other: none of the two qualifiers can be applied conveniently to the noun that is being discussed. There is an essential irreducibility between the two doctrines...” (in Rodrigues, 1981, p.160-161). The ideas of this document can be related to the new European context that includes the pontificate of Pius XI (1922-1939), the electoral victory that led

the fascists to govern Italy (1925) and Hitler's publication of *Mein Kampf*. In 1925 the 16th Congress of the Communist Party met in the Soviet Union, when a group broke with the Stalin government (1924) and, together with Trotsky, created the Unified Opposition tendency, which only lasted a short while. During this decade, in Brazil, the 2nd Congress of the Brazilian Communist Party [PCB = Partido Comunista Brasileiro] was held, and the Brazilian Socialist Party [PSB = Partido Socialista Brasileiro] was founded. It was at this time that Jackson de Figueiredo again furthered the topic of forming a Catholic Party, thus indicating that the internal problem still persisted for the Church. The concept of citizen-soldier used to defend the political action of the Brazilian military since the 1880s was updated to the context of the objectives delineated by Catholic intellectuals and in the direction indicated by the then growing leadership of Dom Leme. Having submitted to the leadership of the prelate since his conversion to Catholicism, Figueiredo took on the task of organizing the lay movement towards the Dom Vital Center, aiming to accomplish the political role that was meant for the Brazilian Catholic elite. The debate on the topic went on, and the pressure exerted by Dom Leme was also expressed by the attempt to obtain a constitutional amendment to define Catholicism as the official religion of the State in 1925, besides locally promoting the guidelines announced by Pius XI, who instituted the Catholic Action (Rome, 1925) and founded the Pontifical Brazilian College (Rome, 1929) to train the clergy.

Under Vargas' provisional government Dom Leme's attitudes were channeled to mobilize the masses and to motivate the elites to also participate in the elections, especially aiming at the work of the Constitutional Assembly of 1932. Using this strategy the Catholic Electoral League [LEC = Liga Eleitoral Católica] was formed. It was established in Brazil along the lines of the Unione Elettorale Cattolica created by Pius XI in 1905 and controlled by him (Della Cava, 1975, p.16). In 1932 the Workers' Circles [Círculos Operários] began to operate in Brazil. These institutions were harshly criticized by Távora (1974, vol. 2, p.135-137). According to the evaluation of Thomas C. Bruneau (1974, p.82), the LEC was successful: "In the elections to the constitutional assembly of May 1933 most of the candidates supported by LEC were elected", and the new Brazilian Constitution – enacted the same year when Dom João Becker greeted "the triumphal march of the fascists on Rome" in a speech – included the demands made by LEC. Bruneau also highlights the relativity of the Catholic success, since the Constitution was "shaped according to Vargas' needs and priorities".

Historians and Brazilianists include the foundation of the Brazilian Catholic Action (1935) among the activities of Dom Leme that continued the line of reaction against the creation of a Catholic Party. During the same period Vargas repressed the Communist Uprising [Intentona Comunista], and this repression was hailed by Dom João Becker (Bruneau, 1974, p.84). The institutional initiatives of the ecclesial sphere are related by the authors rather to Dom Leme's dynamic nature than to the definition of the ultramontane policy, to the point that Della Cava (1975, p.31-32) refers to the year the prelate died as one in which there was a "collapse in the leadership" of the hierarchy and a "collapse of the lay structures", such as the Confederation of Catholic Associations, the Catholic Action and the Workers' Circles, and the year in which there was also a change in the line of work at the Dom Vital Center. It was also in this situation that Alceu Amoroso Lima definitely moved away "from Fascism, after 1937, to embrace and advocate the democratic centrism of Jacques Maritain's 'Integral Humanism'". The "specific mystique of the Catholic Action – molded, as Alves recalls – according to the authoritarian Italian model" ensured, says Della Cava (1975, p.16), "its 'clericalization' and obedience to the hierarchy". He adds that the institution "may have been implemented for the same reason that led Pius XI to prefer the Catholic Action to the incipient Christian Democratic Party of Luigi Sturzo, at that time called Partito Popolare Italiano: the hierarchy would be better able to control an entity under its own jurisdiction than under a jurisdiction of civilians (whose social platform, in Sturzo's, case was already too progressive to be adequate for the Papacy)".

It appears possible to accept the authors' evaluation as long as one only takes into account the data involving the internal sphere of the ecclesial institution in Brazil. For the historical analysis it is necessary to point out the relationship between the collapse mentioned and the great changes that occurred precisely at this time with the ongoing World War II and the definition of positions that, in Brazil, led to the coup that ended the dictatorship that characterized the second phase of the first Vargas administration. If one expands the perspective, it should also be considered that the collapse of the centralizing leadership of Dom Leme – presented as being the "source of many experiments" and of the "rise of 'several talented bishops' in Brazil, including Eugênio Sales, Vicente Scherer and Vasconcelos Mota" (Della Cava, 1975, p.31) – was regarded as positive based on the outlook adopted by Church historians and Brazilianists. These scholars seek to establish in this change in the Catholic hierarchy the source of concern of part of the Brazilian Catholic clergy



regarding the situation of the poor population groups and, from the mid-20th century onwards, of active participation in the debate on the consequences of the implementation of capitalism as the predominant economic form in Latin America, besides the growing involvement in demonstrations to defend human dignity.

Based on the data analyzed, however, the 1940s cannot be considered as the beginning of the concern of the Catholic hierarchy with economic-social topics, but rather as the moment of collapse of the ultramontane project in the political form through which it had been conducted since the beginning of the 19th century and which in the 20th is characterized by concordats or by the establishment of informal agreements with the Nation-States that adopted the organic model of exercising power, i.e. the organization of the State as a single body, as opposed to the liberal model that involved a party division. In other words, the project of State-Church relationship furthered by the Holy See had to be redirected, given the context of World War II and the problems caused for international relations, as it became evident that the adoption of the organicist political-economic system ultimately led to territorial expansion and the necessary elimination of any opposition to it, external or internal.

Two points should be mentioned for their importance in this political juncture in the case of Brazil: (1) it was during this period that Golbery do Couto e Silva, who was reproducing the need to defend Brazil against the Communist threat, was appointed to an internship at a military school in the United States of America; (2) the activist Catholic Action bishops in the 1930s, the same who supported the 1964 coup – Dom Antônio de Castro Meyer and Dom Geraldo Proença Sigaud –, together with the founder of the institution called Tradition, Family and Property [TFP = Tradição, Família e Propriedade], Plínio Correa de Oliveira, at that time denounced the ‘modernism’ (i.e. Maritainism) of the Brazilian Catholic Action and since 1951 had been working together in the conservative Catholic weekly *O Catolicismo* (Della Cava, 1975, p.36). For this reason the topic of the Catholic hierarchy’s action cannot be considered only from the aspect of the “profound decentralization of the Catholic Church [in Brazil] at the precise moment when the political system of the country was going firmly towards marked centralization” (Della Cava, 1975, p.32), but one must take into account that this positioning of social Catholicism – which already had a foundation since *Rerum novarum* – was now conducted along at least two main paths, different and opposed to each other. The second one is the object of study proposed here: a segment of the Catholic hierarchy – roughly expressed – accepted the interaction of

the organic system, in the form of Ultramontanism, with the liberal system; another segment, which operated the system based on the organicist foundation, reorganized itself to act within the country by making a certain reading of the international situation, continuing the project under a new channel of leadership and allying segments participating in the ecclesial institution and segments participating in the military institution that shared ideas that were concurrently anti-liberal and anti-Communist.

The first line mentioned was the one that, acting within the Catholic institution in Brazil, in practice took on a new role in the relationship with a State theoretically founded on contractualism. In the Brazilian context this line appeared clearly with the formalization of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops [CNBB = Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil] in 1952, which was established under the leadership of Dom Helder Câmara, who had been connected to Integralism in the 1930s and directed the Catholic Action since 1947. The new institutional form of Catholic action at the national level took up the channels that had previously been opened by lay people to participate in Brazil's political process and, at the same time, became one more hierarchical channel of communication with the Vatican, besides the one represented by Cardinal Archbishop Jaime de Barros Câmara. From the adoption of this form of institutional action one may deduce the concern about the opening of a new political space by the Holy See after World War II. It also allows one to claim that what was going on was a search for a specific manner to influence society and the government and also that the above-mentioned collapse was a broad and complex phenomenon. It also indicates – as clearly evidenced by the data that indicate the initiative of Vatican diplomacy to implement CNBB and in the concrete action of appointing new members of the hierarchy – that at the beginning of the 1950s, from within the pontificate of Pius XII (1939-1958), a change of direction was being formulated and applied by the Holy See to the diplomatic relations with the national States via concordats.

Two other initiatives considered less important in Brazil at the time can be taken into account to elucidate the direction taken by the second line of activity of the Catholic institution that was being formed at this time. One of them is the TFP, considered by Della Cava (1975, p.37) as “a ‘minuscule, fanatical’ movement which, within more or less five years, only scratched the surface of Brazil's political life”; the other one, which is also recorded by Della Cava (1975, p.37), is the founding, “under the ideological influence of Maritain”, of the Christian Democratic Movement for Latin America, in 1946, by Alceu Amoroso Lima – who had definitively left fascism behind after 1937 – and by

the Chilean Eduardo Frei, as well as the establishment of a party under this name, Christian Democratic Party, in 1948. The latter was, “since its inception, connected to the clergy, but to those elements of the clergy who were less connected to local and state-level politics”: in 1962, at the “height” of its action, this *party* gathered “5.7% of the votes in Congress”.

The formation of the Christian Democratic Party [PDC – Partido Democrata Cristão] – which became possible in the Church’s new hierarchical context of the mid-century with the participation of Alceu Amoroso Lima, one of the important intellectuals connected to the ultramontane project in the form it took under the leadership of Dom Leme – can be interpreted as an attempt to continue that proposal of the Catholic elite in the light of the change of direction signaled by the action of the Brazilian hierarchy, via CNBB, and the renewal of the political line adopted by the Vatican. The signs of change must have been clear since the beginning of the decade and they were institutionalized in 1959 when the pope and Doctor of Theology John XXIII called the Vatican Council II (1962-1965). In this frame it is possible to locate the observation of Bruneau (1974, p.90) that the “initial success of LEC and its strict control by the hierarchy made it much more attractive to the Church [under the leadership of Dom Leme] and [until then] had discouraged attempts to form a Christian Democratic Party like those that were made in many countries of Europe and some of Latin America (mainly in Chile and in Venezuela)”. The question asked by Della Cava (1975, p.33) points to the reason why Alceu Amoroso Lima’s initiative “as a new instrument” of Catholic political insertion in the Brazilian context failed. Della Cava concludes – because he does not consider the existence of another path through which the electoral result obtained by this party was coopted – that “it does not appear forced to us to suggest that the relative failure of the PDC was inversely proportional to the success of the alternative effort” constituted by the institutionalization of the CNBB.

It is the data relating to these initiatives that introduce and highlight the importance of studying the other important line – as a fact that occurred – in order to understand the process that was reorganized in Brazil at that time and had its foundation in the ultramontane project. Della Cava (1975, p.21) studies it based on the criterion of the “double crisis” that affected “Brazilian Catholicism at the end of the [19]40s and beginning of the [19]50s”, ascribed by the author to the “erosion of the religious monopoly” and the collapse of leadership, “which lasted a decade”. The topic is discussed under the aspects of the priesthood, lay religiosity and alternative beliefs, which refers to

Pentecostalism and Marxism. In the content of the three subtitles enounced the data that are related to the activities of North American Catholicism during the same period are worthy of attention.

Concerning the problem of the lack of priestly vocations in Brazil, Della Cava says that it is part of a “third and last effort” to fill the places of a growing ecclesial structure – also in the Brazilian case – which was “undertaken in the 1940s”, when “[North] American priests, removed by the war from the missions in Asia, used the good neighbor policy to perform a reconnaissance of Latin America” and “increased their incursion through the South, reflecting the growing integration of the region into the sphere of influence of the United States. These inspection trips, however, revealed the interest of the American Catholic minority to appropriate themselves of the Catholic life in Latin America” (Della Cava, 1975, p.25). The threat came from the “Protestant compatriots because of their religious proselytism and their considerable influence on the US government’s directions with respect to Inter-American policy”. It also had to do with the observation of “a Church strictly structured in terms of class, constituted by privileged and uninvolved laypeople and a mass of poor ‘superstitious semi-human beings’, none of them able to resist rival ideologies”, especially Communism. A Jesuit assessed them as “seeing ‘disaster written in the skies’” due to the “Protestant proselytism funded by North Americans’ and the ‘workers’ union agitation instigated by the Soviet Union”, which should be countered with “mass training of Mexican seminary students in Texas” and the “launch of an ‘appeal for 40 thousand missionaries’ to go down to Latin America immediately and bring the bark of St. Peter that was about to submerge to firm land” (Della Cava, 1975, p.25).

The divergence between the two lines is highlighted under the figure of speech that is essential in the tradition of Christianity: in the interview to *Jornal do Brasil*, in 1947, in which Dom Helder Câmara talked “for the first time” about the reorganization of the hierarchy’s action and referred to the need to “build a completely new bark for the Church to be able to sail on the sea of modern times” (Della Cava, 1975, p.34). The effort to bring the bark that is about to submerge to firm land is directed by North American Catholics to the three Latin American countries “where the Protestant missions were most active: Puerto Rico, Brazil and Cuba”, countries that “already in 1946 ... [received] 40% of the North American missionaries and over 50% of the religious”, says Della Cava (1975, p.25). Without expressly mentioning this possibility as a result of war, i.e. of the dispute for the market among the different models of capitalist expansion, he says that this number of Catholic activists

increased “after the missions in China and the former colonies in Asia and Africa were closed in the [19]50s and [19]60s, respectively”. The 1945 appeal by Father John Considine, of the Maryknoll religious order, was presented as a front against “Protestantism”, which grew “everywhere throughout Latin America and nowhere faster than in Brazil”. If we consider the necessary relationship established, already in the 1920s, by Brazilian lay Catholics between Protestantism and liberalism, it is possible to see the size of the challenge for the ultramontane project that, in this situation in 1960, meant a new effort to “mobilize and send 20,000 North American missionaries to Latin America within a decade” (Della Cava, 1975, p.27, 25). Under the “national command” of Father Considine, taken up at the request of Pope John XXIII, the short and long term consequence of this effort of the “North American Catholic Church – enriched by the prosperity of the [19]50s” was to immediately begin to “play two other significant roles: it became one of the main sources of the Vatican to fund the Latin American Church (the other was West Germany)”, and then to organize the “food surplus program, known as *Caritas*, developed in association with the US Department of Agriculture, [that] within a short time became the vital bloodline of the social welfare programs sponsored by the Latin American Church”. This effort meant the political escalade of the action of segments of certain North American religious orders such as, for instance, Maryknoll, which began to work with the Latin American revolutionary movements of the 1970s and 1980s. It should be noted that the social works and programs of the Catholic institutions in Latin America promoted with funds from institutions such as *Caritas* were evaluated by Della Cava (1975, p.25) as “having an impressively paternalistic tendency”, without tracing the ideological origins of this practice and without indicating in the text the source of enrichment of this Catholic institution in the United States.

While in Brazil the Communist Party was again repressed and driven underground by the Dutra Government in 1946 after the electoral victories of 1945, the expansion process of the Soviet Union was going on. In 1948, when Czechoslovakia was invaded, “the lines against Marxism became stronger everywhere”, says Della Cava (1975, p.30). At this time, “under the leadership of the USA and with the support of the Roman Catholic Church, the Crusade against Communism was launched, also called ‘Cold War’”, precisely in the middle of those undertakings that were evaluated by Golbery do Couto e Silva (1993, p.118) in the 1980 lecture as “dangerous redeeming crusades in distant lands” in which the United States of America became involved. During this new period of turmoil and uncertainty for the Catholic program, the action of

the Brazilian Expeditionary Force [FEB = Força Expedicionária Brasileira] under North American command during World War II under the Vargas Government was carried out. This took place in a context prior to the conflict between different and opposite currents among the Brazilian military, which became visible during the elections to the Board of the Brazilian Military Club in 1952, when General Estillac Leal left the command of the Ministry of War, which favored the structural modifications and a return to repression in the military sphere. This was done with the collaboration of North American officers – the Military Agreement between the United States and Brazil is from this time – and aimed at facilitating the victory of the Democratic Crusade current, which disputed the elections against the nationalists Estillac Leal and Horta Barbosa and operated under the banner of a healthy nationalism. Its mission was to keep the Military Club away from the totalitarian influences of the right or the left, i.e. to seek a rational nationalism. The outstanding action of Golbery do Couto e Silva, who postulated a healthy nationalism, in rearticulating the Democratic Crusade favored the election of Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco as President of the Club and gave a direction to the anti-Communist policy. As a support to the program, the “Manifesto of the Colonels” (1954) was published, through which Golbery do Couto e Silva – indicated as the main author of the document – pressured for the Brazilian military to take a position regarding action in national politics.

The change in the institutional relation of the Catholic hierarchy with the national State after 1930 was a historical phenomenon parallel to the change – in practice – in the domestic and foreign political behavior of the Federal Executive of the United States. Because of the domestic recession and the necessary competition with the equally expansionist economic system of the Soviet market, the United States became aggressive in conquering the markets of Asia and the Pacific and intensified their domination over the areas of the Pacific which were then considered under their control. It then occurred that the groups that in the 1920s and 1930s reacted and defended the growth of the State through authoritarian and expansionist systems – those that achieved power in Europe and in Asia – brought discredit to the political theory of neutrality and agreements symbolized by the League of Nations. The same happened after World War II, when the United States promoted the policy of bi and multilateral military alliances.

In the situation that resulted in World War II, the policy of the Brazilian State under the Vargas administration was of industrial growth and non-alignment with the United States. This is a political practice that, beginning with the

second Vargas administration, was characterized as multilateral in foreign relations and that was not joined by all domestic political segments, especially those who thought of the Brazilian economy as an agricultural exporter and as dependent on or complementary to the North American one. This is the factor that allows discussion of the analysis by Della Cava (1975, p.39): among other depreciative utterances regarding the role of the Brazilian government during the period, the author says that “the trips of Messrs. Kubitschek, Quadros and Goulart to Washington were not merely symbolic, insofar as the domestic campaign against Communism was precisely the coin to pay the piper”, i.e. what at the time would be called bargaining coin, and that, with regard to Brazil, “the excessive dependence on the United States which had been established by three decades of industrialization made it essential to maintain cordial relations”. Intending to demonstrate the claim that there was “an ideological harmony that approaches Church and State” during the period from 1954 to 1964 and the existence of an “essentially anti-Communist policy practiced by all Brazilian administrations since 1930”, the author claims that “in the [19]50s Anti-Communism was part of the ‘Cold War’ and the [Brazilian] State [with a growing and intense nationalist component] was a theoretician in the defense of ‘Western and Christian civilization’” (Della Cava, 1975, p.38). This statement is only valid when attributed to the exponent segment of the Brazilian economy which was, at the same time, part of the Catholic elite.

The reorganization of the landscape of pre-World War II economic confrontation – polarizing competing market systems based on systems of State that were in practice antagonistic – mobilized different political segments in Brazil. Considering the time elapsed between the beginning of the second Vargas administration and the 1964 coup as a period of continuity in the multilateralization policy, this proposal constituted the initiative of a segment that had been acting in the State and in national economy since the 1930s, that accepted economic relations with the Soviet Union and Communist China and was described in Brazil simply as nationalist.

Another segment that operated during this period – called “healthy nationalism” by Golbery do Couto e Silva (1967, p.101) as opposed to Vargas’ nationalism – had the opportunity of reorganizing itself in the new situation and, again due to a problem of institutional definition of power and internal authority of the national State, discussed under the criterion of legitimacy, became subordinated to an external alliance with the United States, without doing a reading of the broader political-economic picture that would show the new structure of economic hegemony that was being formed there. In this

North American structure of power, in which the political parties, through Congress and the Executive, no longer determined the North American policy, the corporations – the transnational conglomerates – began to run the capitalist (called free and liberal) economy, and did this seconded by the power of the military apparatus. The anti-Communist alliance was envisaged as an exchange of favors, as a function of the “antagonism between the Christian West and the Communist East [which] still dominates the world situation” (Silva, 1967, p.4) and, given the unique geopolitical perspective, was called “loyal bargaining” (Silva, 1967, p.51), because it was a common antagonism faced by Catholic Brazil and by the “bigger brothers of the North” (Silva, 1967, p.52).

It is in this context that one can understand the alliance made with the articulation of North American priests, committed, like Golbery do Couto e Silva, to reorganizing the same ultramontane project. Those priests were the ones who “observed” that in 1945 Protestantism – not that of the “historical churches”, but of the “Brazilian Pentecostal congregations” – was growing “‘everywhere in Latin America’, and nowhere faster than in Brazil” (Della Cava, 1975, p.27). Internally, in Brazil, this line in the 1950s constituted what Della Cava recorded as an activity of contrast – or antagonism to the “alleged radicalism of the CNBB”, the “accusations of radicalism [against the CNBB] from the Catholic right” (Della Cava, p.37, 38) – and instituted a new time “of intense piety and public devotion at the parish and diocesan level”, promoting “Eucharistic Congresses” and “national campaigns such as the anti-Communist pilgrimages of the image of Our Lady of Fatima and the Family Rosary Crusade of Father Peyton, who, in North American Catholicism, was an alternative to Reverend Billy Graham” (Della Cava, 1975, p.38).

Della Cava found that “the political reflex of liturgy – also evident in Leme’s time – was not in question”, indicating that “in 1960, when the tensions and frustrations between Brazilian Catholicism and society began to come to the fore” and when the right wing of the Catholic institution in Brazil itself suffered what in the text is called “involuntary marginalization” (Della Cava, 1975, p.37), the TFP merely scratched the surface of Brazil’s political life. The founder of the updated organization collaborated since 1951 with the “dissident bishops of 1960, Dom Antônio de Castro Meyer, of the Campos Diocese, and Dom Geraldo Proença Sigaud, of Diamantina” (Della Cava, 1975, p.36). In 1958, when Golbery do Couto e Silva was writing parts of the text that made up the edition of *Geopolítica do Brasil*, in São Paulo – which was at the same time the political center of resistance to the Vargas project since 1930 and the economic center managing the agricultural export policy depending on the



North American economy – the “headquarters of the Brazilian PDC” was being “installed” (Della Cava, 1975, p.33). The PDC “quickly mobilized many young urban Catholics who were dissatisfied with the conservative *coronelismo*, enchanted with Maritain’s view of progress, Catholicism and democracy, and comforted by the thunderous successes and friendly openings of the founding parties in Europe (Italy, Germany and France)”.

It should be taken into account, when thinking about these data, that the theoretical proposal of Golbery do Couto e Silva against what can be called “Vargas-style bargaining” promoted by the performance of FEB involved, at that time, a view of the North American State resulting from a specific situation and also from a line of Catholicism that was recovering an important ultramontane tradition as it was exercised during the period of the Old Republic and that, in turn, was updated according to the guidelines of the Holy See enounced as doctrine, according to J.-Y. Calvez and J. Perrin, between the mid-19th century and the mid-20th. Whereas the post-1945 Catholicism was already obeying another guideline that predominated at the Holy See, culminating with “Paul VI and his international policy of dialogue, peace, affirmation of a universal common good that requires the promotion of social justice in international terms” and with the publication of documents such as *Populorum progressio*, evaluated as the “*Mater et magistra* in universal terms” – and whereas the United Nations Organization (1945) was then supported by the Pontiff, “who visited it personally, to appeal there in favor of Peace” (Villaça, 1975, p.148-149) –, Brazilian Catholics were divided – as throughout the *ecclesia* – into different currents, and the alliances they made determined the direction of the political action – made possible by financial resources – which culminated in the coup d’état in 1964 in Brazil.

By understanding the persistence of the ideas of Catholicism of the time of the Old Republic, as spelled out also by Antonio Carlos Villaça, and their update in new situations, it is possible to situate the configuration of Golbery do Couto e Silva’s ideas, their adoption by a specific political group made up of military and civilians at the Brazilian Institute of Economic, Sociology and Politics [IBESP = Instituto Brasileiro de Economia, Sociologia e Política], the alliances established then and the influence they were able to exert. These ideas, according to Villaça (1975, p.148-149), are not isolated in the Brazilian context, as exemplified by him in the way he characterizes the intellectual Gustavo Corção: “traditionalist, defender of order and authority, fierce enemy of progressivism”; a Catholic intellectual who “turns to the past” and “writes a book to say that the 20th century is the century of nothing”, who “reneges the

democratic ideal”, who “fights socialism” and “is mistrustful towards the UN”. Corção and Plínio Correia “do not accept the least dialogue with Marxists, nor the doctrine of Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit” to support opposition to theses advocated during that period, including the thesis that “the social issue today is underdevelopment” and that “the philosophical issue is that of man as a situated being” advocated both by laypeople in the social movements of the period and by CNBB’s radical bishops. Villaça argues that the modern theses – “here is what Corção cannot accept” – and the perception of the data as a whole may lead to a broader conclusion when one analyzes the update to post-World War II and the view of *ecclesia* based on the line given by the ultramontane project, i.e. the philosophical line based on neo-Thomism, and when one looks at the way in which this project was rearticulated by the advocates of the Order.

In this framework one can understand the proposal of the Crusade for Democracy – the anti-liberal crusade of the 19th century, which foresaw the future risk of materialistic Communism, i.e. of atheism – and the way in which the confrontation that existed between the two philosophical lines which were clearly antagonistic since at least the 14th century took place. This concept of crusade was transposed by Golbery do Couto e Silva in Brazil in the mid-20th century to anti-Marxism and used to defend a democracy, even though (or precisely because) Marxism also came from a philosophical line underlying the proposed organicist policy. Therefore, the use of the concept ‘democracy’ is out of line in this proposition, and this term, when used to refer to North American policy, as Brazilian Catholics did in the 1920s, points to a meaning determined by its origin in the Enlightenment. If we follow the designation of the periodization of the history of philosophy, the reference to the term ‘democracy’ is connected to the contractualistic notion of State. The provisos to be made are that in fact the term ‘crusade’ is used by the North American military in the context of the Cold War, a fact mentioned both by José Oscar Beozzo (1992, p.177-218) and by Enrique Dussel (1992, p.224). As to the last decades of the 20th century, there is a relationship to be investigated, viz. a relationship established between North American policy and the Holy See policy regarding Latin America during this period, which depends on verification in documents.

If the Constitution of the Republic “was an imitation of the clauses and ideas of other countries, especially the United States and France”, while in that of the United States “the separation and neutrality in religious issues’ was a political principle” and in France it was a reaction to the Ancien Regime (Bruneau, 1974, p.56), segments of the Catholic Church in Brazil had a different expectation: the “Pastoral Letter” of the Brazilian Episcopate to the clergy

and to the faithful of March 19, 1890 stated that the United States, “already in 1890 enjoy[ed] a great reputation in Brazil”: “Ah! It would be great if our statesmen, many of whom feel proud to be Catholic, were to treat Catholicism with the same respect and deference as it is treated by the Protestant statesmen of the North American Union!” because they do not exclude the “influx of the religious idea” from the “ideal of progress and civilization” (see Araújo, 1986, p.59-60). The same Letter proposed to imitate “the broad way of dealing with things, the trust in the progress of the country through Religion, justice, freedom, obedience to the law, the fruitful initiative of each citizen in the great work of social progress”, using the argument that in the United States “today there are 10 million Catholics, in comparison with 100,000 that they were only a century ago, with 62 bishops, 13 archbishops, including one Cardinal, and a very great number of clergy”, and that the American government made “such astonishing progress” because “the bishops, the priests, the Catholics are the best citizens, the best friends of the republic”. The Letter argues in favor of abandoning “the miserable small-mindedness that is a characteristic of our race [of Brazilians], the mean jealousies and mistrust, the atrophying mania of wanting the government to regulate everything, including Religion, and let’s leave it free, and make it easier for it to grow, because the State will only profit from this” (see Araújo, 1986, p.59-60). The data on the numerical and economic growth of the Catholic ecclesial institution recorded by Della Cava (1975, p.27) for the United States in the mid-20th century and on the effective intervention undertaken by the missionaries in the attempt to reorganize it are important to understand the continuity of the openness to North American influence in Brazil. The factor of influence that appears to be important during the period, however, is given by the meaning itself of the term ‘democracy’.

In the North American tradition, theoretically, this term is related to the liberal political-economic system and, therefore, expresses the contractualist view of the State, a view supported by a multi-party system. In practice, however, the North American political-economic system was strictly controlled by a *de facto* nationalist and protectionist structure of that country, a structure that was functionally divided by a two-party form of administration, whose difference basically lay in the way of expanding trade. The democracy observed in the North American practice was the one that became part of Golbery do Couto e Silva’s proposal and was implemented in Brazil with the National Renewal Alliance [Arena = Aliança Renovadora Nacional] as the party in power and the Brazilian Democratic Movement [MDB – Movimento Democrático Brasileiro] as the opposition allowed after the 1964 coup.

Therefore, the word ‘democracy’, when used by Golbery do Couto e Silva, can only be understood because it is a definition established by a context and in a doctrinal text. Outside of this perspective, also when it was used in the North American text elaboration, the proposition “Crusade for Democracy” is an unsustainable theoretical concept as far as logic is concerned and can only be maintained in political practice if it is used non-critically, dogmatically, or under threat of force, which were the three forms adopted in Brazil to achieve the coup d’état in 1964.

If the North American post-1945 – both domestic and foreign – policy is viewed as authoritarian, one can perceive the alliance accepted by Golbery do Couto e Silva “in view of such severe, multiform and omnipresent threats” faced by the West in the “defense of the free world”. The 1958 text records the daydreams of this politician who justified the alliance for the “crusade” against “such severe, multiform and omnipresent threats” – an alliance that in turn provided the foundation for the proposition of a “loyal bargain”.

Obviously, it would not be an easy task, despite the unarguable supremacy of ... the great leading country of North America ... The North American experience in this specific aspect would leave much to be desired, and the highly laudable and productive effort of planning and conducting an international policy above the parties, the so celebrated two-party policy [from the North American model] could not be maintained [in Brazil] over the long term without discrepancies or breaches, because of the natural internal divergences and the convenience, not always politically resolved, of the successive electoral campaigns. Fatigue among the people after a long, devastating [electoral] war, the still almost general ignorance about the vital [anti-Communist] interests that would be played out in distant and strange lands [in Asia], the democratic need for a broad public debate on the most delicate issues and even on those that recommend a confidential treatment, the pressure of groups that are more concerned with immediate advantages than with the well-being and future of the Nation – the famous lobbies – and, not less, the regrettable, sterile disputes for prestige among the military of the three armed forces [indicating that there is no unanimity] – were huge difficulties that only time would slowly help overcome. On the other hand, the interests of the different allies themselves [subordinating themselves to those of the *defense of the West*] and, only on a smaller scale, of the neutral ones themselves would have to be met [by the great leading country of North America] within certain irreducible limits so that the West would finally reach a minimal degree of general agreement, essential to the true existence of what would deserve the

name of a collective or coordinate strategy of the entire Western world [in the crusade against the *infidel Communist enemy*]. (Silva, 1967, p.239-240)

This juxtaposition of concepts can only be understood for its usefulness, given by the transposition of contexts – from the 19th century, from the medieval ‘crusade’ to that of the project of North American political-economic ‘practice’ since the 1930s. At a practical level, it can be concluded that: (a) if the sphere of the Church is considered both from the standpoint of the guideline imprinted by the Holy See policy after the collapse of post-1945 Ultramontanism and on the basis of the rearticulation of the doctrine as proposed by the CNBB, the project that made the 1964 coup in Brazil feasible was anachronistic; (b) if the sphere of the North American policy is considered, it was a development project that was impossible to implement by an independent national State during a period when the priority aim of the capitalist expansion of the transnational conglomerates was Asia, supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and by the World Bank. The loyal bargain implied that the project of Brazilian autonomy would continue, which was impossible in the global hegemony sphere of the capitalist conglomerates; and (c) the comprehension of the political history of the 1964 coup can be studied on the basis of the clash between different segments of the Brazilian military. This study may be considered the struggle for hegemony in conducting the process begun immediately in April 1964 and the change of the groups that were running the Brazilian federal Executive, or the evaluation performed in 1980 by Golbery do Couto e Silva (1981, p.118-119), expressed in the conference “National Political Situation: The Executive Power”, according to which the failure to maintain power was to be attributed to the “hypertrophy of the State”, “of the executive”, to “the faster centralization” and to “the bureaucracy” that “flourishingly expanded” under the promotion of the military dictatorship. These aspects indicate that the political plans for the defense of the Christian West, even if they were suspended more than once – including “due to the historical unfeasibility of the Paulo Maluf candidacy, of which [Golbery] was one of the coordinators” in 1983, as Elio Gaspari (1987, p.26) says – did not exhaust the planning, since in 1984 the ideologue of the coup,

with the photo of the rally for direct elections held in Rio de Janeiro on the first page of the newspapers spread over his desk, admitted: ‘Yes, this thing I talked about may be happening, but anyhow, my business is not crowds’. And he continued to side with Maluf, while a large part of the military leaders who called him

counter-revolutionary because he helped Geisel do away with censorship of the press, torture and the AI-5 secretly and smilingly approached Tancredo Neves.

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