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**The Catholic Response to A Republican Challenge: Adversaries of the Catholic Church in Brazil through the Lens of "Good Press" (1889-1930)**

*PhD thesis by*

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## Abstract

When Brazil abolished the monarchy and became a republic in 1889, it also embraced an entirely different model of the relationships between State and Catholic Church. Unlike the previous Portuguese colonial (1500-1822) and imperial governments (1822-1889) that exercised strict control over the institutional church known as *padroado régio* (“royal patronage”), the new regime of the “Old Republic” (1889-1930) gave the Brazilian Catholic hierarchy extraordinary degree of freedom. But at the same time, it deprived it of its traditional privileges – from the status of the official “state church”, to secularization of marriages, cemeteries and public education.

Facing an unprecedented situation, the Brazilian Catholic Church had to redefine its positions towards the state and society and look for alternative models of mutual relationships both at home and abroad. Based on the officially-sanctioned Catholic press and especially the influential biweekly magazine *Mensagem da Fé*, this thesis attempts to reconstruct the perceptions and attitudes of the institutional Catholicism towards challenges brought by the regime change, tracking the image formation of new and re-formulation of old enemies and creation of a new vision for the Catholic role in recently secularized Brazil.

**keywords:** secularization; Catholic Church; First Republic; Brazil

## Abstrakt

Když se z Brazílie po převratu v roce 1889 stala republika, změnil se také do té doby nastavený model vzájemných vztahů mezi Státem a Církví. Zatímco dřívější portugalské koloniální vlády (1500-1822) a posléze i nezávislí brazilští císařové (1822-1889) měly nad brazilskou katolickou církví značnou kontrolou v rámci tzv. *padroado régio* („královského patronátu“), nový republikánský režim známý jako „Stará republika“ (1889-1930) poskytl katolické hierarchii nevídanou míru svobody. Zároveň však církev připravil o staletá privilegia, když ji zbavil pozice oficiální „státní církve“, sekularizoval sňatky i pohřby a vytlačil náboženství ze státních škol.

Za této bezprecedentní situace musela katolická církev přehodnotit své postoje vůči brazilskému státu a společnosti a poohlédnout se po alternativách vzájemných vztahů doma i v zahraničí. Tato disertační práce se pokouší na základě oficiálního katolického tisku (a především vlivného čtrnáctideníku *Mensagem da Fé*) zrekonstruovat, jak brazilská institucionální církev vnímala nový režim, konstruovala obraz nových a přetvářela obraz starých nepřátel a postupně vytvářela vizi katolického působení v čerstvě sekularizovaném státu.

**klíčová slova:** sekularizace; katolická církev, První republika; Brazílie

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## Introduction

In 1889, the Brazilian Catholic Church was on its knees. The Brazilian Empire (1822-1889), the direct successor of the Portuguese colonial regime (1500-1822) that settled and conquered the territory of what we know today as “Brazil” in the mutually interchangeable name of the Throne and the Altar, was overthrown by a group of revolutionary-minded soldiers and replaced by a republic – the first of its kind, nowadays often called the “Old Republic” (*República Velha*).

A new elite, strongly influenced by liberal and positivist ideals, soon began to implement a program that it already tried to push forward in the last days of the monarchy: a formal divorce between State and a Catholic Church that enjoyed the status of an official religion during the Empire, accompanied by the rapid secularization of public education and key aspects of citizens’ lives, including marriages (now replaced by mandatory civil union) and death (secularization of cemeteries). At the same time, early republican legislation fully opened Brazil to Protestant and Spiritist religious competitors that further challenged Roman Catholic dominance in the society.

While the Brazilian Catholic Church never had to face the kind of large-scale material confiscations or violent persecution, so typical for revolutionary regimes in countries such as France or Mexico, the newly-established republic hardly presented favourable ground for the institution that used to think of itself as synonymous with the Brazilian state and nation. Monarchy was overthrown in the name of “progress” (that, after all, even appeared on the new Brazilian flag) and modernization inspired by successful and often Protestant countries – the United Kingdom and the United States (Aquino 2012).<sup>1</sup>

Roman Catholicism, on the other hand, was associated by the early republican elite with the very opposite of these values, painted at best as an obsolete, “Medieval” ideology from the dark colonial past. It seemed that the Old Republic was deemed to become fertile ground for anti-clericalism and a secularist agenda, promulgated by rapidly emerging and increasingly prominent liberal and even openly Protestant or Spiritist newspapers and journals.

And yet, the situation in 1930 – the year of another military coup that marked the end of the First Republic and the rise of a young politician from Rio Grande do Sul, Getúlio Vargas (1882-1954)<sup>2</sup> who would soon become the head of the authoritative regime known as *Estado Novo* (1937-1946) – looked very different. Religious education was back in the public schools of Minas Gerais state and would soon once again become available at the national level. And the support of the Brazilian Catholic hierarchy turned out to be in high demand by the politicians of the new republic, as apparent most obviously during the inaugural ceremony of the monumental statue of Christ the Redeemer in 1931 that dominates the landscape of Rio de Janeiro to this day.

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<sup>1</sup>AQUINO, Maurício de. 2012. “Modernidade republicana e diocesanização do catolicismo no Brasil: as relações entre Estado e Igreja na Primeira República (1889-1930)“. *Revista Brasileira de História*, v. 32, nº 63: pp. 143-170.

<sup>2</sup> President between 1930-1945 and then briefly between 1951-1954.

On this occasion, cardinal Sebastião Leme da Silveira Cintra (1882-1942), accompanied by 45 Brazilian bishops and archbishops and also by the president of the new provisional government Vargas and his ministers, blessed the statue of Christ as king and asked him to save Brazil – something hardly imaginable even a few years before when the project of the statue was perceived as a symbol of the Catholic ambitions in opposition to the secular nature of the First Republic and as a direct challenge to the constitutionally enshrined equality between religions (Ranquetat 2016)<sup>3</sup>.

Of course, the road from hostile separation to cordial reapproximation that eventually reached its peak during Vargas' *Estado Novo* is extremely complex and can be studied from different angles, as historians writing almost exclusively in Portuguese have indeed done in the past decades.

In my dissertation, I have decided to focus exclusively on the Catholic side of this larger-than-life story of the changing status of the Catholic Church within the Brazilian state and Brazilian society. More specifically, I became interested in what it meant to be a "Catholic" in Brazil in the new socio-political environment of the self-declared lay republic, answering the following questions:

a) *what role should a "Catholic" play in the state and society that no longer defaultly associated its own existence with the Roman Catholic Church, removing all references to God in the constitution;*

b) *who were the main competitors (or, in their terminology, rather open "enemies") of Catholicism in the newly opened arena of ideologies and religions and in what ways did they pose threat to the Catholic Church and, by extension, to its understanding of the Brazilian state, society and nation;*

And finally c) *what changes did the Catholics propose and attempt to push through in order to make the new regime more in line with their own ideal vision of Brazil?*

I am aware how problematic it might be to generally refer to a "Catholic" reaction and perceptions; even more so in a country such as Brazil where the overwhelming proportion of its population during the First Republic continued to declare itself to belong to the Roman Catholic Church – 98,9 percent in the 1890 census, 93,6 percent in 1900 and 95 percent in 1940, already in the middle of the Vargas regime.<sup>4</sup> Statistically speaking, therefore, the Brazilian First Republic was a period with an unquestionable majority of self-ascribed Catholics.

It was, however, not a representative democracy in the modern sense as it excluded women from the right to vote for its entire existence (female suffrage was only legalized in 1932) but also all those unable to read and write; illiterate citizens would actually vote for the very first time in 1985 and so suffrage was effectively reserved for a very small portion of the

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<sup>3</sup> RANQUETAT Júnior, Cesar Alberto. 2016. *Laicidade à Brasileira: Estudo Sobre a Controvérsia em Torno da Presença de Símbolos Religiosos em Espaços Públicos*. Paco Editorial: Jundiaí.

<sup>4</sup> Question of religious affiliation was not part of otherwise detailed 1920 national census. See "O Quesito 'Religião' no Censo Demográfico de 1950", *Documentos Censitários Série C, Número 8*, Rio de Janeiro, 1952.



population.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, there is no available data for the amount of actually *practicing* Catholics in opposition to what the authorities of the Catholic Church and their affiliated press commonly called “Catholics by name only” or “religiously ignorant”.

The understanding of “Catholicism” in this dissertation is narrower and corresponds with what Teodoro (2008)<sup>6</sup> branded “militant Catholicism”, that is the positions and attitudes assumed by the Romanized and overwhelmingly ultramontane official hierarchy of the Brazilian Catholic Church during the First Republic. I decided to track these attitudes and formation of a specific Brazilian Catholic identity similar to what Clark (2003)<sup>7</sup> calls “New Catholicism” in the European context through the media officially-sanctioned by the Brazilian Catholic Church, the so-called “good press” (*boa imprensa*). Even more specifically through content analysis of one of the most influential and yet long time neglected representatives of this official press, the biweekly magazine *Mensagem da Fé*<sup>8</sup>.

I consider *Mensagem* relevant source material for the above stated research aims not only because it was literally published “with ecclesiastical approval” without interruption between 1902 and 1930 – that is for almost the entire period of the First Republic, thus providing consistency and time span unprecedented with virtually all the other media outlets officially-sanctioned by the Catholic Church in Brazil. Its value also stems from the national outreach that at certain points made this Salvador-based magazine the most-read Catholic outlet in Brazil, and from the fact its regular contributors consisted both of important Catholic public figures (journalists, professors, politicians etc.) and of the highest members of the church hierarchy including bishops and even the archbishop of the senior archdiocese of Olinda-Recife. At the same time, as I further describe in chapter 1.5. **Mensagem da Fé: Representative of the ‘Good Press’** that provides detailed characteristic of the source, *Mensagem* formed an integral part of the web of official Catholic magazines and newspapers in the country, publishing all important documents of the local and transnational church and mutually reprinting articles by other representatives of the “good press”.

I find it quite fascinating that until now *Mensagem* has been almost entirely forgotten by the researchers of Brazilian Catholicism; they generally preferred to work with the magazine *A Ordem* founded by Jackson de Figueiredo (1891-1928) in 1921 that rose to prominence in the Catholic circles in later years. Part of the reason might be geographical, as *Mensagem* was based in Salvador in the Northeast and not in the central areas of Brazil, but most probably it can be ascribed to its relative inaccessibility – buried and scattered partially in the central Franciscan archive in São Paulo and libraries and mostly in the archive of the monastery of St. Francis in Salvador where I collected the surviving issues for years.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the 1920 census, astonishing 64,9 percent of Brazilians 15 years and older were counted as illiterate. See FERRARO, Alceu Ravello. 2002. “Analfabetismo e Níveis de Letramento no Brasil: O Que Dizem os Censos?” *Educ. Soc., Campinas, vol. 23, n. 81*: pp. 21-47.

<sup>6</sup> TEODORO da Silva, Wellington. 2008. “Catolicismo Militante na Primeira Metade Do Século XX Brasileiro”, *História Revista v. 13, n. 2*, pp. 541-563.

<sup>7</sup> CLARK, Christopher; KAISER, Wolfram (Eds.). 2003. *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>8</sup> On the following pages, I mostly refer to this source merely as “*Mensagem*” (other media including this word will be referred to in their full name), or alternatively “Mdf”.

Of course, *Mensagem* also had its specific biases as a magazine that could have at least partially impacted its content; for instance that it was founded and originally published by Franciscans from Germany, which clearly influenced how it presented Germany both in general and especially during the First World War. In the following pages, I will try to identify these extraordinary positions and reflect on them in comparison with other Catholic media, such as the aforementioned *A Ordem*. While studying the source, however, I did not find positions that would significantly set *Mensagem* apart from other “good press” outlets and it would be even hard to imagine, considering they operated in close collaboration both with each other and with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

As for the structure, this dissertation is divided into three distinct parts where I examine the primary source to answer different research questions. Part 1 provides the reader with a more general overview of the State-Church relationships in Brazil before and during the First Republic, both briefly tracking its chronological development from the colonial times to the gradual reapproximation by the end of the republic, and describing the instruments used by the Catholic Church throughout the republican period to regain its dominant position, with special emphasis on the role of the Catholic press. It also contains the characteristic of the most important primary source used in this dissertation, the aforementioned biweekly *Mensagem da Fé*, situated in the wider context of the Brazilian “good press”. This part is based on a combination of relevant academic literature and critical reading of the primary sources, including the official documents of the Catholic Church.

In part 2, I focus on the analysis of *Mensagem da Fé* in order to identify what is considered to be the most important “enemies” of Catholicism in Brazil, divide them based on shared aspects of their portrayal in the source material into different categories (ideological, religious, moral and foreign enemies) and figure out whether and how the perception of these diverse competitors changed over the course of the determined time frame.

Finally in part 3, I shift my attention to the alternative model of the state and society proposed by the Catholic “good press”. If the secular republic was clearly not acceptable and allowed the rise of the enemies of Catholicism, what exactly was supposed to change and based on what examples from home and abroad? I discuss both the idealized vision of what a truly “Catholic Brazil” would look like and the more particular demands most commonly brought up on the pages of *Mensagem*.

The second and third part of the dissertation is, in my view, closely interconnected and they constitute two different aspects of the formation of a religious identity. I agree with Alves (2005: 285)<sup>9</sup> that “identity presupposes conflict” – and that is why I prefixed formation of “enemies” to the actual proposals, which began to take concrete form slower and generally in opposition with the new, republican regime and its characteristics.

### **Current state of research**

Classical historians of the Brazilian First Republic paid little attention to religious issues in general, preferring instead to focus on political history, such as José Maria Bello in his

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<sup>9</sup> ALVES, Rubem. *Religião e Repressão*. São Paulo: Teológica e Edições Loyola, 2005, p. 285.

chronological and gradually expanding synthesis *História da República*<sup>10</sup>, or on the economic and institutional transformations like Marxist historian Edgard Carone did in his exhausting two-volume *A República Velha*<sup>11</sup>, inspired by Western material history.

The Catholic Church in the period of the First Republic also received little attention by the most important experts on Brazilian Catholicism writing in English, Thomas C. Bruneau and Scott Mainwaring, whose works gave incomparably more space to the post-war, “contemporary” development after the fall of Vargas’ *Estado Novo* and during the military dictatorship (1964-1985).

In this period, however, Bruneau and Mainwaring pursue entirely different courses, as focus of *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church*<sup>12</sup> lies in the institutional development and strategies employed by the Church as both national and international entity, while *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*<sup>13</sup> pursues a rather selectively intellectual background and the foundations of the so-called Popular (i.e. progressive) Church within Brazilian Catholicism and mostly omits the reactionary, traditionalist wing that played such an important role in the First Republic, even though Mainwaring distinguishes four different historical tendencies within the Brazilian Catholicism – a close alliance with the authoritative state, conservative modernization, a reformist and progressive strand that crystallized in the Liberation Theology. The continuing validity of these works, therefore, lies rather in their analysis of post-war Catholicism and the role of the Catholic Church during the Brazilian military regime.

Relevancy of the Antônio Villaça’s *O pensamento católico no Brasil*<sup>14</sup> to the topic remains in capturing trends and transformations (even though with unconcealed Catholic bias) within the intellectual elite of the Catholic Church, here embodied by “larger-than-life” personalities such as Júlio Maria or Jackson de Figueiredo over an extensive time frame – from the colonial period to the second half of the 20th century. The personality-focused history of Catholicism is in clear contrast with more structural works by Bruneau or Mainwaring.

Villaça’s fixation on Figueiredo’s magazine *A Ordem* might explain its prevalence as a major source for the Catholic press from the First Republic (and further) even among today’s researchers, although he also gives attention to certain intellectuals that actually regularly contributed to *Mensageiro da Fé*, such as journalist Carlos de Laet whom he portrays as a new kind of Catholic thinker in the newly pluralistic Brazil (Villaça 1975: 99).

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<sup>10</sup> BELLO, José Maria. 1964. *História da República: (1889-1954)*. São Paulo: Cia. Ed. Nacional

<sup>11</sup> CARONE, Edgard. 1971a. *A República Velha (Evolução Política) – Corpo e Alma do Brasil*. São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro; CARONE, Edgard. 1971b. *A República Velha (Instituição e Classes Sociais) – Corpo e Alma do Brasil*. São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro.

<sup>12</sup> BRUNEAU, Thomas C. 1974. *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>13</sup> MAINWARING, Scott. 1986. *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

<sup>14</sup> VILLAÇA, Antônio Carlos. 1975. *O Pensamento Católico no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores.

Carvalho (1990)<sup>15</sup> provides information on the competing, republican “thinking” in his more recent monograph *A formação das almas – o imaginário da república no Brasil* that is, however, not so concerned with particular intellectuals but follows the process of creation of the foundational “myths” and symbols (such as leader of revolt in Minas Gerais, Tiradentes, that was turned into a Christ-like figure) of the First Republic and inspiration that it took from abroad, especially France and the United States. Carvalho explains how early republicans attempted to construct a competing national identity not based on monarchy and religion (even though using religious symbolism, as apparent in the case of Tiradentes) in order to legitimize the new order.

More recently, two Brazilian scholars investigated in detail institutional relationships between the Catholic Church and State both during the First Republic and in the periods directly preceding and succeeding it (i.e. final years of the Empire and Vargas era) - Oscar de Figueiredo Lustosa and Riolando Azzi. Lustosa continued in the tradition of the focus on the political and institutional history in his *Igreja e Política no Brasil: do Partido Católico à LEC (1874 – 1945)*<sup>16</sup> and extended *A Igreja Católica no Brasil República: cem anos de compromisso (1889-1989)*<sup>17</sup> that covered the entire republican period in Brazil from the fall of the Empire to 1989.

Azzi coined some key terms for the Catholic attitude towards the First Republic, such as the "Catholic restoration" (*restauração católica*) and "Neo-Christendom" (*neocristandade*)<sup>18</sup> for the project of the official Catholic hierarchy in order to “recover its political space within the State” (Azzi 1994: 58). He also emphasised the influence of the Vatican and especially the papacy of Pius XI (r. 1922-1939) on the political stances of the Brazilian Catholic Church and individually the personality of the cardinal Sebastião Leme whose pastoral letter from 1916 he considers to be the beginning of the aforementioned project to “restore” the position of Catholicism in the country. Azzi's work on the topic is truly extensive, including a mammoth series of monographs called “History of the Catholic Thinking in Brazil” (*História do Pensamento Católico no Brasil*), covering Catholicism in the country from the colonial period to the “New State” of Getúlio Vargas, in which he distinguished between various identities within the history of Brazilian Catholicism.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from that, he wrote numerous shorter studies on the topics relevant to this dissertation, such as the Catholic institutional reforms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (i.e. the Romanization),<sup>20</sup> or what

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<sup>15</sup> CARVALHO, José Murilo de. 1990. *A formação das almas: o imaginário da República no Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

<sup>16</sup> LUSTOSA, Oscar de Figueiredo. 1983. *Igreja e Política no Brasil: do Partido Católico à LEC (1874 – 1945)*. São Paulo: Loyola.

<sup>17</sup> LUSTOSA, Oscar de Figueiredo. 1991. *A Igreja Católica no Brasil República: cem anos de compromisso (1889-1989)*. São Paulo: Paulinas.

<sup>18</sup> See AZZI, Riolando. 1994. *A neocristandade: um projeto restaurador*. São Paulo: Paulinas.

<sup>19</sup> See AZZI, Riolando. 1987a. *A cristandade colonial: Um projeto autoritário*. São Paulo: Paulinas; 1991. *A crise de Cristandade e o projeto liberal*. São Paulo: Paulinas; 1992. *O altar unido ao trono: um projeto conservador*. São Paulo: Paulinas; 1994. *O estado leigo e o projeto ultramontano*, São Paulo: Paulinas; 1994. *A neocristandade: um projeto restaurador*. São Paulo: Paulinas.

<sup>20</sup> AZZI, Riolando. 1974. “O movimento brasileiro de reforma católica durante o século XIX“. *Revista REB* vol. 34, pp. 646-662.

he considers to be the beginning of the Catholic restoration in 1920.<sup>21</sup> There is also a rising number of studies dealing with the Catholic media in Brazil, especially those focusing on the magazine *A Ordem*, that are crucial to understand the role of the “good press” in general. One of the earliest and most detailed is by Mônica Pimenta Velloso (1978).<sup>22</sup>

Shorter studies by Mariano (2011)<sup>23</sup> and Leite (2011)<sup>24</sup> provide valuable insight into the discussions over the terms of "secularism" and "laïcité" in the context of the Brazilian republic; Leite only focuses on the First Republic and some exaggerations commonly present in Brazilian historiography (probably influenced by the official Catholic discourse) concerning radicalism of the 1889-1891 separation while Mariano extends the argument up to the period of re-democratization after 1985. Mariano also points out the structural advantages that the Catholic Church enjoyed until recently and makes useful comparisons to the situation in other predominantly Catholic countries in Europe, such as Italy. These can be then compared with the European and especially French secularization process notably described by René Rémond's (1998) *Religion et Société en Europe*.<sup>25</sup>

As for wider context in terms of how the Catholic Church reacted to "modernity" (and discussions over the understanding of this term in relation to religion) from the perspective of the papacy, the body of literature is extremely vast. Countless authors examined the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) under the pope Pius IX (r. 1846-1878), for instance very recently O'Malley (2018)<sup>26</sup> who linked it closely with the establishment of Ultramontanism as a dominant political ideology within Catholicism. O'Malley heavily draws upon detailed histories of the council by two Jesuit authors, Giacomo Martina and Klaus Schatz. Arx (1998),<sup>27</sup> on the other hand, provided intellectual formulations and slightly different interpretations of Ultramontanism based on the case studies of six influential cardinals from the 19th century in his *Varieties of Ultramontanism*.

More theoretical studies include Bourg's *The Enduring Tensions Between Catholicism and Modernity*<sup>28</sup> that includes useful debate over the process of formulating “modernity” (or rather secular modernity) in opposition to Catholicism, and the debate within the global Catholicism on how to formulate a response to the challenging new situation that arose over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Bourg identifies two very different Catholic “alternative modernities” in the

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<sup>21</sup> AZZI, Riolando. 1977. “O Início da Restauração Católica no Brasil — 1920-1930”. *Síntese* 4, no. 10, pp. 73-101.

<sup>22</sup> VELLOSO, Mônica Pimenta. 1978. “A ordem: uma revista de doutrina, política e cultural católica.” *Revista de Ciência Política* v. 21, n. 3, pp. 117-160.

<sup>23</sup> MARIANO, Ricardo. 2011. “Laicidade à brasileira: Católicos, pentecostais e laicos em disputa na esfera pública”. *Civitas* v. 11, n. 2, pp. 238-258.

<sup>24</sup> LEITE, Fábio Carvalho. 2011. “O laicismo e Outros Exageros sobre a Primeira República no Brasil”, *Religião e Sociedade* 31(1), pp. 32-60.

<sup>25</sup> RÉMOND, René. 1998. *Religion et Société en Europe. La sécularisation aux XIXe et XXe siècles*. Paris: Le Seuil.

<sup>26</sup> O'MALLEY, John W. 2018. *The Council and the Making of the Ultramontane Church*. Cambridge, M.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

<sup>27</sup> ARX, Jeffrey von (Ed.). 1998. *Varieties of Ultramontanism*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

<sup>28</sup> BOURG, Julian. 2015. “The Enduring Tensions Between Catholicism and Modernity”. *Integritas*: pp. 1-22.

form of the Catholic social teachings and the accommodation to Fascism which can be both compared to the development within the Brazilian Catholic Church.

In the collective monograph called *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Clark (2003) provides an interesting counter-narrative to the usual modern-traditional divide when he comes up with the term “New Catholicism” as the most successful Catholic alternative model to socialism, liberalism and other new ideologies within the broader understanding of modernity, not in direct opposition to it. Furthermore, he places the tensions between the New Catholicism and competing “modern” ideologies in the framework of “culture wars”, thus expanding the German period of *Kulturkampf* into a wider, almost pan-European phenomenon whose national particularities in different countries are described in the different chapters of the book.

**PART 1:**  
**SOURCES AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

## 1.1. Under Siege: Catholic response to Secularism and Brazilian situation in the “long 19th century”

Over the course of the "long 19th century", the Catholic Church faced a wave of unprecedented challenges first on the level of individual nations and soon on a global scale. The so-called "Reign of Terror" (1793-1794), after the 1789 French Revolution, sparked a full-scale attack on the Catholic privileges and institutions that expanded far beyond France's neighbors during the Napoleonic regime (1799-1815) and then culminated over the course of the Third Republic (1870-1940) when the State was formally and definitely divorced from the Church. It was then replicated in certain forms in almost the entirety of Europe and a large portion of the newly-independent Latin American countries.

Anti-Catholic – and to a lesser extent anti-religious – sentiments with their origins in radical Enlightenment (and, according to some Catholic thinkers, much further back in the Protestant Reformation<sup>29</sup>) became the cornerstone of emerging political ideologies such as liberalism and later socialism, that perceived the Catholic Church (and especially the transnational institution of the papacy) and Catholic beliefs (dogmas and alleged “superstitions”) as one of the primary obstacles in the way of the political, societal and even economic progress of their respective nations and forming nation-states (Zalar 2001).<sup>30</sup>

This led to the implementation of policies designed to secularize state institutions and to uproot the Catholic influence over virtually all the aspects of public life, most notably education, marriages and healthcare. Republican France became the primary example, eventually driving the Catholic Church away from hospitals (1880) and schools (1882), legalizing divorce (1884), forcing priests to attend military service (1889) and finally separating the Catholic Church from the State altogether in 1905 when the French side definitively abandoned Napoleon's concordat with the papacy (Haupt 2008).<sup>31</sup>

In Italy, revolutionaries successfully annexed the Papal States in 1870, thus once again<sup>32</sup> turning the pope from semi-feudal sovereign over his territories into a “prisoner”, confined only to the Apostolic Palace on the Vatican Hill. Even though Italian liberal politicians never achieved nearly as much as their French counterparts, the Catholic Church still found itself literally besieged and in staunch opposition to the unified Italian State that it initially did not

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<sup>29</sup> See e.g. ROBIN, Corey. 2011. *The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>30</sup> ZALAR, Jeffrey T. 2001. “The Process of Confessional Inculturation: Catholic Reading in the ‘Long Nineteenth Century’”, in: Smith, Helmut Walser (ed.), *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800–1914*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 121-153.

<sup>31</sup> HAUPT, Heinz-Gerhard. 2008. “Religion and nation in Europe in the 19th century: some comparative notes”. *Estudos Avançados* 22 (62), pp. 77-94.

<sup>32</sup> Previously, popes Pius VI (r. 1775-1799) and Pius VII (r. 1800-1823) were literally taken hostage by Napoleon Bonaparte when France invaded the Papal States.



recognize; papal policy of *Non Expedit* actually forbade Italian Catholics to either stand in elections or even vote until 1919 (Papenheim 2003).<sup>33</sup>

Gradually unifying Germany under Prussian leadership also proved to be quite hostile to the Catholic Church, beginning with the so-called “Cologne Troubles” in 1837 when the conflict over mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics escalated into a confrontation between the archbishop of Cologne and the Prussian state that had recently occupied the territory, even leading to the brief imprisonment of archbishop Clemens August von Droste-Vischering (1773-1845) and the first mass mobilization of both the Catholic press and laity in the region (O’Malley 2018). Several decades later, the German chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) launched an offensive against the Catholic Church after victory over France in 1871 that would become known as the *Kulturkampf* (literally “culture war”). In this conflict, the numerically dominant Protestants, who envisioned the new Germany as a confessional state, joined hands with political liberals, forbidding the Catholic clergy to criticize the German Empire, expelling the Jesuits from the entire German territory and attempting to take control of the Catholic hierarchy (Haupt 2008).

### **1.1.1. Catholic reaction(s)**

Substantial challenges to the Catholic Church brought by the French Revolution and the subsequent rise of liberalism led to a range of different reactions. For instance, a large part of the French clergy embraced the revolutionary changes, swore an oath required by the Civil Constitution in 1790 and continued to support the new regime, even throughout the Reign of Terror. Similarly, Roman Catholic priests took part in various revolutionary movements in Latin America, such as Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (1753-1811) and José María Morelos (1765-1815) who both led the Mexican War of Independence against the Spanish Monarchy between 1810 and 1821.

On the other hand, many ecclesiastical authorities continued to embrace the “Gallican”<sup>34</sup> model of the royal control over the Catholic hierarchy that would be typical for the “enlightened absolutists” in Bourbon Spain, Portugal, the Habsburg monarchy and also for the later imperial Brazil that inherited the Portuguese system known as *padroado*.<sup>35</sup>

### **Ultramontanism**

Another response from within the Catholic Church concentrated on the central and increasingly transnational authority of the Roman pontiff that would become known as ultramontanism – an ideology formulated most importantly after the post-Napoleonic Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), initially among French Catholic intellectuals such as Joseph

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<sup>33</sup> PAPHENHEIM, Martin. “Roma o Morte: culture wars in Italy”, in: Clark, Christopher; Kaiser, Wolfram (ed.) *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 202-227.

<sup>34</sup> I am not referring here merely to the movement that originated in France based on the so-called Four Articles of 1682, but more generally to the intellectual (and political) tradition of an autonomous national church that recognizes the strong position of the monarch. These include movements such as Febronianism in the German territories or Josephism in the Habsburg empire. See e.g. O’Malley (2018): 26-30.

<sup>35</sup> See chapter 1.2. **Rise and Fall of State-Church Relations in pre-Republican Brazil (1500-1889)**.

Marie de Maistre (1753–1821), the author of a staunch and popular advocacy of the papal monarchy *Du Pape* (1819), and eventually adopted by the papacy itself.

Clark (2003) actually uses the broader term “New Catholicism”<sup>36</sup>, both because he argues that it was accompanied by the rapid growth of the popular religiosity in European countries, and because it gradually managed to assume the dominant position within European (and I would argue even global) Catholicism in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In many ways, the ideology and specific identity of New Catholicism would be openly defined in opposition to the aforementioned Gallican and liberal Catholics that would turn into internal enemies, and more generally in opposition to the notions of “freedom”, “modernity” and “progress” as it was first construed by the radical enlightened philosophers and later by political liberals (Bourg 2015). These enemies would be named and condemned in the crucial papal documents, such as *Syllabus Errorum* (1864) issued by Pius IX (r. 1846-1878) and *Pascendi Dominici gregis* (1907) by Pius X (r. 1903-1914).

The most vigorously criticized elements of the Counter-Reformation Catholic Church were placed in the very center of New Catholicism: pilgrimages, veneration of the relics and saints, monasticism and celibacy, miracles, visions and apparitions. For instance, the apparitions of the Virgin Mary such as in 1846 at La Salette and in 1858 in Lourdes became far more common and also increasingly liturgically and politically prominent, gaining quick recognition from the Catholic authorities unlike in the previous periods. Of course, the very figure of the pope himself stood in the center of the New Catholic beliefs and practices. The “supreme pontiff” became not only the subject of near-saintly devotion but also the unquestionable authority in both spiritual and secular matters, that would be finally formulated in the controversial dogma of the papal infallibility in 1870 (McMillan 2003).<sup>37</sup> In this period, numerous other dogmas and devotions in direct opposition to the liberal and rationalizing tendencies were established by the papacy, notably the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854.

While Clark (2003) argues that New Catholicism cannot be only viewed as constructed from above (i.e. by the pope himself and ecclesiastical authorities) and we must take into consideration the substantive rise in popular religiosity in many European countries over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there is no doubt the papacy, aided by the local Church hierarchies, was responsible for setting up and spreading the unifying agenda. Not only that, but the papacy formulated official Catholic positions on crucial matters involving state and societies in its documents and even dogmas but, more importantly, it gradually took control over the Church structures on the level of the nation states during the aforementioned process known as Romanization, and it developed powerful means of communication with the global Catholic community. In this case, I agree with Clark’s (2003) assessment that the instruments used to spread and foment the ideas of New Catholicism were indeed modern, even if they

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<sup>36</sup> Brazilian version of this term is *Neocrisandade* coined by Riolando Azzi to describe the dominant response of the local Catholic Church to the post-1891 separation. See AZZI, Riolando. 1994. *A neocrisandade: Um projeto restaurador*. São Paulo: Paulus.

<sup>37</sup> MCMILLAN James. 2003. “Priest hits girl’: on the front line in the ‘war of the two Frances’“, in: Clark, Christopher; Kaiser, Wolfram (ed.) *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 77-102.

were employed to communicate a self-declared “anti-modern” message – from the founding of newspapers, to promoting Catholic lay associations of all kinds, and even to the very centralization of the hierarchy and religious practices that in a way resembled the ongoing centralization of the nation states.

All these instruments would be hardly possible without the developments associated with “modernity” that were otherwise openly despised and criticized by figures of New Catholicism, such as the ideals of the freedom of expression and association that allowed the establishment of the Catholic press and mass lay movements, and paradoxically most of all the state-sponsored secularization itself, as is apparent from the cases ranging from Austria-Hungary to Brazil, that is at the heart of this dissertation; as long as the state institutions maintained their control over the local Catholic hierarchy, the papal outreach to the Catholic population in the respective countries remained harshly limited and the pope’s very authority continued to be contested by the competing religious authority of the monarch.

So while New Catholicism assumed “tradition” as an opposing concept to “modernity”, its construction of the past was at the very least extremely selective and the wished-for “return to normal” never really envisioned the restoration of the previous status of the Catholic Church under direct state control, as was the case in the imperial Brazil and elsewhere. It would be more accurate to see the New Catholic “traditionalism” as an entirely new and complex model of both society and Church-state relations, offering a well-formulated alternative to the modern all-encompassing ideologies of socialism, liberalism and nationalism that would eventually at least partially converge (especially in the terms of its economic model and moral ideals) with Portuguese Salazarism, Italian Fascism or *Estado Novo* de Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (Bourg 2015).

## 1.2. The rise and fall of State-Church Relations in pre-republican Brazil (1500-1889)

*They shared the same aspirations for the entirety of three centuries. They built the Fatherland together, as brothers, making arts, combining their hard effort, building one nation. They were united in peace, helping each other to build. And they were strong in war, victorious together. They wrote one and only history, a glorious, splendid history. The history of Brazil.*<sup>38</sup>

Although these grandiose words come from an article published in the *Mensageiro* asking for public funding for the renovation of St. Francis church in Salvador (Bahia), they are also indicative of the way Brazilian Catholics during the First Republic tended to portray the period before formal separation of Church and State. Since the “discovery” of Brazil by the Portuguese captain Pedro Álvares Cabral (c. 1467 – c.1520) in 1500, the Catholic Church was indeed closely tied to the State, first to the Portuguese colonial empire and later the independent, imperial Brazil. While relations were, in fact, hardly as harmonic as they were referred to by the proponents of the Catholic restoration, a formal link between the two actors and the dominant position of Roman Catholicism on the religious front was still seen as the preferable model to the “religious neutrality” introduced in the wake of the republic.

### 1.2.1. Colonial church

Just as in the case of the Spanish colonies, the Brazilian church was, from its very beginnings, under the decisive influence of the monarchy. This regime is often referred to as the “royal patronage” (*padroado régio*), as initially defined by the bulls *Inter caetera* (1493) and *Eximiae devotionis* (1501) by pope Alexander VI (r. 1492-1502), and later complemented by popes Julius II (r. 1503-1513) in 1505 and Paul IV (r. 155-1559) in 1555 and 1558 (Soares 2014).<sup>39</sup> In general terms, the Church in colonized territories was seen as an integral part of royal administration. Or, as Soares (2014: 21-22) formulated it, as a “public organ or ministry“, regulated and even directed in its religious activities by the Portuguese Crown.

Attempting to detach the State and the Church, especially in the initial colonial period, is barely possible, as almost every single religious activity was adapted to Portuguese interests, but, at the same time, the Portuguese Crown saw itself as the protector of Faith and Church, responsible for its well-being, protection from religious competitors (mainly Islam and Protestantism) and, of course, expansion. Evangelization of the colonized territories was the shared goal of both actors, with conversion to Catholicism perceived equally as a means of individual salvation and as of socio-political control through cultural appropriation (Machado

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<sup>38</sup> “Pela conservação do majestoso templo de S. Francisco na Bahia”, *MdF*, 4.9.1927.

<sup>39</sup> SOARES, Evaldo. 2014. *Pensamento Católico Brasileiro: influências e tendências*. Marília: Cultura Acadêmica.

1996).<sup>40</sup> Active participation in Catholic rituals, such as regular church attendance and confessions or taking part in the regional and national religious celebrations, was seen as a crucial part of the Portuguese identity and as essential behavior of loyal subjects.

In practical terms, this relationship in Brazil's case began to be formed with the establishment of a stable colonial administration in 1549, when the Portuguese nobleman Tomé de Sousa (1503-1579) arrived to Brazil as its first governor-general and founded the colony's capital, São Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos.<sup>41</sup> Until then, the colonization of Brazil was a rather haphazard venture, concentrated around the extraction of the precious brazilwood, with a scarce religious presence in the form of voluntary missionaries, hermits or ship's chaplains. But Tomé de Sousa arrived equipped not only with the formal title of governor-general of the entire colony, but accompanied by a convoy of soldiers, settlers, bureaucrats and clergymen, including the first Jesuit missionaries under the leadership of Manuel de Nóbrega (1517-1570). Only two years later, the new capital city became the seat of the first Brazilian bishopric, subordinated, until 1676, to the Portuguese archdiocese of Funchal (Schwaller 2011).<sup>42</sup>

Religious orders – and especially the Jesuits – quickly became the most important representatives of the Catholic Church on Brazilian soil. While the secular clergy was present, it was usually limited to the provision of spiritual care for the small number of Portuguese colonists and, of course, for soldiers. Religious orders, on the other hand, played a very active role in imperial policy, with the missionaries tasked with the “pacification” of the native population and either assisting to maintain direct control of the colonized territories, or attempting to forge alliances with the indigenous tribes against other competing European powers, most notably France and the United Provinces.

The Jesuit and – to a lesser extent – Franciscan missionaries studied and codified the indigenous languages, established schools and seminars and educated the entrusted “Indians” in the Catholic faith and Portuguese manners (Schwaller 2011). In these activities, they served as the faithful agents of the State, even though demonstrating a certain degree of autonomy in their vigorous fight against indigenous slavery. At least in the Brazilian case, however, they did not do so in any opposition to the Crown but mostly to the local settlers, who, as a result, often entered into direct conflict with the missionaries.

The Holy Office can be seen as another important religious actor working on the State's behalf, making sure that the general population remained loyal to the official Catholic Church and its teachings. Even though it never gained as significant a presence in Brazil as it did in Portugal itself or even in its Asian colonies, the inquisition still played a role during these times of tension, for instance during and just after the victorious war with the United Provinces (1624-1654) over the control of the northern captaincies, when it harshly sought out and persecuted supposed Jewish agents, who it considered to be working on behalf of the

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<sup>40</sup> MACHADO, Jónatas. 1996. *Liberdade religiosa numa comunidade constitucional inclusiva: Dos direitos da verdade aos direitos dos cidadãos*. Coimbra: Coimbra Editora.

<sup>41</sup> Today's city of Salvador.

<sup>42</sup> SCHWALLER, John Frederick. 2011. *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America*. New York: New York University Press.

enemy.<sup>43</sup> In the same fashion, it systematically targeted Protestant “heresies”, strongly connected to the notion of foreign interests. In Schwaller’s (2011: 86) words: “political thought was considered merely one manifestation of religious thought”.

### 1.2.2. Pombaline reform

While the political interests and goals of the Catholic Church and the Portuguese crown remained closely aligned and together formed part of the colonization process, many branches of the Brazilian Church eventually turned into considerable economic powerhouses. Tithe, rents and interest incomes from mortgages and liens, alongside the parochial dues, alms and first fruits, all provided significant income to the local hierarchy, religious orders, chantries or confraternities (Schwaller 2011). The immense wealth of the Catholic Church during the colonial period is still visible today in the form of the hundreds of splendid baroque churches and monasteries in cities such as Ouro Preto or Salvador.

Over the course of the 18th century, the economic influence of the Catholic Church – together with an almost unlimited control over educational institutions – became a thorn in the side of the monarchy, inspired with ideas of absolutism and Enlightenment. In the Spanish Empire, it was the Bourbon dynasty that initiated a series of reforms, attempting to increase the faltering efficiency of the colonial administration and to ultimately maximize the economic profit from the controlled territories. In Portugal, similar reforms can largely be ascribed to Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782), more commonly known as the marquis of Pombal; Pombal de facto controlled the country from 1750 to 1777 during the reign of king Joseph I (Souza 2010).<sup>44</sup>

Pombal is probably most often remembered for his violent repression of the Jesuit order as he carried out the ideas already long formulated by the Enlightenment thinkers in Portugal and elsewhere. Jesuit dominance in educational institutions was widely perceived as a major obstacle to put the theoretical concepts of the Enlightenment into practice – and the Jesuit order itself turned into a symbol of the cultural decadence and economic regression of the Catholic countries (Carvalho 1978).<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, through a series of royal decrees in 1759, Pombal ordered the confiscation of all Jesuit properties and banned their teaching methods, which he replaced with an entirely new and secularized methodology. He also suppressed their semi-independent missionary “republic” in Paraguay with the assistance of the Spanish Bourbons. While this led to a prolonged conflict with the Holy See, including the suspension of diplomatic relationships until 1770, Pombal’s anti-Jesuit stance gradually prevailed in other Catholic countries as well.

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<sup>43</sup> Mainly because of the relative religious freedom that the Jews were given in the Dutch overseas territories. For instance, they were allowed to build the first synagogue on the Brazilian soil (and in both Americas), *Sinagoga Kahar Zur Israel*, constructed in the Dutch colonial capital in Recife in 1637.

<sup>44</sup> SOUZA, Evergton Sales. 2010. “The Catholic Enlightenment in Portugal“. In: *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment*. Leiden: Brill.

<sup>45</sup> CARVALHO, Laerte Ramos de. 1978. *As reformas pombalinas da instrução pública*. São Paulo: EDUSP/Saraiva.

The pope himself was forced to succumb to the international pressure and finally abolished the order altogether in 1773.

But Pombal's reforms, as related to the Church, were in no way limited only to the "Jesuit question". In fact, he institutionalized state censorship,<sup>46</sup> thus taking over the traditional power of the Holy Office, while also reforming the Portuguese inquisition as a whole to better serve the demands of the 18th century; for instance, he finally abolished the centuries-old distinction between the "New Christians"<sup>47</sup> and the rest of the society and the inquisition's interests were redirected towards political opponents of the Portuguese crown. Inspired by the French model, Pombal also pushed through the royal appointment of bishops and archbishops and asserted authority over their removal, restricted the right of the religious orders to open new institutions and de facto subjugated the canon law to the royal law and local custom (Schwaller 2011).

### 1.2.3. Imperial policies

All these reforms did not fundamentally change the system of royal patronage; neither did they diminish the link between State and Church but served only to increase the State's dominant position in this relationship, in effect turning the Church officials into public servants. In fact, the large majority of the Portuguese prelates, both in the motherland and in the colonies, supported Pombal's policies, even if the Holy See itself maintained a more careful position (Souza 2010).

When Pedro I (r. 1822-1831) proclaimed himself the emperor of the independent Brazil in 1822, he inherited precisely this relationship and, unlike the vast majority of the governments of the newly-established Latin American countries that became republics, continued to pursue the policy of royal patronage, in place of the more usual concordat that generally granted the pope clear authority over the religious matters. The first Brazilian constitution – *Constituição Política do Império do Brasil* (1824) – preserved the status of Roman Catholicism as the official religion of the State, recognized the emperor's vast powers over his "national Church" and recognized the Church officials as civil servants due to be paid salaries from the government's expenditures (Souza 2013).<sup>48</sup> For instance, article 102 of the new constitution explicitly stated the emperor's right to name bishops and to approve or refuse the decrees of the Church councils and apostolic letters (Santos 2016).<sup>49</sup>

A limited degree of religious tolerance turned out to be the only notable change from the previous period, as the constitution legalized the right to private worship for non-Catholics. While originally aimed to appease the British merchant community and to encourage

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<sup>46</sup> So-called Royal Censors Office was founded in 1768.

<sup>47</sup> I.e. the descendants of the Portuguese Muslims and Jews that were forced to convert to Christianity in 1497.

<sup>48</sup> SOUZA, Ney de. 2013. "Catolicismo, sociedade e teologia no Brasil Império". *Atualidade Teológica*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 46, pp. 127-144.

<sup>49</sup> SANTOS, Sérgio Ribeiro. 2016. "O Protestantismo e a Construção do Estado Laico Brasileiro: Uma Breve Abordagem do Processo Histórico". *Fides Reformata* XXI, N° 1, pp. 71-100.

immigration from European countries, especially Prussia, it provided a legal framework for the rising Protestant presence in Brazil in the later years of the Empire (Vieira 1980).<sup>50</sup>

Protestant activities, including the arrival of the first German and American missionaries, were only one of many reasons for an increased tension between the Catholic Church and the imperial administration during the long reign of the emperor Pedro II (r. 1831-1889). In fact, a major source of the conflict that culminated in the so-called “Religious Question” affair, was the sharp ideological difference between a part of the Catholic hierarchy and the imperial court.

On one hand, there was the young and ambitious emperor, inspired by the ideas of modernization and liberalism that influenced his policies in the religious affairs where he – lawfully – perceived himself to be the sovereign. These policies included the aforementioned invitation to large Protestant and Jewish communities from different parts of the world, limitations on religious orders, and even granting permission to the Protestant missionaries to preach in the Portuguese language in 1860, thus opening the way to proselytism among the Brazilian population, and not only the immigrant communities (Vieira 1980).

On the other hand, there was the Holy See, feeling threatened precisely by the liberal ideas that in many countries led to a brutal suppression of the Catholic Church, that was seeking to develop strategies to counter their influence on the global level. Popes Gregory XVI (r. 1831-1846) and, in particular, Pius IX (r. 1846-1878) clearly formulated this Catholic reaction, emphasizing papal authority over the Church on a global level, the importance of “traditional” Christian values and staunch opposition to dangerous “modern” concepts, from civil unions, to the freedom of press and thought, to the separation of Church and State, in their encyclicals *Mirari vos* (1832) and *Quanta cura* (1864) (Souza 2013). The ever more popular organisations of Freemasonry, that attracted large segments of the ruling classes in Brazil and elsewhere, also became the target of the papal initiatives – and it was condemned as incompatible with the Catholic faith by Pius’ *Syllabus Errorum* (1864). Religious officials that took part in the rituals at Masonic lodges were supposed to either renounce their errors or face suspension. (Soares 2014).

While the majority of the Brazilian episcopate during the imperial period could be described as supportive of royal patronage, and some of its members even endorsed the creation of a truly national Catholic Church, inspired by the English model, papal ideas slowly gained ground in certain spheres of the local hierarchy. Ultramontanist prelates, such as the bishop of Olinda, Vital Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira (1844-1878), and the bishop of Pará, Antônio de Macedo Costa (1830-1891), insisted on adherence to the papal documents and engaged in a prolonged battle with Freemasonry and its sympathizers, that culminated in dramatic fashion between 1872 and 1874 and became the first open conflict between the Church and State in Brazilian history (Soares 2014).

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<sup>50</sup> VIEIRA, David Gueiros. 1980. *O Protestantismo, a Maçonaria e a Questão Religiosa no Brasil*. 2. ed. Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília.



#### **1.2.4. The “Religious Question” affair (1872-1874)**

The whole controversy began in March 1872 when Pedro Maria de Lacerda (1830-1890), bishop of Rio de Janeiro, suspended father José Luiz de Almeida Martins for delivering a sermon in a Masonic Lodge. His action led to an outcry among influential sympathizers of Freemasonry, and the bishop of Rio was embarrassingly forced to reverse his decision on the behalf of the Brazilian prime minister, himself a Masonic Grand Master (Schwaller 2011). A few months later, the recently consecrated bishop of Olinda, Vital de Oliveira, issued a secret circular that prohibited the participation of any Church official in Masonic meetings. He also acted against the lay brotherhoods that failed to expel prominent Masons from their ranks and interfered in the celebration of masses on behalf of the deceased member of the local Lodge. In response, Catholic masons began to publish articles attacking the prelate and certain key dogmas of the Church, including the perpetual virginity of Mary (Souza 2013). Finally, in December 1872, bishop Vital imposed an interdict upon two fraternities that defied his order to expel the Masonic members.

Instead of respecting the bishop’s decision, the fraternities appealed to the Crown itself, claiming that only the emperor has the authority to impose such decisions, due to the imperial privileges in the Church matters. Bishop Vital was asked to retract his decision – which he refused to do, based on the pope’s directive. At the same time Macedo Costa, another bishop and active participant of the First Vatican Council, entered the frame, decreeing an expulsion of all the Masons from the fraternities in his diocese and issuing an interdict over those who failed to respect his decision.

Both prelates refused to renounce their stance, defending themselves with the argument that the pope’s authority in a Catholic country is higher than the authority of the State, even though the Brazilian emperor had the right to sanction any religious directive coming from the Holy See first – which he did not in case of the Pius’ condemnations of masonry (Souza 2013). Such a provocative stance highly offended the emperor's sense of the ultimate religious superiority and his supposed royal prerogatives and both offenders were sentenced to four years of forced labor in 1874.

A few months later, Pedro II yielded to enormous national and international pressure and granted both the imprisoned bishops royal pardons. This short but dramatic episode, however, demonstrates how tense the mutual relationship could be at some points, even during the highly idealized period before the official separation. In any case, the “Religious Question” affair severely damaged the monarchy and dug an even deeper ditch between the liberals and ultramontane Catholics, while eventually leading to the ultimate creation of the much more independent and active Brazilian Catholic Church that we will encounter in the first decades of the First Republic.

### 1.3. Conflict and reconciliation: The Catholic Church and the First Republic (1889-1930)

*And then, on one November morning, a barbarous marshal severed the warm embrace in which was the State and the Church.*<sup>51</sup>

Such was the later Catholic (re)interpretation of the Brazilian coup d'état that on November 15, 1889 deposed the second (and last) Brazilian emperor Pedro II. This “barbarous marshal” is, of course, Deodoro da Fonseca (1827-1892), leader of a group of military officers and also the governor of Rio Grande do Sul state, who eventually became the first president of the new Brazilian Republic. In the discourse of the “Catholic restoration” (Azzi 1994), which will be further explored in this chapter, November 15, 1889 became the darkest day in Brazilian history. And marshal Fonseca himself was personally blamed for being an architect of the separation between the Church and the State, usually singled out as an “ill-informed” or sometimes even malevolent being that forced an anti-clerical, liberal regime upon a profoundly Catholic nation.

This separation was conducted through the two decrees of the provisional government in 1890 and, one year later, finalized by the new constitution (“Constitution of the Republic of United States of Brazil“). The first decree – named Decree 119A or “Decree of the Freedom of Worship” – was issued on January 7, 1890, and established the basic principles upon which the relationship between the new republic and the Catholic Church was founded: it abolished the *padroado* regime, separated both entities, declared the freedom of religion and proclaimed the policy of governmental non-interference in religious matters (Giumbelli 2008).<sup>52</sup> One week later, on January 14, Decree 155B introduced a new republican calendar that was completely free of religious holidays, including Christmas (Aquino 2012).

The initial Catholic reaction to the fall of the monarchy - that it later praised and an influential group of the Catholic hierarchy even hoped for its eventual return-<sup>53</sup> was not, however, entirely one of condemnation. On the contrary, many bishops and other Church officials expressed optimism over the end of the “Caesarist” regime of emperor Pedro II that did not hesitate to imprison God’s faithful servants during the “Religious Question” affair. Aquino (2012: 148) cites the reaction of Lino Deodato Rodrigues de Carvalho (1826-1894), bishop of São Paulo, who declared to the apostolic internuncio about the 119A Decree: „In relationship to the future, this decree [...] will have positive results, liberating the Church that was until then oppressed by Caesarism that [...] attempted to absorb the Church in this country, reducing it to a mere branch of the State’s administration“.

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<sup>51</sup> Macario Pinto, “O Divorcio”, *MdF*, 16.3.1913.

<sup>52</sup> GIUMBELLI, Emmerson. 2008. “A Modernidade do Cristo Redentor”. *Revista de Ciências Sociais*, vol. 51, n. 1, pp. 75-105.

<sup>53</sup> In the first year of the Old Republic, conservative groups including Catholic lay organizations and part of the clergy wished for the return of Pedro II’s daughter, princess Isabel (1846-1921), as the new empress of Brazil. Unlike her father, princess Isabel was a fervent Catholic and quite popular with the public because of her role in the abolition of slavery. See Azzi 1977: 74.

The collective pastoral of the Brazilian bishops from 1890, the first one of this kind in the new regime, assumed a similar position. While it criticized the “secular philosophy installed by the republic” (in Aquino 2012: 149-150) and decried the potential fall into anarchy and social disorder due to this dissolution, it also offered a helping hand to the regime and declared the Catholic Church was “indifferent to all forms of the government”<sup>54</sup> (in Aquino 2012: 149). “Liberating” the Church was especially appreciated in the document:

*Is liberty of the Church going to be a good thing? There is no doubt about that, respected collaborators and beloved sons. It is inappreciable, so precious and so essential to the full development of its existence that the Church continuously prays to God for it in the liturgy: ut destructis adversitatibus et erroribus universis. Ecclesia tua secura tibi serviat libertate.* (in Rodrigues 1981: 37)<sup>55</sup>

### **1.3.1. Romanization**

This sudden and previously unknown freedom in religious matters was immediately used to name new bishops who were, for the first time, chosen freely by the papacy without the emperor’s interference. The first such appointments occurred in Rome in 1890, leading to a significant strengthening of the ultramontanist faction within the Brazilian Catholic Church that soon gained a definitive upper hand, while the old monarchist and loyal clergy progressively died out. In the same year the Holy See actually published a document describing the actions to be taken in Brazil that was discussed during the first Brazilian episcopal conference that took place in São Paulo. These included:

*1. Unity among the bishops; 2. Reform of the clergy; 3. Reform of religious congregations and orders in Brazil; 4. Control over the brotherhoods and fraternities; 5. Missionary actions in the interior of Brazil; 6. The introduction of European devotions, especially the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Holy Family; 7. Intensification of religious instruction; 8. Formation of the new dioceses; 9. The search for new sources of fundraising.* (in Aquino 2012: 154-155)

Four new dioceses were created in 1892, adding to the existing twelve that were founded over the course of almost four hundred years, since there was no more royal administration to impede this process (Aquino 2012). Thanks to the end of *padroado*, the papacy was finally free to dramatically re-organize and modernize the Church administration in Brazil based on the European model, adapting the painfully dated diocesan system to the boundaries of the new republican administrative units. In total, an astonishing 56 new dioceses were created between 1889 and 1930, twenty of them in the first two decades of the new regime. These new dioceses were further accompanied by 18 prelatures, with some hundred bishops designated directly by the Holy See (Gomes 2008).<sup>56</sup> At the same time, religious education, already partially modernized by the end of the monarchy, was restructured and dying religious

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<sup>54</sup> i.e. whether it’s republican or monarchist.

<sup>55</sup> RODRIGUES, Anna Maria Moog. 1981. *A Igreja na República*. Brasília: UNB.

<sup>56</sup> GOMES, Edgar da Silva. 2008. “A Reaproximação Estado–Igreja no Brasil durante a República Velha (1889-1930)”. *Revista da Cultura Teológica* v. 16, n. 62., pp. 95-110.

orders were massively reinforced by the influx of foreign friars coming most often from Germany, Portugal and Spain.

Franciscans are a perfect example of this process: by 1889 this order was almost entirely “extinct”, with only 10 (*sic*) ageing friars in the whole country, all of them in their eighties. This situation was, once again, due to the system of royal patronage, because in 1855 the imperial administration decreed that all new novices entering religious orders had to be sanctioned by the State (Fragoso 1991).<sup>57</sup> The desperate lack of Franciscan friars was solved thanks to the mission sent from Germany, or, more specifically, from the Saxonian province of the local order. The first expedition led by Amando Bahlmann arrived in 1891 and had four members. Franciscan missionaries continued to arrive in Brazil until 1904 in nineteen waves and in total, about 262 Saxonian friars were sent to revitalize the two Franciscan provinces in the country (Fragoso 1991). Because it was based on the directives from Rome and under the policy of the Roman pontiffs Leo XIII (r. 1878-1903) and Pius X (r. 1903-1914), this process of remodeling the Catholic Church is commonly referred to as “Romanization”.

### **1.3.2. Breaking point: the constitution of 1891**

The initially rather welcomed position worsened over time, especially under the influence of the hated 1891 constitution that not only affirmed already divisive content of the two decrees but went further, secularizing cemeteries, instituting civil unions as the only state-sponsored form of marriage, banning religious works from public funding or prohibiting people under the oath of obedience<sup>58</sup> from voting in the elections. Maybe most importantly, obligatory religious education was strictly banned from public schools at both state and national level (Aquino 2012). The 1891 constitution was completely free of any reference to religious principles, instead establishing its legitimacy on the will of the “Brazilian people”; the word “God” was not used even once in the whole text.

Augusto da Lima from the Brazilian Academy of Letters (*Academia Brasileira de Letras*) described the new constitution in the following terms in his article “Constitution and Catholicism” for *Mensagem*:

*This anti-religious sentiment, euphemistically disguised under terms such as laicism, freedom of conscience and freedom of worship, was in fact animated on one side by free thinkers, sectarians of the 1789 revolutionary dogma of the ‘goddess of Reason’; and on the other side, by the sectarians around Auguste Comte that sought to establish a dominant role for their doctrine in the new [republican] institutions, beginning with the inscription on the [new] national flag<sup>59</sup> and adoption of certain holidays linked to their sectarian rite.<sup>60</sup>*

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<sup>57</sup> FRAGOSO, Hugo. 1991. *Cadernos da Restauração da Província Santo Antônio do Brasil*. Salvador: Impressos nas escolas Salesianas.

<sup>58</sup> i.e. members of the religious orders.

<sup>59</sup> The new national flag of Brazil, still in use to the present day, with minor modifications to the number of stars, bears the motto: “Order and Progress” (*Ordem e Progresso*), inspired by Comte’s motto of positivism “Love as a principle and order as the basis; progress as the goal” (*L’amour pour principe et l’ordre pour base; le progrès pour but*). See Paul 2000: 258-260.

To be clear, the new republican constitution did not define Brazil in fiercely anti-religious terms, similar to the French model. Aquino (2012: 152) calls this Brazilian approach “pragmatic *Laïcité*”, defined by neutrality, not hostility towards religion in general or Catholicism in particular. Even so, proclaimed “religious neutrality” began to be understood and described as dangerous indifference or even cloaked atheism that had to be challenged by the Brazilian Catholic Church.

### **1.3.3. The Brazilian Church in the political process**

At first, the Catholic hierarchy attempted to take direct part in republican politics, embracing the newly accessible democratic process. Centered around the hero from the “Religious Question” controversy, the now archbishop<sup>61</sup> Antônio de Macedo Costa, more than two hundred prelates and conservative intellectuals gathered in the federal capital Rio de Janeiro in 1890 to found the nationwide Catholic Party (*Partido Católico*). Church officials from all around the country appealed to the Catholic electorate, through their limited press at the time<sup>62</sup> to vote – and to vote for the Catholic Party to “gain from the State, through legal means, recognition of the rights of the Church” (Lustosa 1983: 43-44). As leader of the new movement, archbishop Macedo Costa appeared on the ballot himself, becoming one of the party’s candidates to the Senate. The results were, however, more than disappointing, as even Macedo Costa did not succeed in the political fight and his party’s candidates gained no representation in the Senate and only poor representation in the legislative bodies on state levels (Quadros 1973).<sup>63</sup>

Another significant attempt to organize the national Catholic party to contest the elections on a large scale occurred between 1909 and 1911. It came from the local ecclesiastical hierarchy of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro and failed as well and after that, the idea of such a party got mostly limited to the occasional appeals from Catholic intellectuals. „It is time to wake up the Catholics from lethargy! It’s time to truly conquer the citizens’ rights and to choose from their middle those who legitimately represent their ideals. Catholic people have the right to have Catholic politics! And for this, there must be a Catholic Party that would extend from the borders of Amazonia to Rio Grande do Sul,“ decried Catholic journalist and regular contributor to *Mensageiro da Fé* under the pen name Firmo Antonio continuing the necessity of a dream that never truly materialized.<sup>64</sup>

### **1.3.4. New strategy: Mass mobilization**

Church officials, however, changed their strategy. Even though minor Catholic parties continued to rise and fall in certain Brazilian states, episcopacy embraced different methods.

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<sup>60</sup> Augusto da Lima, “A Constituição e o Catholicismo”, *MdF*, 19.9.1926.

<sup>61</sup> Macedo de Costa was elevated to archbishop of Bahia in 1890.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. journal *Era Novo* was founded in Pernambuco to officially represent the local branch of the party.

<sup>63</sup> QUADROS, Consuelo Novais Soares de. 1973. “Os Partidos Políticos da Bahia na Primeira República”. Master’s thesis. Salvador, Ba: Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da UFBA, 1973.

<sup>64</sup> Firmo Antonio, “Politica,” *MdF*, 18.11.1917.

To achieve their political goals, already well-formulated over this early republican period, they instead started to support loyal Catholic candidates from across the party spectrum through the official and binding recommendation of the hierarchy published in the Catholic communication channels (i.e. circulars, pastoral letters and most importantly journals and newspapers).

The bishop of Campinas João Corrêa Nery was a pioneer of this approach, establishing the first so-called Catholic Electoral League (*Liga Eleitoral Católica*) in 1913 that was based on a similar institution that already existed in Italy (Citino 2013).<sup>65</sup> This institution was only expanded to the national level in 1932, communicated through by probably the most influential Catholic journal, *A Ordem*. But even before this centralization, the Church hierarchy in other dioceses was trying to appeal forcefully to Catholic citizens to exercise their right to vote – and to do so for the pre-selected list of the Catholic candidates. Just as LEC existed in Campinas, in Rio de Janeiro there was Catholic Electoral Action (*Acção católica eleitoral*) already by the middle of the 1910s.<sup>66</sup>

In *Mensagem da Fé*, electoral mobilization was among the most discussed political topics from its beginnings all the way up to the year 1930. Taking part in the elections was presented not only as a right, but also as an obligation for loyal Catholics. “In the present time, it is a sacred obligation for Catholics to take part in public matters, especially to fight anti-Christian politics,” wrote Coriolano<sup>67</sup> in 1914, distinguishing only between two kinds of politics: Christian and anti-Christian. “The weight of saving the society in peril lies in the hands of every single citizen.”<sup>68</sup>

Electoral mobilization was only one and not the most significant component of the new strategy to gain the political ground. At least from 1916 onwards, the Catholic Church embarked on an ambitious project aimed to mobilize the “indifferent” Catholic majority of the country and to “re-Christianize” all the spheres of Brazilian society through mass lay mobilization. The beginnings of this project, often called the “Catholic restoration” or “re-Christianization”, are usually traced to the first pastoral letter of Sebastião Leme da Silveira Cintra (1882-1942), by then the freshly consecrated archbishop of Olinda-Recife,<sup>69</sup> where he sharply criticized “Catholics by name only”, defined Brazil as an inherently Catholic country and pleaded to redefine the laws and politics according to this fact.

*Indeed, a Catholic cannot be indifferent whether his country is an ally, or an enemy of Jesus Christ. It would be treason of Jesus himself – and treason of our fatherland! For this reason, with all the strength of our Catholic and Brazilian souls, we need to urgently finish with the*

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<sup>65</sup> CITINO, Adriana Gilioli. 2013. “Presença e Ação da Igreja Católica na Vida Política da Sociedade Brasileira”. *Fênix – Revista de História e Estudos Culturais*, Vol. 10, nº 2, pp. 1-19.

<sup>66</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Se não, não...”, *MdF*, 16.12.1917.

<sup>67</sup> Another pen name.

<sup>68</sup> Coriolano, “Catholics e política”, *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>69</sup> In 1930, he became archbishop of Rio de Janeiro and primate of Brazil, also receiving the title of cardinal in the very same year, thus being formally affirmed in his leading position in the Brazilian Catholic Church. Leme was only the second Brazilian to be named cardinal. See Cleary 1997: 256.

*stunting decay that makes us majority in name only, forgetful of its duties, unconscious of its rights. This evil is enormous and the cure is urgent.*<sup>70</sup>

Leme pioneered the institutional support for the creation of Catholic associations in all areas of life, often under his direct control, that was replicated in other dioceses as well. These included lay associations of women, workers, youth and even soldiers, aiming to re-spiritualize these social groups, promoting specific Catholic agenda or forcefully opposing the anti-Catholic forces. Associations of women were, for example, used as a Catholic alternative to the growing feminist movement, instead of fighting for the traditional model of family.

Associations of workers were supposed to counter the influence of the socialist and later especially communist ideas with social teachings of the Church based fundamentally on pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891). Finally, the youth associations counted among the most important ones, as religious education in the public schools was banned, and they also engaged in specific activities. For instance, the Union of Catholic Youth (*União de Moços Católicos*) from Belo Horizonte lobbied for the return of the image of Jesus Christ in the state's public educational institutions.<sup>71</sup>

Catholic journals and newspapers were supported and coordinated by the Center of the Good Press (*Centro da Boa Imprensa*), founded in Rio de Janeiro under the leadership of Joaquim Arcoverde (1850-1930), archbishop of Rio de Janeiro and the first Brazilian to be named cardinal (Soares 1988).<sup>72</sup> Leagues of the Good Press (*Liga de boa imprensa*), founded in Petrópolis in the same year, were supposed to finance this new institution with monthly contributions, to help promote the Catholic press and creation of Catholic libraries. These leagues soon disseminated in other dioceses across Brazil so much that the Catholic journalist Soares de Azevedo lamented in 1917 there were far too many of them almost to the point of mutual petty competition.<sup>73</sup>

Similarly, League for Morality (*Ligas pela moralidade*) fought against gambling, alcohol and, very importantly at the time, excessive fashion that was perceived as extremely harmful to public morale. Under the direct leadership of the hierarchy, even religious-oriented financial institutions were created, for instance the Popular Catholic Bank (*Banco Popular Católico*) in Rio de Janeiro and in the northeastern state of Ceará where it was presided over by the local bishop Quintino Rodrigues de Oliveira e Silva (1863-1929).<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, it was the first financial institution founded in the southern part of Ceará.

After the end of the First World War, Catholic mobilization in Brazil gained steam, partially thanks to the credit the Holy See obtained from its peace-seeking role in the war, but especially because of the perception of the growing threat of global revolution and communism coming from the Soviet Union. The Catholic reaction sought to become much

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<sup>70</sup> Sebastião Leme, "O Grande Mal e suas causas", *MdF*, 1.10.1916.

<sup>71</sup> "Noticiário: Minas," *MdF*, 3.12.1916.

<sup>72</sup> SOARES, Ismar de Oliveira. 1988. *Do Santo Ofício à libertação: o discurso e a prática do Vaticano e da Igreja Católica no Brasil sobre a comunicação social*. São Paulo: Paulinas.

<sup>73</sup> Soares d'Azevedo, "Cariocas: Se não, não...", *MdF*, 16.12.1917.

<sup>74</sup> "Notas e notícias: Ceará", *MdF*, 7/8/1921.

more public through a series of very visible activities. We could mention the National Eucharistic Congress (*Congresso Eucarístico Nacional*), summoned to Rio de Janeiro in 1922 by archbishop Leme<sup>75</sup> on the occasion of hundred years of independent Brazil and with the topic of “Restoration of Christianity in Brazil through Eucharistic life, especially in regards to infancy, youth and family“ (Dias 1996).<sup>76</sup> Many similar congresses or so-called Eucharistic weeks (*semanas eucarísticas*) took place on a local level from this point on, aiming to raise awareness of the Catholic program.

But by far the most visible action was the project of the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro. Probably the most famous contemporary symbol of Rio de Janeiro was initially planned as a purely Catholic initiative, demonstrating growing public assertiveness of the Catholic Church and its claim to play a major role in national politics. “The erection of Christ the Redeemer high on the Corcovado hill, like a true giant dominating lands and people, will serve as a mirror for all to look into, whether they are big or small, whether they rule or are being ruled”, formulated Catholic journalist Argemiro Soare, two years before the statue was finished.

For this reason, the project of the statue was fiercely opposed by Protestants, Spiritists and also secularist republicans, considering it to be an attack on the separation of Church and State (Giumbelli 2008). For an entire decade, Catholic supporters of the project and its various opponents were engaged in a legal and media battle over the statue’s erection. But in the end, it was belatedly inaugurated on October 12, 1931 under very different political circumstances.

### **1.3.5. Reapproximation**

Leme’s strategy, adopted by the whole Brazilian ecclesiastical establishment and, by 1920 at the latest, actively supported by the Holy See and popes Benedict XV (r. 1914-1922) and his successor Pius XI (r. 1922-1939), eventually bore fruit. First it happened on the state level, with Minas Gerais turning into the model example of reapproximation. The rationale of this regional reapproximation is pretty obvious in the words of its architect, governor Antônio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrada (1870-1946), quoted by Soares de Azevedo: “Let’s conduct our own revolution in good order, with justice and charity, before the enemies of order, justice and charity turn the entire world into a slavish copy of Russia.”<sup>77</sup>

What Andrada did was indeed revolutionary. Even against the constitutional ban, he reinstated religious education in state schools in 1927, at least for those students whose parents authorized it (Azzi 1977). Furthermore, deputy for Minas Gerais proposed an amendment of the 1891 constitution aiming both for the mandatory religious education for all the students, and for making the Catholic Church once again the official religion of the state.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Argemiro R. de Macedo Soares, “O Brasil progride...“, *MdF*, 7.7.1929.

<sup>76</sup> DIAS, Romualdo. 1996. *Imagens de ordem: a doutrina católica sobre autoridade no Brasil (1922-1933)*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP.

<sup>77</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Antes que outros a façam”, *MdF*, 15.9.1929.

<sup>78</sup> Francisco Campos, “A reforma da Constituição”, *MdF*, 16.8.1925.



Interestingly enough, this deputy named Francisco Campos (1891-1968) became the minister of education after the 1930 revolution and was indeed one of the main authors of the new autocratic constitution of 1937 when president Getúlio Vargas began to build his “New State”, based on the Salazar’s example in Portugal.

In Mato Grosso state, reapproximation was even starker but somewhat unique, since the local bishop, Francisco de Aquino Correia (1885-1956), temporarily became the governor himself between 1918 and 1922. While he was originally chosen as a conciliatory candidate, he used his position to deepen the relationship of the Church with the local administration, for instance inviting the apostolic nuncio (i.e. representative of the Vatican) to accompany the celebrations of the bicentenary of foundation of Mato Grosso’s capital (Azzi 1977: 79-81).

Local successes were replicated on the national level, culminating with the 1930 revolution in which cardinal Leme played a prominent role since he persuaded president Washington Luís (1869-1957) to resign peacefully from office and to give himself up to the authorities of the new regime, thus avoiding possible bloodshed. The cardinal then became closely associated with Getúlio Vargas, the de facto Brazilian leader for many years to come, providing the new regime<sup>79</sup> with legitimacy and the backing of the Church, while the Catholic Church was able to finally implement some of its long-term goals (Azzi 1977).

The closeness of the two personalities – and of the two powers – can be demonstrated in two initial moments of the Second Republic that had major symbolic impacts. The first occurred on November 30, 1930, only one month after the deposition of president Luís, when cardinal Leme celebrated “mass for peace“ and after this liturgy appeared in public alongside Vargas, then leader of the provisional government (Azzi 1978). The second such occasion would happen one year later, during the inaugural ceremony of the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro in 1931. Far from the previous controversy, the statue was revealed to the public in a spectacular manner, with both cardinal and president Vargas present side by side, accompanied by the prelates and government ministers. Suddenly, the statue of Christ became a symbol both of the Catholic Church and of the Brazilian State, once again closely tied together.

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<sup>79</sup> The first so-called Second Republic (1930-1937) and then the aforementioned New State (1937-1946).

#### 1.4. “Mighty arm to propagate our faith”: “Good Press” as instrument of Catholic reaction

*Press, this modern pulpit, should not continue to be almost exclusively in the service of impiety. But it must be a mighty arm to defend and promote our holy Catholic faith!*<sup>80</sup>

Just as the declaration of the First Republic constituted a turning point for the reform of the Catholic institutions in Brazil and for the revitalization of its political role, it had a similar impact on the development of the Catholic press. There is no doubt that the official Catholic magazines and bulletins existed long before the 1889 coup d'état; Catholic authors themselves, including members of the religious orders, were actually engaged in the very birth of the press on the Brazilian soil. In fact, two Franciscan friars were the editors-in-chief of the first-ever Brazilian newspapers, *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*<sup>81</sup>, published since 1808 after the Portuguese royal court relocated together with a typography to the colonial capital Rio de Janeiro (Deister 1967).<sup>82</sup> When the royal decrees of king John VI of Portugal (r. 1816-1826; 1816-1822 in Brazil) and the emperor Pedro I of Brazil abolished pre-publication censorship and the “freedom of the press”, enshrined in the 1824 constitution, certain dioceses also began to experiment with publishing their own religious journals and circulars.

The Catholic press, however, only started to assume political importance by the end of the imperial period, mostly due to the growing controversy around Freemasonry. With the flourishing private press almost entirely in the hands of the liberal elite, the ultramontanist faction of the Catholic hierarchy, siding with the pope's directives regarding the Masons, felt an urgency to defend their positions both on the local and, increasingly, on the national level. This led to the creation of the first openly apologetic and combative journals, such as *A União*, founded in 1872 by the aforementioned bishop Vital of Olinda, one of the two protagonists of the “Religious Question”. The headquarters of *A União* itself turned into a sort of battlefield of the controversy, as they were invaded by Masons' sympathizers for supporting the bishop's policies (Pereira 1978).<sup>83</sup>

The advent of the First Republic brought an unprecedented freedom for the Church, both in financial and administrative matters, allowing the rapid development of the Catholic media as part of the strategy of reorganization and Romanization, following the policies set by Leo XIII that fervently appealed to the Catholic prelates worldwide to create, support and disseminate their own press, in order to counter the “wicked” forces that “abuse the [power of] the media to spread evil doctrines and deprivation of manners” (Leão XIII, 1959: 9 – 10).<sup>84</sup> He asked them to “consider using the same means. While they use it for destruction, you use it for edification” (ibid: 9-10). Leo XIII brought up the issue of the Catholic press repeatedly, making it an important part of the Latin American Plenary Council convened in 1898 in Rome

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<sup>80</sup> “O pulpito moderno”, *MdF*, 20.4.1913.

<sup>81</sup> Renamed *Diário do Governo* in 1822 after the proclamation of Brazilian independence.

<sup>82</sup> DEISTER, Jorge C. 1967. “A imprensa católica no Brasil até 1925”. *Revista Católica de Cultura Vozes*, n. 12, pp. 1071-1081.

<sup>83</sup> PEREIRA, Nilo. 1978. “Gilberto Freyre e Dom Vital”. *Ciência & Trópico* 6 (1), pp. 107-120.

<sup>84</sup> Leão XIII. *Documentos Pontifícios: sobre a Imprensa- (excertos)*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1959.

and mentioning it on many occasions in his documents. For instance, he wrote to the bishops of Peru:

*It will certainly be very useful if instructed and faithful people dedicate themselves to daily or periodical publications, so that the errors will gradually disperse, the truth will spread, sleeping souls will wake up and will openly profess and defend the faith they cultivated inside themselves for their salvation.* (in Klauck 2011: 145).<sup>85</sup>

Leo's recommendations were echoed by the local hierarchy in Brazil from the very dawn of the republican regime. "If God gave you the gift of speech and the ability to write, your voice and your pen should be in the service of the Church", appealed Brazilian bishops in the aforementioned 1890 collective pastoral on both their lay and clerical audience.<sup>86</sup> And in the first-ever Brazilian Catholic Congress (*Congresso Católico Brasileiro*) that took place between July 3 and 10, 1900 in Salvador, participating delegates suggested that every diocese should create and directly finance their own Catholic magazine (Deister 1967).

Such an ambitious proposition was never fully put into practice, partially because of financial reasons. But numerous dioceses followed suit, either directly founding their own magazine (e.g. *A Tribuna*, created in 1906 by the archdiocese of Olinda), or delegating this initiative to some of the revitalized religious orders that, at least until 1920s and the creation of Jackson de Figueireda's Dom Vital's Center (*Centro Dom Vital*),<sup>87</sup> played a major role in maintaining and spreading the Catholic press. To mention just a few examples, Franciscans founded their own "cultural magazine" *Vozes de Petrópolis* in Rio de Janeiro state and assumed control over *Mensageiro da Fé* in Bahia (see chapter 1.5. **Mensageiro da Fé: Representative of the "Good Press"**). Jesuits had their *Mensageiro do Coração de Jesus*, Salesians founded *Leituras Católicas* and Claretians assumed and greatly expanded *Ave Maria* magazine in São Paulo.

From the very beginning, the Catholic hierarchy supported these initiatives in their pastoral letters and from the church pulpits, attempting to convince Brazilian Catholics to subscribe to particular local journals, newspapers and magazines, and to refrain from any non-Catholic press. In their third collective pastoral letter, bishops of the Salvador archdiocese called subscribing to a Catholic journal a "sacred duty" of true Catholics, adding that "whoever subscribes to a good [i.e. Catholic] journal contributes immensely to the good cause. Because a good journal is like a preacher of the gospel whose voice can be heard not only in the temples, but also in the public spaces, on the streets and in the households. And whoever subscribes to a false journal becomes responsible for evils it causes to society, most of all in religious matters."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> KLAUCK, Samuel. 2011. "A imprensa como instrumento de defesa da Igreja Católica e de reordenamento dos católicos no século XIX." *MNEME – Revista de Humanidades*, 11(29), pp. 132-148.

<sup>86</sup> *Pastoral Coletiva de 19 março de 1890*. São Paulo: Lyceu do Sagrado Coração, 1890.

<sup>87</sup> Note that the very name of this center referred to the bishop of Olinda, Vital Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira, whose actions started the "Religious Question" controversy by the end of the imperial period.

<sup>88</sup> "Dever urgente", *MdF*, 20.12.1908.

For clarification: when referring to the “false press” (*má imprensa*), Salvadorian prelates, just as most Brazilian Catholic officials, mean basically any kind of non-Catholic publication, from truly anti-religious ones, to the confessional press of Protestants and Spiritists, to the religiously neutral, mainstream newspapers and magazines with the largest circulation. Because, as the bishop from Botucatu (São Paulo state) Lucio Antunes de Souza explained to his own pastoral, “in religiously neutral press, evil spirits have an efficient helper to do all the damage, disguised as such to penetrate everywhere, multiplying itself in it to become omnipresent, trying, seducing and spreading rapidly to cause evil even in the most remote of places.”<sup>89</sup>

On the other hand, for the press to be classified “good” (*boa imprensa*) – and therefore it can and should be read by the true Catholics – it must be absolutely and undoubtedly obedient to the teachings of the Catholic Church and to its earthly representatives. Mensageiro’s editor-in-chief João Manderfelt, in this case writing under the pen name João do Norte, includes these conditions clearly in his “characteristic signs” of the “good press”: it must “support, in its entirety, the doctrine of the Church with no ‘buts’ or exceptions”, “instill the Catholic moral practice in all purity” and “submit itself to the authority of the Church, the pope and the bishops in everything concerning the ecclesiastical jurisdiction”.<sup>90</sup> Catholic publications are, in the words of Gonçalves (2008: 69),<sup>91</sup> “wielders of the truth of the Catholic religion” so they cannot corrupt themselves with dissenting voices.

#### **1.4.1. Center of the Good Press and the Catholic Daily**

Initially promoted from the church pulpits, the Brazilian Catholic media reached an entirely new stage nationwide in 1910 when a group of journalists around Pedro Sinzig (1876-1952), a Franciscan friar originally from Germany and at that time editor-in-chief of the influential *Vozes de Petrópolis*, founded the so-called Center of the Good Press. In general, its primary function was to coordinate activities and content from already existing Catholic publications and to assist with their propagation.

But the declared aims of this institution – also based in Petrópolis – were even more ambitious and far-reaching: to “support founding and maintenance of the good journals and magazines”, to “educate journalists and writers” and to “assist Catholic journalists living in poverty”, to “serve as intermediaries with the foreign centers”, or to “promote the publication of good books, both original ones and translations” (Soares 1988: 186). The new center also published its own magazine (*A Resposta*), handed out all kinds of Catholic literature for free both to the general public and to libraries in different parts of Brazil, and organized workshops, congresses and conferences.

Already on 31 of March of the same year, Sinzig and his colleagues summoned the First Congress of Brazilian Journalists where they created the first League of the Good Press (*Liga*

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<sup>89</sup> “A Primeira Pastoral do Ex<sup>mo</sup>. Sr. D. Lucio Antunes de Souza e a imprensa”, *MdF*, 2.5.1909.

<sup>90</sup> João do Norte, “Meu cantinho”, *MdF*, 5.12.1912.

<sup>91</sup> GONÇALVES, Marcos. 2008. “Missionários da ‘boa imprensa’: a revista *Ave Maria* e os desafios da imprensa católica nos primeiros anos do século XX”. *Revista Brasileira de História*, v. 28, nº 55, pp. 63-84.

*da Boa Imprensa*) to serve as a supporting institution to the Center. Members of the League were expected to contribute ten thousand réis to the Center monthly, basically serving as the principal source of its financing, and also pledged to promote and disseminate the Catholic press in their respective social group (Amaral 2011).<sup>92</sup> On an organizational level, a branch of the League was supposed to be created in every ecclesiastical province, with a “diocesan director” chosen by the Center of the Good Press and confirmed by the local bishop.

In a few years, local branches of the League were present in almost all the Brazilian state, and Catholic journals were spreading in larger numbers than ever before. Sinzig himself conducted research of the Catholic press in 1913, concluding that there were about 90 Catholic newspapers and magazines in all Brazil, together with fifty other publications, such as bulletins, yearbooks and almanacs (Soares 1988). In 1917, Soares de Azevedo already counted 200 Catholic newspapers and magazines. Even though he lamented there are no daily newspapers with a Catholic orientation, Mensageiro’s editorial note pointed out that there were, in fact, three; even though they had minor circulation: *O Semeador* from Alagoas<sup>93</sup>, *A Gazeta Popular* from Porto Alegre and *Correio do Ceará* from Fortaleza.<sup>94</sup>

Creating a daily Catholic newspaper on the national level, however, greatly preoccupied both the Center of the Good Press and Friar Sinzig himself, becoming subject of an intense fundraising campaign. Motivated by the bankruptcy of the daily *Gazeta do Povo* from São Paulo in 1916, Sinzig came up with “a grandiose project, counting with the general support of all the good Catholics”, including “the backing of the Center of the Good Press” and “the endorsement of our brilliant episcopate”<sup>95</sup>. For six long years, the Center, together with most of the Catholic press in Brazil, repeatedly asked faithful readers to send financial contributions to this project. Sinzig even purchased the necessary technical equipment on his visit to Germany in 1920 in order to start publishing the newspaper under the simple name Catholic Daily (*Diário Católico*); and in December, 1921, subscription to this new journal was opened and concrete date of the first issue was officially set to July 1, 1922.<sup>96</sup>

It was never published, however; probably in part because of the accumulated debts, in part because of lack of support from the Rio de Janeiro archdiocese as cardinal Arcoverde, who supported the project from its birth, got severely ill. Sebastião Leme, his successor, had a very tense personal relationship with Friar Sinzig and his circle. The failed Catholic Daily, combined with bad blood between the founders and the sympathizers of the Center and the archbishop, eventually led to Sinzig’s departure back to Germany and the long and painful death of the Center of the Good Press in 1926, after Leme had it transferred from Petrópolis to Rio de Janeiro (Deister, 1967).

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<sup>92</sup> AMARAL, Walter Valdevino Do. 2011. “Contra a Imprensa, a Imprensa: O jornal A Tribuna, um instrumento de defesa da verdade católica em Pernambuco na República Velha”. *Anais do XXVI Simpósio Nacional de História* – ANPUH, São Paulo, pp. 1-16.

<sup>93</sup> Today claiming to be the oldest Catholic diary still in existence.

<sup>94</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Se não, não...”, *MdF*, 16.12.1917.

<sup>95</sup> João Manderfelt, “Em caminho”, *MdF*, 20.8.1916.

<sup>96</sup> “Noticias: Capital”, *MdF*, 4.12.1921.

#### 1.4.2. Dom Vital's Center: Height of the "good press"

As it turned out, archbishop Leme had a different vision of the way forward with the "good press"; a vision that was soon materialized in the form of the new Dom Vital's Center. This institution was founded in 1922 by Jackson de Figueiredo, a leading Catholic intellectual of his generation and close personal friend of Leme whose conversion to Catholicism was actually inspired by the archbishop's famous 1916 pastoral letter (Teodoro 2008).

Figueiredo and other intellectuals responsible for Dom Vital's Center were all laymen and nominally independent of the archdiocese – but Leme vigorously supported the organization, writing in 1923: "We very much recommend to all the Catholics the new Dom Vital's Center, an institution dedicated to the spiritual conquest of the intellectuals through libraries and publishing special books, etc. Generosity that we render to this beautiful idea will bear fruit in the formation of a generation of Catholic intellectuals" (in Teodoro 2008: 557).

Its proclaimed independence was actually never really the case anyway, as the founding statutes of the magazine counted with an "ecclesiastical advisor" named directly by the archbishop, and as it submitted all the religion-related content to pre-publication examination by the Church authorities.<sup>97</sup> Figueiredo and the Dom Vital's Center published probably the best-known and certainly the most influential Catholic journal of the late years of the First Republic, *A Ordem*, that defined itself as "apologetic, nationalist, within the program of integral Catholicism".<sup>98</sup>

The new magazine assumed a truly reactionary form, fiercely condemning any notion of rationalism or progress, instead embracing a highly idealized vision of the past, especially the Middle Ages, with strictly determined social hierarchy and order, centered around God and his Church (Pinheiro 2007).<sup>99</sup> It also distinguished itself from the previous Catholic publications by adopting nationalist discourse including even criticism of the foreign clergy in Brazil.

Within a few years of its existence, Figueiredo's *A Ordem* managed to achieve exactly what archbishop Leme imagined: attracting an intellectual elite to Catholicism and actively involving them in the cause of the re-spiritualization of Brazil. Soon, Figueiredo was soon joined in *A Ordem*'s team by professor and writer, Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983), who became editor-in-chief of the magazine after his friend's premature death in 1928, and also by the poets Murilo Mendes (1901-1975) and Jorge de Lima (1893-1953), all three recent converts to Catholicism (Pinheiro 2007).

Dom Vital's Center later became the nucleus of the Brazilian Catholic Action (*Ação Católica*), created by cardinal Leme in 1935 to merge the diverse Catholic lay initiatives and movements under a single umbrella organization. Alceu Amoroso Lima became its first national president, which clearly demonstrates the group's position within Brazilian Catholicism at that time.

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<sup>97</sup> Jackson de Figueiredo, "O Centro D. Vital", *A Ordem*, v. 1, n. 11, July 1922.

<sup>98</sup> "Editorial", *A Ordem*, v. 1, n. 1, August 1921.

<sup>99</sup> PINHEIRO, Fernando Antonio Filho. 2007. *Tempo Social: revista de sociologia da USP*, v. 19, n. 1, pp. 33-49.

## 1.5. Mensageiro da Fé: Representative of the “good press”

*Dear reader! Have you already paid your subscription to Mensageiro da Fé? No? Oh, so don't you hesitate even one more day and comply with your sacred duty! Give your precious help to the support of the Good Press! Yes, you say? Very well! Always punctual, always generous, always Catholic of action! God will reward you!*<sup>100</sup>

Mensageiro da Fé, the main primary source of this text, was born in January 1902 in Salvador, the capital city of the state Bahia, originally founded by canon Manuel Antonio de Oliveira Lopes directly under the archdiocese. In the first few years of its existence, it was a rather humble publication, mostly focusing on theological issues, conversions from Protestantism and on the communication between the local Church hierarchy and their faithful.

Published on the first and third Sunday of every month, Mensageiro under Oliveira Lopes had only four pages and an initial circulation of just about one thousand copies. Father Oliveira Lopes led this little-known journal for five years only to be replaced by another canon, Miguel de Lima Valverde, for one year, before it was finally handed over by Archbishop Jerônimo Tomé da Silva (1849-1924) to the Franciscan Province of St. Anthony (*Santo Antônio*) with its central seat in the convent of St. Francis in Salvador in 1908.

Franciscans, already in charge of a small publishing house<sup>101</sup> thanks to a typography brought by the friar Jesualdo Machetti from the mission in Amazonian Manaus in 1894,<sup>102</sup> proved to be able administrators. The number of subscribers rose dramatically – to 25 thousands in 1914<sup>103</sup> and peaking at an astronomical 40 thousand subscribers in 1927, claiming to be the most-read Catholic publication in all of Brazil at that time.<sup>104</sup> This popularity didn't endure for long since the new editor-in-chief, Benigno Randebrock, writing under the pen name F.B.R., complained in 1929 of losing more than half of the subscribers because of the doubling of Mensageiro's price.<sup>105</sup>

But with about 20 thousand subscribers, Mensageiro still continued to be a major Catholic journal for the rest of the republican period, not only in Bahia and the northern region but eventually reaching every Brazilian state and even foreign countries. In several capitals, Mensageiro da Fé had its own authorized dealers<sup>106</sup> and great regional diversity of its readers can be well demonstrated by the published lists of deceased subscribers, coming from all over the union. In words of Soares de Azevedo, Mensageiro “ceased to be a local publication to become one of the national journals of the largest importance, responsibility and leadership.

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<sup>100</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 1.1.1922.

<sup>101</sup> In 1908, this publishing house became *A Editôra Mensageiro da Fé*, eventually turning into a major Catholic company of this kind, responsible for thousands of religious books and, aside from the biweekly Mensageiro, its own magazine for children (*Amigo da Infancia*). See Frei Cláudio Schneider, “A Editôra Mensageiro da Fé”, *Santo Antônio*, Ano 24, N. 2, 1966.

<sup>102</sup> Frei Cláudio Schneider, “A Editôra Mensageiro da Fé”, *Santo Antônio*, Ano 24, N. 2, 1966.

<sup>103</sup> “O que dizem de nós”, *MdF*, 17/5/1914.

<sup>104</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Nossas bodas”, *MdF*, 2.1.1927.

<sup>105</sup> F.B.R., “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 17.11.1929.

<sup>106</sup> E.g. in São Paulo certain Henrique Heins, “owner of a good Catholic bookshop”. See “Notas e Notícias”, *MdF*, 2.4.1922.

Today [...] there is no State [of Brazil] without some citizen who receives every fifteen days [...] our beloved magazine”.<sup>107</sup> Two years later, Randebrock claimed even international readership: “It is well known that Mensageiro da Fé is distributed in all the Brazilian states, Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and even has one subscriber in Greece”.<sup>108</sup>

In Franciscan hands, Mensageiro began to offer a wide spectrum of genres, always religiously but often also politically oriented, including poetry, short stories, excerpts from fiction and non-fiction<sup>109</sup>, international news or, at one point, even movie reviews. As for the regular contributors, it boasted some of the most famous Catholic intellectuals, including professor and journalist Carlos de Laet (1847-1927) who was responsible for the translation of encyclical *Rerum Novarum* to Brazilian Portuguese (Villaça 1975), the teacher and pioneering educator of women Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves (1862-1945), the poet Amélia Rodrigues (1861-1926), or the professor and director of the Brazilian Institute of History and Geography (*Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*), Afonso Celso (1860-1938).

### 1.5.1. Complex identities

The subsequent Franciscan editors-in-chief for all the period of the First Republic were the aforementioned revivers coming from the Saxonian province: Friars Maurício Mellage, Benigno Randebrock and, most importantly, Friar João Manderfelt, who presided over the peak of Mensageiro’s expansion from 1916 all the way until 1928, when he had to step down because of illness; he died a few months later. Manderfelt wrote articles under many pen names, most importantly Zeca and João do Norte (later João Bahiano), and also under his real name, publishing editorials and two regular columns often with political content, *Pedacinhos* and *Meu cantinho*, that both continued after his death under the new editor-in-chief.

Just as in case of the Franciscan *Vozes de Petrópolis* in the southern Province of Immaculate Conception (*Província da Imaculada Conceição*), friars coming from Germany brought with them the long experience in publishing Catholic journals and newspapers together with experience in journalistic work. They also closely connected Mensageiro to the Franciscan world, bringing detailed information about Franciscan events such as conferences and congresses, publishing articles written by Franciscan friars from other provinces, both from Brazil and from other countries<sup>110</sup>, or regularly fundraising finances for Franciscan missionary activities among indigenous people in Amazonia. In general terms, Mensageiro published texts on the history of the Church of all kinds, often in several installments, but Franciscan history played a very prominent part and the personality of St. Francis became the centerpiece of various editorials, including political interpretations of his legacy in today’s society.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Nossas bodas”, *MdF*, 2.1.1927.

<sup>108</sup> F.B.R., “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 16.6.1929.

<sup>109</sup> Sometimes published by the aforementioned publishing house.

<sup>110</sup> E.g. from the “Holy Land” – see “A guerra e a Terra Santa”, *MdF*, 6.8.1916.

<sup>111</sup> E.g. see João Bahiano, “S. Francisco d’Assis”, *MdF*, 2.10.1921.



Besides being Franciscans, friars taking charge of Mensageiro in 1908 were also – in the vast majority of the cases<sup>112</sup> – Germans. This fact was not without visible influence on the journal's content, as Germany became generously overrepresented in terms of the international news<sup>113</sup>; Mensageiro reported even about local elections in various imperial territories and it published hundreds of photos and illustrations with German content, from Franciscan convents and religious architecture, to the marvels of the German military and technologies. The political organization of German Catholics was frequently used as an example to be followed, the German Catholic Centre Party (*Deutsche Zentrumspartei*) tended to be presented as a model for the long-desired national Catholic party in Brazil, and the experience of German Catholics with Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* was often compared to the struggle with secularism in Brazil.

The German link became most visible during the first years of the “Great War”, when almost every issue of Mensageiro published some positive news about Germany's role in the war, presenting the country in very bright terms and, paradoxically, as an ally to the Catholic cause even though the emperor Wilhelm II and majority of his subjects were Protestant. To explain its sympathies, Mensageiro used numerous arguments, from Germany allowing both the Protestant and Catholic chaplains to accompany the soldiers,<sup>114</sup> to Wilhelm II's sympathies to religion and hostility to Freemasonry, to statistics demonstrating a rapidly growing Catholic population in the country. On repeated occasions, Mensageiro's authors, including Manderfelt himself, claimed that “when looking at the numeric progress of the Catholics in Prussia, sooner or later the Catholic element will unquestioningly overcome the Protestant one and in this way, the ‘Protestant Prussia’ will once again become history“.<sup>115</sup>

As the war progressed and Brazil moved closer to the United Kingdom and France, Mensageiro had to confront growing attacks in the secular Brazilian press against German Franciscans for being “unpatriotic”. Already in 1915, it reacted to criticism in *Gazeta de Pesqueira*, writing that “those responsible for Gazeta know well, just as all of us, the selflessness, love and dedication of German Franciscans for our country“.<sup>116</sup> Anti-German riots by the end of the Great War in various cities also included attacks on the churches and convents of the German friars. Soares de Azevedo, together with the rest of Mensageiro's authors, found this despicable and a possible sign of the religious persecution to come:

*Religious persecution is coming. Do not believe that what's been happening to the ‘German friars’ in the last months is only directed against them. Church is not German or Chinese – and they attacked churches. Images of saints are not German, and they tore them to pieces. Altars are not German either – and yet, they destroyed them.*<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Some of the missionaries reviving the Franciscan provinces of Saint Anthony and Immaculate Conception in Brazil were, in fact, from other countries. For instance, Friar Apolinário (1863-1943) was from the Netherlands. See Frei Francisco Xavier Bocker, “Frei Apolinário“, *Santo Antônio*, Ano I, N. 2, 1943.

<sup>113</sup> Mostly to be found in section *Noticiario* (and later *Notas e noticias*) on Mensageiro's final page.

<sup>114</sup> In contrast, the hated, secular France forced all the clergymen to recruit.

<sup>115</sup> João do Norte, “Estatística eloquente“, *MdF*, 4.4.1915.

<sup>116</sup> “Lemos n' ,O Sertão‘ de Garanhuns“, *MdF*, 2.5.1915.

<sup>117</sup> “Soares de Azevedo, Cariocas: Sêr-se catholico“, *MdF*, 3.2.1918.

Even though the controversy around the foreign clergymen in general calmed down in both tone and action in the years after the war, *Mensagem* – for obvious reasons – continued to be clearly on their side, which separated it from the new generation, mainly *A Ordem*, that embraced a more critical and nationalistic point of view in this matter. In the 1920s, news from Germany also gradually came back to become part of the journal’s discourse, together with admiration for the Catholic involvement in politics, personified in one of the republican chancellors, Wilhelm Marx (1863-1946) from the Centre Party.<sup>118</sup>

### **1.5.2. *Mensagem* as an instrument of the “good press”**

While Franciscan and German components strongly contributed to *Mensagem*’s unique identity, it was still, at first, a proud part of the “good press”, linked to the rest of the Brazilian Catholic media on ideological, organizational and even personal levels. *Mensagem* presented itself as the voice and instrument of the only truth, i.e. Catholicism embodied in the teachings of the Catholic Church as an institution.

Unconditional submission to the Catholic hierarchy was part of the editorial policy and an absolutely crucial element of *Mensagem*’s identity as a journal with “ecclesiastical approval”, which, in practice, meant it had to subjugate itself to pre-publication censorship by the archdiocese, therefore never publishing any critical content of the Church authorities. It also served in part as a semi-official communication channel, regularly publishing circulars and pastoral letters from the archdiocese of Salvador and other ecclesiastical provinces from all over Brazil.

Furthermore, as part of the Catholic press, *Mensagem* expected and demanded the same unconditional submission from its readers because “who does not submit himself to the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ will be forlorn on earth as in eternity. Catholic proceeding in this way is much worse than a soldier disobedient to his commander. [...] The Church has an admirably constructed hierarchy – and it must be respected”.<sup>119</sup>

*Mensagem*’s proximity to the Church hierarchy was even reinforced by the fact that the two first editors-in-chief were an important part of it, eventually becoming some of the most vocal representatives of the Catholic restoration. Manuel Antonio de Oliveira Lopes, aforementioned founder of *Mensagem da Fé*, was chosen to become auxiliary bishop of Ceará in 1908, bishop of Alagoas in 1910 and finally became archbishop of the newly-created archdiocese of Maceió. *Mensagem* of course celebrated this and continued to inform its readers of his activities and to publish his pastoral letters.<sup>120</sup> Miguel de Lima Valverde, who took charge of the magazine after Oliveira Lopes, had an even brighter career within the Church ranks, becoming bishop of Santa Marta in 1910 and then finally archbishop of Olinda-Recife diocese in 1922, substituting Sebastião Leme in this position.

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<sup>118</sup> Marx was chancellor of the Weimar Republic on two occasions: between 1923 and 1925 and between 1926 and 1928. He was also the longest-serving chancellor of the Republic.

<sup>119</sup> Manuel Buarque, “Sejamos submissos a Igreja”, *MdF*, 20.4.1924.

<sup>120</sup> E.g. F. Macedo de Costa, “O Novo Bispo”, 6.9.1908.

Besides the self-proclaimed ideology and both direct and indirect links with the Catholic hierarchy, *Mensageiro da Fé* was closely interconnected with the rest of the “good press“, as can be demonstrated by the enormous amount of articles re-published (or followed up on) from the other Catholic magazines and newspapers – and vice versa. To name just some of the most common examples, *Mensageiro* repeatedly re-published articles by the Sinzig’s *Vozes de Petrópolis*, *Gazeta do Povo*, *A União*, *Ave Maria*, or *A Bussola*. Its journalists also engaged in support of other Catholic publications, asking their readers to pay attention to them, reporting on their financial troubles and calling on *Mensageiro*’s subscribers to “rescue” them, or defending particular publications from the attacks in the “false press”.

When the Center of the Good Press was founded in 1910, *Mensageiro* applauded its creation and often published the texts coming from the Center itself, or at least from those working for it. Through this link, it obtained some of its most notable regular contributors, including Rio de Janeiro journalist Soares de Azevedo, at first writing about the Center of the Good Press and its activities before getting his own regular column in *Mensageiro* called *Cariocas* that began to be published in 1916 and eventually moved to the front page of the magazine.

Similarly, *Mensageiro* got strongly involved in the Center’s dream project of Catholic Daily newspapers, fundraising for it for years and writing numerous supportive articles. Editor-in-chief Manderfelt himself, under his many pen names, authored some of these texts, appealing in his editorial to “Catholic citizens” to “wake up from lethargy and organize defense” in the form of a “journal genuinely inspired with the Catholic morale” (i.e. Catholic Daily).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> João Manderfelt, “Em torno do Diario Catholico”, *MdF*, 15.10.1916.

**PART 2:**  
**ENEMIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

## 2.1. Introduction

We have established that the Brazilian Catholic Church post-1889 was in many ways in opposition to the new, republican regime. Catholic journalists and writers identified enemies behind every corner, both in the open - launching attacks on Catholic values and the Roman Catholic Church as an institution - and in the dark, pulling the strings behind the scenes. During the secular First Republic, Catholics were in hostile territory, painting themselves as being in constant defense and only a step away from a full-scale attack that would lead to the destruction of both their religion and Christian values in society as a whole.

“Our Fatherland is in a grave situation. [...] Since the proclamation of the republic divorced from God and from his principles, it is left on its own in a world full of difficult crises: institutional crisis, economic crisis, moral crisis. Especially the moral crisis,” Mensageiro’s columnist, writing under the pen-name Fortunatus, characterized the state of the country.<sup>122</sup> Although he wrote these words in 1922, they were only slightly different from previous years, given the perception of the “terrible anarchist doctrine spreading from Russia”,<sup>123</sup> inspired by Lenin and Trotsky.

From the very advent of the Old Republic, the journalists of the “good press” preached about the deterioration of values and embraced an apocalyptic vision of the future, warning of a looming fall of civilization, using historical parallels:

*Remember those shiny civilizations that amazed the world? Babylonia, Egypt, Persia, the immortal Greece of arts and philosophical thoughts? Splendid Rome, built on universal conquest and civil law? They disappeared exactly because of the lack of faith. [...] Today’s society is deformed. It reached the zenith of its intellectual and material perfection, the depth of the moral imperfection, and now is in a decline, on the way to its eventual dissolution.*<sup>124</sup>

Brazilian Catholics themselves were in even more immediate danger, facing possible eradication stemming from the anticlerical movements and shady revolutions from all over the world. The separation of the Church and State in Brazil fueled fears of an anti-religious campaign similar to the one taking place in France. This feeling was even strengthened by the subsequent revolutions in Portugal and Mexico in 1910 and, of course, by the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia; all of these events were reflected in the Brazilian Catholic press. For instance, in 1929, de Azevedo warned that Brazil was only one step away from the kind of religious persecution and conflict seen in Mexico, itself recently embroiled in the bloody Cristero War (1926-1929):

*Here in Brazil, we do not yet suffer the religious wars, whether officially declared or not. But we find ourselves in the preparatory phase when the characters are being deranged, spirits*

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<sup>122</sup> Fortunatus, “Ao correr da pena”, *MdF*, 16.4.1922.

<sup>123</sup> Fortunatus, “Ao correr da pena”, *MdF*, 16.4.1922.

<sup>124</sup> Fortunatus, “Ao correr da pena”, *MdF*, 4.6.1922.

*are being perverted, wide doors are opened to the complacency and the senses are being plunged into the great pool of pleasures.*<sup>125</sup>

Responsible for both of these imminent and long-term threats to the Brazilian Catholic Church and Brazilian society as a whole was, in Catholic eyes, a long list of enemies. Very often, these enemies were described as a broad front only slightly differing in shades of grey and in particular form, in fact closely aligned and united in their hatred towards Catholicism. Manderfelt wrote about the “diabolical conspiracy”, uniting together the Freemasons, “red socialists”, free-thinkers and anarchists.<sup>126</sup> Catholic students from São Paulo, similarly, put together a slightly different list of enemies, denouncing the “Jews, the Protestants, atheists and impious”,<sup>127</sup> while count Afonso Celso grouped the “free thinkers, positivists and Protestants of every denomination”, plotting together against the “progress of the Cross in our country”.<sup>128</sup>

Even so, in this part of the dissertation, I will attempt to divide these Catholic enemies into categories, based on the common characteristics ascribed to them by the very representatives of the “good press”. Each of these categories consists of several groups of enemies, based on the importance given to them by Catholic authors, while emphasis is given to the development of their role over time, if there was any, and the subsequent rise or fall of importance of each and every group. Finally, I also attempted to provide the reader with an elementary historical (and sometimes theological) context in order to better understand each category.

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<sup>125</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Redobrar os esforços”, *MdF*, 7.4.1929.

<sup>126</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: O racionalismo”, *MdF*, 21.8.1927.

<sup>127</sup> “Anatole France”, *MdF*, 22.8.1909.

<sup>128</sup> Affonso Celso, “Manejos Impios”, *MdF*, 8.10.1907.

## 2.2. Ideological enemies

I decided to name the first category of Catholic foes as “ideological enemies”, since all the groups related to it form – at least in the view of the Catholic authors – some sort of a cohesive ideology that the Catholic Church perceived as direct competition to the relationship with the Brazilian state and society. The groups in this category are presented as having their own political agenda and end game that is incompatible with a Catholic nation, even offering alternatives to the religion as a whole.

### 2.2.1. Freemasons

By far the most devious, dangerous and omnipotent of all the Catholic enemies described in the “good press” was global Freemasonry. While concrete actors of all kinds of anti-Catholic deeds could come from different groups and officially declare themselves sympathizers of other ideologies and political movements, Catholic authors tended to only see one manipulator from behind the curtain: the plotting members of the masonic lodges in Brazil and elsewhere.

Liberal or socialist politicians? All controlled by the Freemasons, as “almost all of their deputies [in this case in Belgium] belong to the lodge”.<sup>129</sup> Anarchist revolutionaries, for instance the often cited Spaniard Francisco Ferrer (1859-1909) responsible for Barcelona's “Tragic Week” in 1909? Organized by the Freemasons, as proven by the loud protests in the worldwide Masonic press when he was “rightfully” executed by the Spanish government.<sup>130</sup> As for the communist revolution, “European journals say that communists and Freemasons work hand by hand to organize a worldwide revolution against God and his Church”, claimed Franciscan friar Hildebrando.<sup>131</sup>

Freemasons were also secretly behind the deterioration of public morality and harmful emancipation of women – “looking for the dechristianization of women, introducing atheism in her heart” through the “emancipation from the Church”.<sup>132</sup> “Dear Catholic lady, mother or young girl. Do you want to be aiding impious Masonry? How will you explain this in the hour of your death?” Mensageiro asked its female readers who embraced this perilous modern fashion.<sup>133</sup>

In short, there was hardly any anti-Catholic action, both in Brazil and globally, that was not secretly organized by the Freemasons:

*Freemasonry has not been inactive. Quite the contrary; in all parts of the world, it has spent all its effort to force governments and public authorities to implement its plans. France, Portugal, Brazil, Spain... Intense effort is already bearing fruits in all these countries. So far,*

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<sup>129</sup> “Noticiario: Belgica”, *MdF*, 17.5.1914.

<sup>130</sup> “O caso do anarquista Ferrer”, *MdF*, 7.11.1909.

<sup>131</sup> Frei Hildebrando O.F.M., “Alerta!”, *MdF*, 4.5.1930.

<sup>132</sup> “A Maçonaria e a mulher”, *MdF*, 5.1.1919.

<sup>133</sup> Monitor, “Pedacinhos: A moda e a maçonaria”, *MdF*, 21.12.1930.

only Spain knew how to react<sup>134</sup> while Masonry has already won in France and Portugal. And here in Brazil, the imminent threat is not yet fully understood.<sup>135</sup>

According to the Catholic press, Masons were basically in control of all the “revolutionary” governments, especially in anticlerical France, but also in Portugal, Mexico, Soviet Russia or even Czechoslovakia.<sup>136</sup> They conspired against Catholics even in beloved Germany – and in Italy, their main goal was the pope himself, seeking to evict him from Rome and move him under their control, maybe on one of the small Mediterranean islands.<sup>137</sup>

In Brazil, while not being openly in control of the government, Freemasons were ascribed vast influence over the society and politics including specific secular policies, such as proposing the divorce laws. According to Z.L., an anonymous writer for Mensageiro da Fé and therefore a member of the editorial team, Masons “dominate the courts, army, police and business. They corrupt families, children, workers, it interferes with religion, showing off fake zeal and devotion, creating brotherhoods and fraternities, erecting churches, promoting celebrations and even trying to make laws for the clergy.”<sup>138</sup>

Behind all these plots and evil actions, according to these Catholic authors, lies one characteristic on which Freemasonry is supposedly based and founded upon: an absolute hatred for the Catholic Church, leading them to employ all the means necessary to destroy it everywhere in the world. Often, they are referred to in purely religious terms – as a “malicious sect” obviously incompatible with the Catholic faith: “For the condemned sect of Masonry, all means of corruption are acceptable.”<sup>139</sup> And this sect is a diabolical invention, “the latest word coming from hell” as “Satan could never have invented a more efficient means to fight against all that is good”.<sup>140</sup> No surprise that such a disgusting organization engaged in murders and perverted rituals like in “androgynous lodges where, in absolute secret, men and women meet in promiscuity”.<sup>141</sup>

### **Shifts and development**

Such radical views did not really develop in any significant way over the course of the First Republic, only changing in terms of which ideology or action the Freemasons were behind at the moment. So they gradually moved from Republican liberalism, to socialism and anarchism to, prominently in the 1920s, Masonic-Bolshevik (and in some cases also Jewish) conspiracy. The origins of these beliefs can actually be traced back much further. Officially, the Catholic Church had already reacted to Freemasonry in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Pope

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<sup>134</sup> Reference to the execution of Ferrer and violent crushing of the 1909 protests.

<sup>135</sup> “Projecto de lei“, *MdF*, 2.11.1913.

<sup>136</sup> “The Masonic government systematically persecutes the Catholic Church [in Czechoslovakia]. Even among the children, it spreads pamphlets against the Church, claiming Catholicism is incompatible with patriotism. An association of local university professors asked all its members to commit apostasy, and many other associations proceeded in the same way. It was not without motive that a political union was created between revolting Czechs, Masons and Slovak Catholics.” See “Notas e noticias: Tcheco-slovaquia“, *MdF*, 18.9.1921.

<sup>137</sup> “Noticiario: Roma“, *MdF*, 20.6.1915

<sup>138</sup> Z.L., “Ultima palavra de Satan“, *MdF*, 7.2.1909.

<sup>139</sup> “A Maçonaria e a mulher“, *MdF*, 5.1.1919.

<sup>140</sup> Z.L., “Ultima palavra de Satan“, *MdF*, 7.2.1909.

<sup>141</sup> “Maçonaria feminina“, *MdF*, 6.12.1908.



Clement XII condemned “highly suspicious associations” including so-called Masons in his bull *In eminenti apostolatus specula* (1738) (in Gueiros 1987: 198).

Subsequent papacies repeatedly reaffirmed this condemnation and kept forbidding Catholics from joining Masonic lodges, even though members of the highest nobility, including some rulers, continued to belong to them. The conflict between the papacy and Freemasonry accelerated in the second half of the 19th century, with rising conflict between states and the Church that attempted to reform itself. Pope Pius IX attempted to enforce the long-proclaimed incompatibility between being Mason and Catholic in his *Syllabus* and *Multiplices inter* (1865).

His successor, Leo XIII., continued this policy, in total publishing 226 documents against the Masons, including his well-known encyclical *Humanum genus* (1884) in which he called the Freemasonry an “insane and wicked endeavor“ where you may “almost see the implacable hatred and spirit of revenge with which Satan himself is inflamed against Jesus Christ“.<sup>142</sup> Roughly at the same time, in 1877, the Masonic Grand Orient of France began to accept open atheists to its ranks, suppressing in its constitution all the references to God and immortal soul, therefore reinforcing the Catholic fear of close relationship between atheism and Freemasonry.

In the local Brazilian context, the “Religious Question” affair greatly heightened the tensions and mutual suspicions, as this conflict between State and Church effectively began over Masonic influence in the Catholic institutions. Prominent politicians, including prime ministers, belonged to the Grand Orient of Brazil and even emperor Pedro II himself was its grandmaster, same as marshal Fonseca that was in charge of the 1889 coup d’état and later became first president of the Old Republic. Some years later, due to the arrival of an increasing number of missionaries from the United States, Masonry also began to be associated with American Protestantism, especially the Methodists that were ascribed to all sorts of malicious intents (see subchapter **2.3.1. Protestantism**).

With memory of the “Religious Question” in mind, the Brazilian Catholic Church continued being extremely paranoid in regards to Freemason influence, and the Catholic “good press” remained in constant struggle with the Masonic journals and magazines such as *O Livre Pensador* (1903-1915). Anti-masonic writing actually became quite a popular Catholic literary genre for decades to come, writing about the “truth” about this secret organization. Franciscan publishing house Mensageiro da Fé Ltda. also published some of them, e.g. “Communism and Masonry” written by father Antonio Feitosa.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Humanum Genus: Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on Freemasonry*. Accessed 15 January 2020, <[http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_18840420\\_humanum-genus.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18840420_humanum-genus.html)>

<sup>143</sup> See FEITOSA, Antonio. 1948. “O Comunismo e a Maçonaria“, Salvador: Editora Mensageiro da Fé Ltda.

### 2.2.2. Liberal republicans

The republican regime born in 1889 was not in fact significantly more democratic than the Monarchy even by contemporary standards. This can be well attested by the number of the active voters. While in the first direct elections in 1881, organized and based on the so-called “Saraiva’s Law” (*Lei Saraiva*), about 1,5% of the Brazilian population assumed voting right, in 1898 presidential election, it went only up to about 2,7%, or 462 thousands eligible voters in the population of 17 million (Arruda 2007).<sup>144</sup>

All kinds of important posts including senators and deputies on the national level were already directly voted in by the aforementioned law and even though the 1891 Constitution changed suffrage from censitary to equal one for men 21 years or older, it did not abolish the exclusion of the vast majority of society from the electoral process; most notably analphabets, homeless people, active soldiers, members of the clergy and the indigenous people. The vote itself was made public and not secret, clearly giving upper hand to the rural oligarchy that dominated the republican regime. This is why Holanda (1963: 15)<sup>145</sup> noted that “democracy in Brazil was always a sad misunderstanding”, only treated as a “facade or external decoration” while the real power rested in the hands of what he called “rural and semi-feudal aristocracy”.

Ideologically, however, the new regime was based on the principles of 19th century Latin American liberalism that was adopted by a significant part of the Brazilian rural elite already during the imperial period (Mendonça 1984).<sup>146</sup> Contemporary liberals, based on the ideas of the radical Enlightenment and inspired mostly by the British and American example, considered individual freedoms to be the keys to the nation’s progress and therefore believed they should be instituted and protected by the state.

While facing some competition from the positivists, it was the liberal-oriented lawyers and politicians that formulated the crucial pieces of legislation. Most notable of these was Ruy Barbosa (1849-1923), one of the ministers of the provisional government of marshall Deodoro Fonseca that, among many other things, authored the Decree 119-A that formally separated Church from the State and co-authored the 1891 constitution. Barbosa also later unsuccessfully ran for the presidency itself (Paim 1998).<sup>147</sup>

The new constitution introduced key liberal principles, soon targeted by the Catholic Church and its media: the freedom of the press, conscience, assembly and association, principle of habeas corpus and, of course, freedom of religion and separation of the Church and State (Paim 1998). In the contemporary liberal view, freedom of religion was seen as a crucial component of freedom of conscience, considering all the religions to be equally truthful to their followers. Having an official religion, on the other hand, was perceived as contrary to the long-desired idea of modernization of Brazil that was at the center of the liberal agenda.

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<sup>144</sup> ARRUDA, Pedro Fassoni. 2007. “Liberalismo, direito e dominação da burguesia agrária na Primeira República brasileira (1889-1930)”. *Ponto-e-Vírgula: Revista de Ciências Sociais* vol. 1, pp. 161-188.

<sup>145</sup> HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque. 1963. *Raízes do Brasil*. Brasília, Editora UnB.

<sup>146</sup> MENDONÇA, Antônio Gouvêa. 1984. *O Celeste Porvir - A inserção do protestantismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Paulinas.

<sup>147</sup> PAIM, Antonio. 1998. *História do liberalismo brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Mandarim.

Ruy Barbosa, for instance, saw the Church-State alliance as a “contract of death”, binding and limiting both parts of this relationship (Pereira 2008: 65).<sup>148</sup>

The Catholic religion was considered to be especially damaging to a modern state as the Catholic nations were generally perceived to be far behind the Protestant ones in education, work ethic, industrial development and even moral teachings, chiefly in its ideals regarding poverty, humility and charity (Vieira 1980). To achieve the modernization and creation of civil society, inspired in liberal circles mostly found in the United States and the British Empire, the separation of the Church and State had to be profound. So Barbosa and other influential liberals of the new regime pushed through the secularization of state rituals, instituting civil marriages, secularizing cemeteries or birth certificates and banning all religious education from public schools. Taking away voting rights from the clerics was also part of the same effort (Pereira 2008).

Unsurprisingly, the Catholic Church did not react well to these ideas and even less so to their practical application soon after the 1889 coup d'état. The republican idea by itself was not necessarily targeted, as the monarchist faction in the Church never gained particular strength or influence over the “good press”. In the words of Mensageiro’s regular contributor Coriolano: “Just like every human institution, this system has its disadvantages. But it also offers doubtless positives”.<sup>149</sup> Monarchy used to be praised more often as an idealized form of government from the past, especially when it came to Brazilian monarchy in particular, or as a good system for certain countries while other countries can better flourish in the republican form. Nevertheless, the First Brazilian Republic itself and its creators were painted in very negative terms, as the freedoms it instituted allegedly corrupted and destroyed public morality and led the nation as a whole on the road to hell, making it fragile and susceptible to even more destructive ideologies, such as communism.

In general terms, Catholic authors writing for Mensageiro condemned the liberal concept of freedom as an evil and harmful concept that leads to chaos, violence and destruction. “Everyone desires and calls for freedom. Freedom of commerce, freedom of industry, freedom of association, freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom of the press, freedom of teaching, freedom of religion, freedom of everything,” lists Coriolano in a different article.<sup>150</sup> “But these who call for freedom are contradicting themselves in an outrageous way. They want freedom, but for themselves, for their passions, for their ideas, theories and systems. Not bothered if their freedom becomes the cruelest tyranny of honest thoughts, of reasonable ideas, of legitimate interests of everyone else.”

These freedoms, he argues, are in fact only freedoms for everything anticlerical and anti-religious, not liberating Catholics but all kinds of malevolent actions against them:

*Liberty of conscience! All of them want to believe or negate everything they wish but then they will go to the churches to disrupt peaceful religious gatherings and mock the faithful,*

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<sup>148</sup> PEREIRA, Gabriela Martins. 2008. “Ultramontanos, positivistas e liberais: reflexões a partir da separação Igreja-Estado”. *Sacrilegens*, v.5, n.1, pp. 53-73.

<sup>149</sup> Coriolano, “Catholicos e politica”, *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>150</sup> Coriolano, “Liberdade”, *MdF*, 18.10.1914.

*shouting: 'Long live freedom!' Freedom of thought, of the press, of teaching, of religion! Everybody can think whatever they want in harmony with their passions, if only it's not in the Catholic sense. Write whatever you want, if it's not in the defense of Catholic religion. Teach everyone whatever you like, if it's not the Catholic truth. Have whatever religion you wish or none at all, but not the Catholic one! Oh, freedom! It is liberty to lie, to slander, to mock religious men and matters.*<sup>151</sup>

In a later text by “João do Norte” (i.e. Manderfelt), Mensageiro’s editor-in-chief calls these “evil freedoms”, arguing principally against the freedom of press that he considers to be the worst of these liberal freedoms.<sup>152</sup> It was the liberal politicians that implanted these destructive ideas and allowed other ideologies to flourish and threaten the very existence of the Brazilian nation, unable to stop them or react to them, either because of their weakness or possibly because of complicity (and of course Masonic influence). Writing about the imminent communist threat in Brazil, Manderfelt warns that “these men are not ready to carry out their obligation to work for the public interest, as they care exclusively about their private needs”.<sup>153</sup>

### 2.2.3. Marxist ideologies

#### **Socialists and anarchists**

This last, rather wide category of the “ideological enemies”, contains basically all the Marxist-based ideologies and movements, from socialists and anarchists to, later, Bolsheviks. Up to the 1917 October Revolution, Brazilian Catholic writers demonstrated a very limited knowledge of the Marxist ideologies and their particular activities in Brazil and elsewhere. Ideological differences between the two were stressed only occasionally, for instance by Coriolano in his regular column *Reflexões ligeiras* in 1914 where he made the distinction based on the anarchist individualism in contrast with collectivism of the socialists:

*Long live individual liberty! howl some. [...] Every individual should do as he likes. And to achieve happiness, don't be reluctant to get involved in robbery or even murder, is the advice of **anarchism**. No way! the socialists protest. There is no value in the individual, the society is all that matters. Family belongs to the state and an individual person is only a number detached from a great collectivity.*<sup>154</sup>

On other occasions, Mensageiro’s contributors did not differentiate at all between the anarchists and socialists that, in their view, shared many common denominations: they operated primarily in the newly-nascent working class, they preached inevitable Revolution, they used violent means (sometimes referred to as “terrorism”) to achieve it, preached class warfare and wanted to dissolve the existing social order.

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<sup>151</sup> Coriolano, “Liberdade”, *MdF*, 18.10.1914.

<sup>152</sup> João do Norte, “Meu cantinho”, *MdF*, 16.5.1915.

<sup>153</sup> João Bahiano, “Pela ordem social”, *MdF*, 7.8.1921.

<sup>154</sup> Coriolano, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 5.4.1914.

This limited knowledge – and honestly limited interest of the Catholic publications such as *Mensagem* – was due to a relatively small scale of influence of Marxist ideologies in Brazil prior to the Great War. Brazilian industrialization came rather late, by the end of the imperial period, highly concentrated in only a few cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, with the workers often being poor immigrants from Europe and elsewhere. For this reason, the first national laws introduced to deal with the workers’ movement were also aimed against foreigners – such as the so-called “Adolfo Gordo’s Law” (*Lei Adolfo Gordo*) from 1907, allowing that the “foreigner that for any reason compromises national security or public order can be expelled from any part of the national territory” (in Alves 1997: 38).<sup>155</sup> In the same year, this law directly led to the expulsion of 132 foreigners mainly coming from Spain, Italy and Portugal. (ibid: 40).

Most of these expelled foreigners were anarchists, as this ideology was the most influential in the workers’ movements prior to the October Revolution (Batalha 2000).<sup>156</sup> Socialism, usually built upon the French and German example, turned out to be more marginal and mostly with mild, pro-republican stances that supported the “gradual transformation of the existing social system, achieved basically through political action and voting” instead of revolutionary changes (Addor 2002: 69).<sup>157</sup> This position was generally adopted by various socialist parties that arose throughout the country, such as *Partido Operário do Rio Grande do Sul* (1890), *Partido Operário de São Paulo* (1890), *Centro Operário da Bahia* (1894) and many others in the following years.

- **First image: Violent beasts**

However, there is little evidence that Catholic journalists, such as those writing for *Mensagem*, were much informed about local socialist or anarchist activities in Brazil. On the contrary, in their perception of both socialism and anarchism, they were clearly influenced by various violent acts from the global stage. For instance, much space was given to assassinations like the one of Polish count and “true Christian” Andrzej Potocki by an alleged socialist, Myroslav Sichynsky, in 1908.<sup>158</sup>

But hardly any event was more consequential in *Mensagem* and elsewhere in the Catholic circles than the aforementioned “Tragic Week” (in *Mensagem* called “bloody week”<sup>159</sup>) one year later in Catalonia. In *Mensagem da Fé*, this event was first noticed in the news section (*Noticiário*) shortly after it took place, on August 22, described in the following manner:

*The most perverted anarchist elements committed utterly horrific and outrageous crimes. Churches and monasteries were sacked, images of saints at altars were broken with screams such as ‘Long live the revolution! Death to the rich! Break down the army!’ Innumerable nuns and novices were raped and murdered, even some children. Friars and priests were killed.*

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<sup>155</sup> ALVES, Paulo. 1997. *A verdade da repressão: práticas penais e outras estratégias da ordem republicana (1890-1921)*. São Paulo: Arte & Ciências.

<sup>156</sup> BATALHA, Cláudio. 2000. *O movimento operário na Primeira República*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar.

<sup>157</sup> ADDOR, Carlos Augusto. 2002. *A insurreição anarquista no Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Achiamé.

<sup>158</sup> See “A morte de um Cristo”, *MdF*, 7.3.1909.

<sup>159</sup> “Sempre assim”, *MdF*, 16.12.1913.

*The heads of the victims, impaled on spikes, were triumphantly paraded in the streets while ranting against God and the army.*<sup>160</sup>

Mensagem's authors, apparently horrified, and at the same time fascinated, by the brutality of the events that took place between July 25 and August 2 mainly in Barcelona, provided horrific details of violence and brutality, following the execution of one of the leaders, Francisco Ferrer. Anarchists (and also socialists) kept being associated with this "Tragic Week" for years to come. For instance, in 1913, an anonymous author reminded their Catholic readers of the incident, calling Ferrer "an enemy of God and the Fatherland" and "human monster that has become a celebrity while his innocent victims are being ridiculed".<sup>161</sup>

- **Second image: Fake friends of the workers**

Apart from violence, both the anarchists and socialists were described as liars to the "credulous" workers they pretended to protect. Instead, they were their sworn enemies, unlike the Catholic Church that even in Brazil slowly moved to address the question of the workers' living conditions inspired by Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) encyclical (see chapter 3.4. **Social Question**). Even before the Bolshevik revolution, Mensagem attempted to explain to its readers that the socialists and anarchists only worsened the lives of the workers, demonstrating it with a foreign example:

*Even in some parts of Europe where [the socialism] dominates, it didn't manage to improve the life conditions of its followers. On the contrary, it destroyed their happiness through the lack of religion and divorce.*<sup>162</sup>

Probably the most detailed account of the deceitful nature of socialism (and also the most detailed account of the socialist ideology as a whole) provides the humorous article called "The Socialist", describing the story of a "shoemaker named Pedro that liked to call himself a socialist".<sup>163</sup> When Pedro was poor, he "dreamt merely of the day when he could have vengeance on the rich people. [...] He spoke avidly of overthrowing the kings, destroying the infernal machines, of the apportionment of material goods, human rights, liberty of thought and conscience".<sup>164</sup>

But then he became rich and, while still proudly declaring himself a socialist, he went to exploit the workers even worse than the predecessors he criticized. In this story, Pedro mocked the workers who believed in socialists, calling them "fools who dream of impossible things".<sup>165</sup> The anonymous author of the article concludes with a warning to beware of "these swindlers, these hypocrites that deceive the people while enriching themselves with the sweat of the poor".<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> "Noticiário: Hespanha", *MdF*, 22.8.1909

<sup>161</sup> "Sempre assim", *MdF*, 16.12.1913.

<sup>162</sup> "Noticiário: Argentina", *MdF*, 16.11.1913.

<sup>163</sup> "O Socialista", *MdF*, 2.3.1913.

<sup>164</sup> "O Socialista", *MdF*, 2.3.1913.

<sup>165</sup> "O Socialista", *MdF*, 2.3.1913.

<sup>166</sup> "O Socialista", *MdF*, 2.3.1913.

## Communists

*Sabe que é um comunista?*

*É um ser original,*

*Que odeia o capitalista,*

*Mas adora o capital.<sup>167</sup>*

In many ways, the 1917 Bolshevik revolution profoundly transformed the Brazilian social and political climate during the late First Republic. First, it seriously influenced the workers' movement in Brazil that began to play a much more active role already during the First World War because of gradually worsening conditions and the lowering purchasing power of the workers.

Dissatisfaction culminated in the July 1917 general strike that paralyzed the industries in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and other parts of the country (Mattos 2009).<sup>168</sup> While this strike was unrelated to the occurrences in Russia, the following waves of strikes in 1918, and especially in 1919, were already greatly inspired by the Revolution that got particularly strongly reflected in the Brazilian workers' press and also socialist and anarchist publications, regarding the "victory of the working class" in Russia with sympathies and excitement (Prado 2017: 58).<sup>169</sup>

Almost exactly one year after the Bolshevik Revolution, on November 18, 1918, its sympathizers (although mostly anarchists) attempted to overthrow the Brazilian government, leading to brief but violent confrontations with the military in different parts of Rio de Janeiro state. The attempted revolution did not work out – instead, its leaders such as José Oiticica (1882-1957, together with hundreds of workers, were imprisoned and the government forced crackdown on the workers' organization, including the suppression of the General Union of the Workers (*União Geral dos Trabalhadores*) and temporary suspension of Union of Workers in Textile Factories (*União dos Operários em Fábricas de Tecidos*) (Prado 2017).

Inspiration, however, did not cease after this initial failure. By March 1919, the first Communist Party (*Partido Comunista*) was founded in Rio de Janeiro, once again gathering mostly socialists and anarchists who were not really well-informed about the exact nature of the Russian revolution. But the first truly Bolshevik Brazilian party, called the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB; *Partido Comunista do Brasil*), came from rather different groups, directly under Soviet influence and copying the same structure and political goals of their Russian counterparts: the Maximalist Union (*União Maximalista*) from Porto Alegre and later Rio de Janeiro's Communist Group (*Grupo Comunista do Rio de Janeiro*), supported by the

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<sup>167</sup> The literal translation of this little poem by Mensageiro's own editor-in-chief reads is as follows: "Do you know who's a communist? It's this original being. That hates capitalists, but loves capital." F.B.R., "Pedacinhos", *MdF*, 6.10.1929.

<sup>168</sup> MATTOS, Marcelo Badaró. 2009. *Trabalhadores e sindicatos no Brasil*. São Paulo: Expressão Popular.

<sup>169</sup> PRADO, Carlos. 2017. "A Revolução Russa e o movimento operário brasileiro: confusão ou adesão consciente?" *Revista Trilhas da História* v. 6, no. 12, pp. 57-70.

journal *Spártacus* and magazine *Movimento Comunista*. The PCB was finally founded in 1922 in Niterói and even managed to elect its first deputy to Congress in 1927, before it was made illegal the very same year (Carone 1989).<sup>170</sup>

More importantly for the topic of this dissertation, Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent communist activities in Brazil terrified the conservative sectors of the society. The threat of revolution turned into a hotly discussed topic and a pretext for social and political repression but also change. Catholic Church and its “good press” played a key role in this process, regularly blaming the republican regime for being too soft on the communists and calling for the restoration of order<sup>171</sup> and the restriction of the “harmful” freedoms of press, expression and, of course, religion. In other words, the communist threat became a powerful instrument of the Catholic restoration and reinterpretation of the republic based on Catholic ideals, as it is explored in detail in Part Three.

So how was the Bolshevik revolution and communism portrayed in the Catholic press, namely in *Mensagem*? Paradoxically, it did not paint an entirely negative image in the first months since October 1917. Because of its own German connection, *Mensagem*’s authors did not share the portrayal of Lenin as a “German agent” or “spy in the Kaiser’s service“ that was so common in mainstream republican media (Prado 2017: 58). On the contrary, it repeatedly praised the early revolutionary religious policy because it terminated the Tsarist’s preferential treatment of the Russian Orthodox Church and granted an equal stance to other religions, including Roman Catholicism.<sup>172</sup>

In January 1918, for example, *Mensagem* noted with clear shock that the Bolshevik government allowed Jesuit orders to return<sup>173</sup> to Russia: “Who would have thought some years ago that a radical revolution would lead to the Jesuits returning to Russia in such a triumphant manner?”<sup>174</sup> Two months later, once again in the news section, *Mensagem* published an account of a Jesuit procession taking place for the first time on the streets of Saint Petersburg.<sup>175</sup>

Such vision, of course, quickly vanished with the first repressions of the Catholic Church and religion as a whole, and with the perceived threat of a global revolution that could take place even on Brazilian soil. Russia – or later the Soviet Union – turned into a haven of brutal and violent atheism, and religious persecution received significant Catholic attention.

- **Nature of communism**

As for the nature of “communism”, there was initially a certain degree of confusion, not exclusive to Catholics but also shared by many proclaimed Brazilian communists, as noted

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<sup>170</sup> CARONE, Edgard. 1989. *Classes sociais e movimento operário*. São Paulo: Ática.

<sup>171</sup> Therefore the name of the Catholic publication *A Ordem*, i.e. *The Order*.

<sup>172</sup> Interestingly enough, the Brazilian Catholics did not object to “religious freedom” in countries where Roman Catholicism was in minority while they severely criticized it in Latin America or in Western Europe.

<sup>173</sup> During the reign of empress Catherine I (r. 1762-1796), Jesuits from other countries were initially welcome in Russia. However, they were later exiled by Alexander I (r. 1801-1825) in 1820.

<sup>174</sup> “Noticiário: Rússia“, *MdF*, 20.1.1918.

<sup>175</sup> “Noticiário: Rússia“, *MdF*, 3.3.1918.



above. So in the first years after the October Revolution, some authors of *Mensagem*, including its editor-in-chief Manderfelt, considered the ruling regime to be anarchist in nature.<sup>176</sup> Others, such as the Franciscan friar Mosca,<sup>177</sup> called it socialism, while De Azevedo in his first reflections on what was happening in Russia labelled it “Maximalism” (*maximalismo*), a term that surged in the Brazilian workers’ press as a translation of the Russian “Bolshevism” (although certain newspapers suggested it was named after Maxim Gorky) and continued to be used by some authors until 1920s (Bartz 2016).<sup>178</sup> Bolshevism (*bolshevismo*) or communism (*comunismo*) eventually became the most commonly used terms to describe the revolutionaries in Russia and elsewhere.

Catholic authors, however, understood Bolshevism as simply the newest and most destructive branch of the old Marxist ideology:

*In relation to religion, the Bolshevik is a faithful follower of Marxism. For him, man has no other objective than rapid material progress and everything related to religion is considered only to be an illusion.*<sup>179</sup>

Many also portrayed communism as something with much deeper roots, related to the worst human vices:

*Communism, after all, is nothing new. Adam was the first communist and then, from Nero and Caligula to Luther and Calvin, from Marat and Robespierre to Calles and Afonso Costa and all the way to today’s Stalin and José Oiticica, communism can change color, some of its aspects, form or processes, but in the essence remains the same.*<sup>180</sup>

And what is this essence? Soares de Azevedo explains his view in another article from a few years earlier: “Communism is envy and revolt born out of envy. [...] Communism is [...] impracticable. But even though it is impracticable, there is something that feeds it: envy, spite and inability”.<sup>181</sup>

- **Images of communism**

Of course, the portrayal of communism and communists was also most commonly related to violence. The Bolshevik revolutionary and post-revolutionary terror was again often painted in gory detail, because in the words of Manderfelt, “in Russia, the people are murdered in the same ordinary way that elsewhere rats are killed”.<sup>182</sup> This violence was mostly mentioned in an anti-religious context that was perceived as inherent to the Soviet regime. The Franciscan friar Hildebrando, for example, brings the statistics of religious persecution, counting that “until now [1930], 11 bishops, 1560 priests and 7000 friars and nuns were murdered. 48

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<sup>176</sup> See João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: O anarchismo”, *MdF*, 16.11.1921.

<sup>177</sup> Irmão Mosca, “S. Francisco Socialista?”, *MdF*, 5.9.1926.

<sup>178</sup> BARTZ, Frederico Duarte. 2016. “O maximalismo como problema: circulação e apropriação da ideia de bolchevismo no movimento operário brasileiro durante os primeiros anos da Revolução Russa”. *Izquierdas* v. 31, pp. 235-248,

<sup>179</sup> P.J. Busato, “No paraíso dos Soviets”, *MdF*, 1.6.1930.

<sup>180</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Comunista porque?”, *MdF*, 1.6.1930.

<sup>181</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Caso para pensar”, *MdF*, 18.9.1927.

<sup>182</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: O anarchismo”, *MdF*, 6.11.1921.

bishops, 3700 priests and more than 8000 members of the religious orders were condemned to forced labor or suffer in prisons.<sup>183</sup>

Hildebrando noted the symbolic violence as well: “Hundreds of churches were destroyed or defiled in a provocative way through an exhibition of obscene and shameful films and performances.”<sup>184</sup> This was meant to prove the perversity of a regime that (unlike others that are implicitly irreligious, such as the liberals) openly defined itself as atheist. Mensageiro portrayed the hostility to religion as a whole on many examples, including the war on Christmas when the Bolshevik government “prohibited to cut, transport and sell Christmas trees;<sup>185</sup> or abolishment of Sundays that was “further proof that Bolshevism is the work of the devil”.<sup>186</sup>

Other characteristics included chaos and poverty, which, in the Catholic view, logically accompanied an atheist and anti-religious society; this belief in the link between wealth (or poverty) and their stance towards religion, and especially the Catholic religion, will be very obvious in some other cases discussed later on. In one of the articles dealing with chaos and poverty, Soares de Azevedo quoted the Argentinian ambassador to Russia describing conditions in the country as follows:

*‘Private property of all forms has disappeared. Today, the State is the only owner in Soviet Russia. Land, buildings, all industry and commerce belong to it exclusively. The amount of objects that any citizen can own is limited. Nobody can own more than one dress and a pair of shoes and the situation is the same is with the majority of other things that the Soviet commissaries set as of primary necessity [...]. Even the number of cigarettes that one person smokes per month is regulated.’<sup>187</sup>*

Of course, the description of miseries that include the poor, working class sympathizing with the communists, served another purpose: to prove that, in direct contrast with the claims of the leftist press, communist revolution did not lead to any kind of improvement of the workers’ living conditions but instead further hurt them. Informing them about banning Sunday, for which Brazilian Catholic Church fiercely fought for the mandatory day of leisure, was clearly part of this discourse as well.

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, offered the workers protection from evils of both capitalism and of communism, and argued against the notion of “class warfare”, replacing it with a father-children based relationship between the employer and his workers. While founded upon the older social doctrine of the Church and the aforementioned encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, the communist threat – and challenge – significantly reinforced and renewed Catholic engagement in the workers’ cause in Brazil, as I argue in part 3, dedicated to the presented Catholic model of society.

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<sup>183</sup> Frei Hildebrando, O.F.M., “Alerta!”, *MdF*, 4.5.1930.

<sup>184</sup> Frei Hildebrando, O.F.M., “Alerta!”, *MdF*, 4.5.1930.

<sup>185</sup> “Notas e notícias: Russia”, *MdF*, 19.1.1930.

<sup>186</sup> “Notas e notícias: Russia”, *MdF*, 5.1.1930.

<sup>187</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: O Maximalismo”, *MdF*, 15.6.1919.

## 2.3. Religious enemies

### 2.3.1. Protestants

From the long historical perspective, Brazilian Protestants have come through a sort of paradoxical journey. Just like today, especially during the 19th and early 20th century, they constituted the fastest growing religious group in the country, with a profound influence on politics and public life that upset the dominant religious group, i.e. the Catholics. Unlike today, however, Protestants stood fully on the side of secularization and Church and State separation, promoting and sort of embodying the liberal ideas of progress, modernization and freedoms criticized by the Catholic Church.

Surprisingly for many, Protestantism is as old as Brazil itself, reaching this Portuguese colony through the Calvinist settlers in Rio de Janeiro and especially in the northernmost Maranhão from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until 1614 when they were expelled by the Portuguese. Only one decade later, another Protestant power, the Dutch, invaded the Brazilian north, attacking the capital of Salvador and soon occupying the rich Pernambuco captaincy that turned into the province of New Holland (*Nieuw Holland*) between 1630 and 1654.

The modern history of Protestantism in the country, however, only really begins in the 19th century, with the arrival of the Portuguese royal family fleeing from Napoleon in 1808. The regent for his mentally ill mother, John VI of Portugal (regent from 1799, r. 1816-1826), ordered the opening up of Brazilian ports to friendly nations. And in 1810, he signed the Treaty of Alliance and Friendship (*Tratado de Aliança e Amizade*) with Britain, for the first time in Portuguese history granting Protestants official tolerance. In the 12th and the 23rd paragraph, the treaty gave full religious freedom for British citizens to practice their respective religions and establish their places of worship in Brazilian cities, only forbidding them to display external religious symbols, such as towers and bells (Santos 2016).

The Independent Brazilian Empire continued and even extended the policy of official tolerance, embedding it in the 1824 constitution which guaranteed in paragraph 5 the right to worship of “all the other [i.e. non-Catholic] religions inside their homes or in houses dedicated for this purpose, without any exterior semblance of a temple” (in Santos 2016: 77-78). Subsequently, the penal code from 1930 made religiously-motivated persecutions a criminal offence punished by imprisonment for one to three months (paragraph 191) and abuse or mockery of any religion in the press by one to six months in prison and a high fine (article 277) (Santos 2016).

Continued tolerance in the imperial period was accompanied by attempts to attract large-scale immigration mainly from the European countries, including a number of German-speaking Protestants. By 1824, the first contingent of 324 German Lutherans, accompanied by their pastor, arrived in Brazil, founding a colony they called *Neufreiburg* (today’s Nova Friburgo). In total, some 4 800 German immigrants settled in the southern Rio Grande do Sul province

between 1824 and 1830, 60% of them of various Protestant denominations (Ribeiro 1973).<sup>188</sup> German-speaking immigrants kept on arriving for the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, first organizing their religious life by themselves but, from the 1850s, receiving European clergy sent by the Prussian and the Swiss government (Dreher 1984).<sup>189</sup>

While the Roman Catholic Church certainly frowned upon the establishment of Protestant communities in Brazil, they were much more disturbed by another trend that commenced and accelerated during the imperial period: the arrival of missionaries that began to proselytize among the Brazilian Catholic population. Pioneers among these were Presbyterian pastors like Scotsman Robert Kalley (1809-1888), founder of *Igreja Evangélica Fluminense* (1858) that became the first Portuguese-speaking Protestant congregation in Brazil. Just a few years later, in 1862, other Presbyterian pastors, this time coming from the United States, such as Ashbel Green Simonton (1833-1867) and Alexander Latimer Blackford (1829-1890), founded *Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil* (Mendonça-Velasquez 1990).<sup>190</sup>

The first Pentecostal churches, that are currently by far the most numerous and influential in contemporary Brazilian Protestantism, emerged during the republican regime; the oldest of them, the Christian Congregation (*Congregação Cristã no Brasil*), was founded in São Paulo in 1910 and one year later, two Swedish missionaries founded the Assembly of God (*Assembleia de Deus*) in the Amazonian port of Belém (Freston 1995).<sup>191</sup> But Pentecostal churches at this time did not generate much interest among Catholics, or in public discourse; it took decades after the end of the First Republic to become a significant part of the debate over Brazilian Protestantism. It was mainline Protestantism that received the most attention both from the liberal elite and from Brazilian Catholics, even though they began from very different starting points.

Liberal-minded Brazilians welcomed and encouraged the settlement of Protestant communities and the arrival of the Protestant missionaries because they assumed the link between Protestantism, progress and modernization of the country, based on examples set by the United Kingdom and soon the United States that turned into model states, were templates that ought to be followed (Dreher 1993). Catholicism, on the other hand, was synonymous with the backwardness, ignorance or superstition that held back Brazil's true potential. Protestants seemingly embraced this role and presented themselves not only as missionaries of their particular understanding of the Scripture, but as missionaries of modernity, progress and development. For them, it was what the United States represented and that is how they portrayed it. Consider, for instance, this article in the Protestant journal *O Estandarte* from 1895:

*We all admire the United States of America, this great, noble, independent country that always keeps on progressing. But very few search for the decisive factor in its greatness and*

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<sup>188</sup> RIBEIRO, Boanerges. 1973. *Protestantismo no Brasil monárquico (1822-1888): aspectos culturais da aceitação do protestantismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Pioneira.

<sup>189</sup> DREHER, Martin. 1984. *Igreja e Germanidade*. São Leopoldo: Sinodal/EST.

<sup>190</sup> MENDONÇA, A. G. e VELASQUES, F. P. 1990. *Introdução ao Protestantismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Loyola.

<sup>191</sup> FRESTON, Paul. 1995. "Pentecostalism in Brazil: A Brief History". *Religion* no. 25, pp. 119-133.

*its progress. It was Cleveland<sup>192</sup> who said that the reason for the envied greatness, peace and order of the United States is the protection of the Supreme Legislator of the Universe. Lord God is the supreme judge of the nations – and His is all the honour, power and majesty (in Silveira 2014: 95).*

For the writers of the “good press”, however, the growing presence of the Protestant element represented an immediate danger for Brazil as a country, for its society and even for its economic development.

### **The theological perspective**

Protestantism as a whole was, obviously, portrayed in almost entirely negative light. From the official theological perspective before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Protestants were considered heretics (the other most common name for them used in Brazilian Catholic sources is “sectarians”) founded by “monstrous Luther”<sup>193</sup> and divided into “thousands of sects of all denominations”<sup>194</sup> that did not respect some of the most important aspects of Catholicism – papal authority, saints, celibacy, the Virgin Mary and her immaculate conception. Mensageiro da Fé, just as innumerable other Catholic publications in Brazil, dedicated thousands of articles to the refutation of these basic points of theological dispute and to the depiction of the allegedly violent history of Protestantism. For example, in the article called “The Establishment of Protestantism”, Protestant history is presented in the following terms:

*Luther’s sect that was the source of all the other sects killed millions of people in Europe. In France, Calvin’s sectarians led dozens of battles against their legitimate sovereigns. What a religion! What a reform! What a Gospel!*<sup>195</sup>

Protestantism simply could not be the truthful religion in the Catholic view because “it is torn apart into a forever increasing amount of sects that divide themselves and then fight each other without being able to even feign the appearance of unity”.<sup>196</sup> This fragmentation was source of constant ridicule in Mensageiro da Fé that served its readers with anecdotal stories, such as the story about the schism in the “Vegetarian Church” that allegedly divided itself into a “cooking” and a “not cooking” branch “because one part believes that Jesus Christ consumed cooked vegetables and the other claims the opposite”.<sup>197</sup>

Some authors, in fact, even denied Protestantism the character of religion. Manderfelt perceived its opposition to Catholicism was the only element defining it: “Protestantism is not a church, it is a coalition of forces opposed to Catholicism. It is not a religion, it’s a counter-religion. It was not born from reform but from anarchy.”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Grover Cleveland (1837-1908), U.S. president between 1885-1889 and again between 1893-1897.

<sup>193</sup> Lourival Ribeiro d’Andrade, “A fé e as boas obras”, *MdF*, 20.7.1924.

<sup>194</sup> “Religião reclame”, *MdF*, 6. 7. 1913.

<sup>195</sup> “Estabelecimento do protestantismo”, *MdF*, 3.3.1907.

<sup>196</sup> “Catholicismo, Protestantismo e Infidelidade XII: Caracteres da divindade da Egreja Catholica”, *MdF*, 2.3.1913.

<sup>197</sup> “Notas e noticias: Estados-Unidos”, *MdF*, 1.1.1922

<sup>198</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 17.7.1921.

## Two kinds of Protestantism

As apparent from the lines above, Roman Catholic authors in the “good press” did not seriously attempt to differentiate between the particular Protestant sects, even though they occasionally named them; for instance, the Baptists are mentioned as “one of the infinite variations of Protestantism, the so-called Baptists”<sup>199</sup>, and the Methodists are most commonly named in connection with the Freemason activities in Latin America, especially in Mexico. Instead, the Catholic portrayal of Protestantism beyond the basic claim of theological error can be roughly divided into two categories with sharply different characteristics.

- **Category 1: Protestants by nature**

The first category represents those who were “born in error” but did not attempt to spread their faith any further. A good definition of this category can be found in the 1915 collective pastoral letter of the Brazilian bishops from the southern dioceses that named Protestantism as a “dangerous enemy” – but not the Protestantism of “those brothers born in error who profess it only for themselves and respect the faith of Catholics without attacking them”.<sup>200</sup>

Calvinists, Lutherans, Anglicans and some of the other oldest confessions could therefore be included here – and were, indeed, most commonly mentioned when a particular denomination was named in *Mensagem da Fé*. Furthermore, this category was associated with all of the most important and influential predominantly Protestant territories – the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands or Scandinavia and partially also the United States, even though the American case is slightly more complicated as we will see later.

These non-expansionist Protestants could have been occasionally even associated with slightly more positive characteristics, especially when they collaborated with the Catholics – for instance, the U.S. president William Howard Taft (r. 1909-1913) was praised for his sympathies to the Catholic Church and his willingness to respect its role in the colonized Philippines<sup>201</sup>, and the Swedish Lutherans were appreciated for being “always sympathetic to Rome” and because they allegedly “never participated in the hatred and persecution of the Lutheran monarchs against the Catholic conscience”<sup>202</sup>.

This category is also characterized by the notion of religious decay, in contrast with the triumphant rise of the Roman Catholicism in respective countries. The example of Germany as a future Catholic state because of constant decline of local Protestantism was already noted in the previous chapters. Curiously enough, *Mensagem*’s authors even praised separation of Church and State when it came to the separation of the Lutheran Church from Prussia after the Great War that was called the “the final mortal blow” to this weak church.<sup>203</sup> The same argument was made about the Church of England that was “increasingly in decline”<sup>204</sup> while the Catholic Church in the country recruited a record number of converts, as attested by the

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<sup>199</sup> “Perfidia heretica”, *MdF*, 21.7.1907.

<sup>200</sup> “Trecha da Pastoral Collectiva dos srs. bispos do Sul”, *MdF*, 4.7.1915.

<sup>201</sup> “O presidente TAFT e a Igreja Catholica”, *MdF*, 18.7.1909.

<sup>202</sup> “Notas e noticias: Suécia”, *MdF*, 21.8.1927.

<sup>203</sup> “Notas e noticias: Alemanha”, *MdF*, 20.11.1921.

<sup>204</sup> “Noticiario: Inglaterra”, *MdF*, 16.4.1916.

frequent stories of the “eloquent” British personalities that decided to accept the one true faith.

Mensagem contributors also did not hesitate to demonstrate a similar process taking place in the United States. One story from 1914 described “empty [Protestant] churches” and their desperate pastors, “making up a thousand skills just to attract at least some people”.<sup>205</sup> Sixteen years later, the situation was no different in this theoretically Protestant country, as there were “25 thousand closed Protestant churches. Many of these were already destroyed or are used as garages and storage houses”.<sup>206</sup> However, while Mensagem regularly listed American converts, the decay of the Protestantism in the U.S. was used to demonstrate one more effect that was not really present in the case of Germany or England – the decay of religion itself, as alarming (and entirely made-up) numbers of Americans were instead becoming atheists or even “pagans”.

“Paganism and atheism are triumphantly marching forward,” claimed an undisclosed author of the 1914’s news section (*Noticiario*). “The latest religious statistics prove that from about 100 million inhabitants, only 37 millions profess some religion. [...] More than 50 millions do not have any religion at all.”<sup>207</sup> This played into a wider narrative of Protestantism as a doctrine based on anti-Christian and immoral values similar or even equal to atheism. Since Mensagem’s authors liked to prove their points with statistics, the news section (*Notas e notícias*) in 1930 quoted a survey by certain G. H. Betts from Northwestern University among 1309 Protestant pastors and students from 7 main theological faculties that served to demonstrate the Protestant “values”.

For example, 13 percent of the surveyed pastors and 36 percent of the students did not believe in “God’s omnipotence”, 20 percent of pastors and a stunning 56 percent of students did not believe in the Trinity and “some even refuse existence of life after death”.<sup>208</sup> But what were Protestant values if they were not based on Christianity and were not even religious in its core? It was money, materialism veiled in religious terms but hardly any different from the ideological enemies of Catholicism. “Religion for those who call themselves ‘ministers of the Word’ is nothing but good and lucrative business,” wrote an anonymous author in Mensagem in 1913.<sup>209</sup>

In this way, Protestantism was linked to the same destructive societal tendencies as the other enemies of the Catholic Church, such as alarming levels of divorces attested in the U.S.: “In 1914, 110 000 divorce cases were registered, [...], one divorce per every 12 marriages. In 1915, divorces produced 90 000 orphans. It is necessary to note that only fifth or sixth of this republic is Catholic, the rest being almost entirely Protestant.”<sup>210</sup>

- **Category 2: Missionary Protestants**

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<sup>205</sup> “Noticiario: America do Norte”, *MdF*, 19.4.1914.

<sup>206</sup> “Notas e notícias: America do Norte”, *MdF*, 18.5.1930.

<sup>207</sup> “Noticiario: America do Norte”, *MdF*, 19.4.1914.

<sup>208</sup> “Notas e notícias: Estados Unidos”, *MdF*, 16.2.1930.

<sup>209</sup> “Religião reclame”, *MdF*, 6.7.1913.

<sup>210</sup> “Noticiario: Estados Unidos”, *MdF*, 3.12.1916.

The second category of Protestantism present in the Brazilian Catholic press is closely associated with many more negative characteristics that threatened the very moral foundations, and also the national interests, of Brazilians. While Protestant missions only converted a tiny fraction of the Brazilian population over the course of the entire period of the First Republic (2,6 percent in the 1940 census – Silveira 2008)<sup>211</sup>, the “good press” created a constant sense of urgency concerning both extent and potential impacts of the missionary activities.

By 1907, the *Mensageiro* warned its readers that, while the conversions to Catholicism rose in the U.S., China or Japan, Brazil itself was experiencing that “the number of so-called Protestants pastors is constantly multiplying and making more and more Brazilians apostate from the Holy Church”.<sup>212</sup> Two years later, Francisco de Paula e Silva (1866-1918), a bishop of Maranhão from 1907 to 1918, raised the issue of the growing Protestant activities in his home state, even while maintaining an overall sense of positiveness when noting that he does not know of the conversion of a single man “known for his intelligence or his position”,<sup>213</sup> implying the intellectual dominance of Catholicism.

What was perceived as especially dangerous were the intrusions into the traditionally Catholic-dominated fields, such as youth education – and it was these activities that provoked the most dramatic responses from the Catholic press. In a 1915 pastoral letter, bishops of the southern Brazilian dioceses collectively warned of the establishment of Protestant private schools; this was a novelty, as private religious schools were previously founded mostly by the Catholic Church in order to be able to teach religious education officially banned in the public institutions.

“They discovered the most diabolical and most destructive way to inject the poison of heresy and impiety into our faithfully Catholic people”, wrote the Brazilian bishops. “They opened schools and high school to spread their wrongful teachings, claiming they have nothing to do with religion, only focusing on science and literature [...] But these are the voices of the sirens and whoever listens to them will perish in the abyss of heresy and ungodliness”.<sup>214</sup>

*Mensageiro*’s contributors also strongly – and repeatedly – reacted to the Protestant associations, such as the Christian Youth Association (ACM) that was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1893 as an offshoot of the British Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) (Giraldi 2000)<sup>215</sup> and soon spread into other Brazilian cities, as lamented by Soares De Azevedo.<sup>216</sup> Plans to construct their new headquarters in the very heart of Rio were called “clear signals of a Protestant invasion in the Land of the Holy Cross”<sup>217</sup> and “the most vicious

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<sup>211</sup> SILVEIRA, Leonildo Campos, 2008. “Os Mapas, Atores e Números da Diversidade Religiosa Cristã Brasileira: Católicos e Evangélicos entre 1940 e 2007”, *Revista de Estudos da Religião* 8, pp. 9-47.

<sup>212</sup> “Pelo mundo: Estatística”, *MdF*, 21.7.1907.

<sup>213</sup> “Balança da Fé”, *MdF*, 20.6.1909.

<sup>214</sup> “Trecho da Pastoral Collectiva dos srs. bispos do Sul”, *MdF*, 4.7.1915.

<sup>215</sup> GIRALDI, Luiz Antonio, *A Bíblia no Brasil República. Como a Liberdade Religiosa Impulsionou a Divulgação da Bíblia no País de 1889 a 1948*, Barueri: Sociedade Bíblica do Brasil, 2000.

<sup>216</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Defesa de todo o geito”, *MdF*, 2.3.1919.

<sup>217</sup> “Notas e notícias: Rio de Janeiro”, *MdF*, 16.2.1919.



attack on our faith”,<sup>218</sup> provoking Catholic organizations to petition the Brazilian president directly asking him to veto the construction.

Other Protestant activities reflected in the Catholic press consisted, for instance, of spreading religious leaflets and giving away bibles (Alberto José Gonçalves, bishop of Ribeirão Preto, claimed these bibles were “not the word of God” and that the leaflets “delicately disseminate the Protestant heretic poison in order to destroy the Catholic faith in the Brazilian souls”<sup>219</sup>), publishing columns in regional newspapers such as *Correio de Manhã*, *Jornal* and *Paiz* in Rio de Janeiro,<sup>220</sup> or even making public appearances as described by Soares De Azevedo that witnessed a “horrificing” scene of seven Protestant women singing (or in his words “howling”) religious songs on the streets of Niteroi.<sup>221</sup>

„And I can guarantee you that what’s happening in Niteroi is taking place in hundreds of Brazilian cities,“ concluded De Azevedo. „We’re witnessing a vehement, formidable and tenacious propaganda of Protestantism, and especially this North-American brand of Protestantism, half political, half sectarian.“<sup>222</sup>

### **In the name of the United States**

Just as was indicated by de Azevedo, missionary Protestantism was, in the Catholic view, inseparably linked to the United States, its values and interests. As for the values, Mensageiro often encapsulated them in a mocking term “Yankee Spirit”, meaning pure materialism veiled in religious terms. “It is necessary to know that the Protestant scream [...] is nothing but a scream of a street vendor,“ wrote an anonymous Mensageiro author in 1913.<sup>223</sup>

It was, however, not only the personal gains that concerned these Protestants – but especially gains for the United States, this “American lion”,<sup>224</sup> and their businessmen that tried to use the missionaries to “seize the Brazilian market”<sup>225</sup> because “Protestant propaganda seems to them as a powerful factor for commercial propaganda”.<sup>226</sup> “Everything they do is business,” noted an anonymous author in Mensageiro. “Money for the [religious] buildings etc. come from the pockets of the American multimillionaires that only generously subsidize Protestant propaganda in the Catholic countries in order to prepare the terrain for their commercial exploitation in the nations that still maintain their independence.”<sup>227</sup>

Bishop Gonçalves of Ribeirão Preto specifically mentioned that what Americans were truly interested in was the main Brazilian products at the time of the First Republic – rubber and coffee – concluding in dark tone that the “yankees” already dominated the economy and all that was left to Brazilians was their Catholic faith: “The United States rule over our market,

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<sup>218</sup> Soares De Azevedo, “Defendamo-nos“, *MdF*, 6.4.1919.

<sup>219</sup> “Uma Palavra Energica“, *MdF*, 7.8.1921.

<sup>220</sup> “Notas e noticias: Rio de Janeiro“, *MdF*, 4.12.1921.

<sup>221</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Porque somos catholicos e não protestantes?“, *MdF*, 3.4.1927.

<sup>222</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Porque somos catholicos e não protestantes?“, *MdF*, 3.4.1927.

<sup>223</sup> “Religião reclame“, *MdF*, 6.7.1913.

<sup>224</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: Alerta! Brasileiros“, *MdF*, 6.1.1924.

<sup>225</sup> “De Atalaia“, *MdF*, 6.6.1915.

<sup>226</sup> “De Atalaia“, *MdF*, 6.6.1915.

<sup>227</sup> “Religião reclame“, *MdF*, 6.7.1913.

they set the prices of our products and impose on us the value of their dollar.”<sup>228</sup> Bishop Gonçalves concluded that the ultimate aim of Americans was to “de-nationalize” the Brazilians and called them “enemies of our country and of our religion”.<sup>229</sup> Basically all the articles in *Mensagem* concerning Protestantism emphasized its destructive anti-national character, both in moral terms (i.e. accepting Protestantism means corrosion of traditional Brazilian values) and in geopolitical terms (i.e. Brazilian economy will suffer and the Brazilians will become merely American servants).

An article from 1927 described the process of American expansion, noting that the “North American conquers in three phases: firstly with Protestant pastors from different sects to disunite the county; secondly with bankers to lend money, buy or humiliate; and lastly with a fleet to secure its capital”.<sup>230</sup> Catholic authors actually used examples of various other Latin American countries to demonstrate these effects and to show what Brazil would look like if missionary Protestants succeeded and Americans gained too much influence. Soares de Azevedo mentioned repeatedly the example of Mexico that he called a “fiefdom of Uncle Sam” and its regime a “dictatorship of the two Yankee agents that dominate it: Standard Oil<sup>231</sup> and Methodism”.<sup>232</sup> The result of their activities was, in de Azevedo’s view, an economic subjugation and brutal persecution of Catholicism that was certain to be repeated in Brazil.

And in Peru, *Mensagem* warned, the American missionaries even managed to deprive local indigenous peoples entirely of their national identity so now they feel more American than Peruvian. “They say with pride: ‘I am not Peruvian, I’m North American. Peru and its flag mean nothing to me, my flag is North American’.”<sup>233</sup> According to this article, “North American Protestant religious propaganda”<sup>234</sup> managed to turn Peruvian Indians so anti-national that they now expect American “armies and planes”<sup>235</sup> to deliver them the promised American values of liberty and progress and to “kill all the white people and divide the land between the Indians”.<sup>236</sup>

### 2.3.2. Spiritists<sup>237</sup>

To understand the animosity between the Catholic Church and Spiritism in Brazil better, one must first understand the specifics of Brazilian Spiritism. Spiritism was, obviously, a global phenomenon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, tracing its origins to the United States of the 1840s, more specifically to the Fox sisters in Hydesville, New York

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<sup>228</sup> “Uma Palavra Energica”, *MdF*, 7.8.1921.

<sup>229</sup> “Uma Palavra Energica”, *MdF*, 7.8.1921.

<sup>230</sup> “Notas e noticias: Nicaragua”, *MdF*, 3.7.1927.

<sup>231</sup> World’s largest oil refiner, founded by John D. Rockefeller in 1870.

<sup>232</sup> Soares D’Azevedo, “Perigo imminente!”, *MdF*, 18.11.1917.

<sup>233</sup> “Notas e noticias: Peru”, *MdF*, 16.11.1930.

<sup>234</sup> “Notas e noticias: Peru”, *MdF*, 16.11.1930.

<sup>235</sup> “Notas e noticias: Peru”, *MdF*, 16.11.1930.

<sup>236</sup> “Notas e noticias: Peru”, *MdF*, 16.11.1930.

<sup>237</sup> This sub-chapter is a slightly modified version of my article published in magazine *Ibero-Americana Pragensia* in 2018. See KALENDA, František. 2018. “Ridiculous Charlatans or Lunatic Neck Cutters: Images of Spiritism in Republican Brazil”. *Ibero-Americana Pragensia*, vol. 46, n. 1, Praha: Karolinum, pp. 31-49.

(Warren 1968).<sup>238</sup> Its emerging ideas and concepts most notably included communicating with spirits in the afterlife and a belief in multiple reincarnation, that were codified and specified in more detail by Allan Kardec (1804-1869)<sup>239</sup>, a French writer who authored defining books on the topic of the doctrine he named Spiritism: *The Spirits' Book* (1857), *Book of Mediums* (1861), and *The Gospel according to Spiritism* (1864).

Kardec defined Spiritism more as a philosophy than as pure religion, working thoroughly with Christian moral doctrine and especially finding inspiration in the Gospels, but at the same time attempting to re-interpret it scientifically, as he strongly opposed the concepts of Heaven and Hell, the Holy Trinity and Jesus' divine nature. Spiritism in his view was, indeed, based on modern scientific knowledge, and he incorporated into his doctrine contemporary theories of evolution and magnetism. The early Spiritists were in fact skeptical about the definition of their philosophy as a distinct religion (Warren 1968).

In Brazil, however, Spiritism took a rather different form. It first appeared on Brazilian soil in the early 1850s, as a curiosity for the local press, and became popular among the immigrant community, mostly the French living in Rio de Janeiro, who also published some early Spiritist works in Brazil in their language (Giumbelli 1997).<sup>240</sup> Brazilians did not demonstrate any particular interest in Spiritism and even the French community in the capital Rio de Janeiro soon moved away from their initial fascination with it (Ferreira 2014).<sup>241</sup> It was in the Northeastern state of Bahia (home of Mensageiro da Fé), however, where the originally *carioca*<sup>242</sup> journalist Teles de Menezes (1825-1893) pioneered the spread of Spiritism, beginning by translating excerpts from *The Spirit's Book* and other works by Kardec, and soon publishing his own essays and books on the topic. He also founded the first center of Spiritist studies in Brazil (*Grupo Familiar de Espiritismo*) and attempted to create the Brazilian Spiritist Society (*Sociedade Espírita Brasileira*) as a state-recognized institution (Ferreira 2014).

Menezes' idea of Spiritism was from the beginning very distinct from Kardec's. He formulated the doctrine in religious terms and even as a new, reformed form of Roman Catholicism. He called himself "Catholic by birth and faith" and claimed that "Spiritism and Catholicism are of the same Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The only thing separating them is time and words. Spiritism is a faithful translation of the Gospel teachings" (in Arribas 2008: 61).<sup>243</sup>

While many Brazilians calling themselves Spiritists did not agree with these claims and preferred to see Spiritism in philosophical and scientific terms, the "mystic group" decisively

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<sup>238</sup> WARREN Jr., Donald. 1968. "Spiritism in Brazil," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 393-405.

<sup>239</sup> Allan Kardec is a pen name; he was born Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail.

<sup>240</sup> GIUMBELLI, Emerson. 1997. "Heresia, doença, crime ou religião: o Espiritismo no discurso de médicos e cientistas sociais," *Revista de Antropologia* vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 31-82.

<sup>241</sup> FERREIRA de Jesus, Leonardo. 2014. "Ventos venenosos": o catolicismo diante da inserção do protestantismo e do espiritismo na Bahia durante o arcebispado de Dom Manoel Joaquim da Silveira (1862-1874), PhD thesis, Salvador: Federal University of Bahia.

<sup>242</sup> I.e. from Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>243</sup> ARRIBAS, Célia da Graca. "Afinal, espiritismo é religião?," Master's thesis, São Paulo: FFLCH-USP, 2008.

won this struggle in the final decade of the nineteenth century. The Federation of Brazilian Spiritists (FEB; formed in 1884) became the official umbrella for the vast majority of the Spiritist groups and centers in Brazil and its official voice, *O Reformador* magazine, and began to define itself suitably in its frontispiece as the “Journal of Christian Spiritism” (Arribas 2008).

### **Catholicism v. Spiritism**

From the very beginning, Spiritism faced vigorous opposition from the Catholic authorities – both globally and within the Church in Brazil itself. As early as 1856, the Holy Office formally condemned the table-turning séances that were gaining popularity in many countries, and in 1864, all Kardec’s books were put on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, the list of books officially forbidden to Catholics (Ferreira 2014). Then, on 30 March 1898, the Holy Office forbade Spiritist practices “even if intercourse with the demon was excluded and communication was sought with good spirits only”.<sup>244</sup>

The theological reasons for such staunch opposition were obvious. First, there was the communication with the spirits of the deceased through a human medium; while some limited contact with the dead is not unheard of in Catholic tradition, it is unthinkable that spirits could possess a different body from their own.

As explained to Catholic readers in the *Mensageiro* by Argemiro Soares: “We believe in the existence of the human soul and that every one of us possesses an individual soul or spirit. But this soul is given exclusively to one body; it is born with it, it accompanies it throughout life, and when they are forced to separate at the final hour, the spirit leaves to await the Last Judgment.”<sup>245</sup> Noone’s deceased spirit can never possess a living human body in Catholicism and the only spiritual possession that is possible is by “malign spirits”: “If indeed [...] another spirit enters the body of a living human being, it is a malign spirit. A demon.”<sup>246</sup>

Secondly, Kardec openly challenged the key principle of the Christian faith: that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who performed miracles in his name. For Kardec, these miracles were scientifically explicable and there was nothing divine about Jesus, who was merely a reincarnation of the most advanced form of spirit.

*The most deadly error of Spiritism is that it does not recognize the divinity of Christ [...]. They say Jesus was a great prophet, a perfect medium and the most noble and saintly among men that have ever lived on this planet but they refuse to accept [...] that he was the only-begotten Son of God.*<sup>247</sup>

These “heretical” beliefs were obviously condemned also by the Brazilian Catholic Church, but from a unique perspective, as it had to confront the Spiritism that claimed to be Christian and even Catholic, as mentioned above. The primary concern in this first phase of polemics between Spiritism and the Catholic authorities was therefore the (in)compatibility between

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<sup>244</sup> KUGELMANN, Robert. *Psychology and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 141.

<sup>245</sup> Argemiro Macedo Soares, “O Espiritismo IV.,” *MdF*, 17.3.1929.

<sup>246</sup> Argemiro Macedo Soares, “O Espiritismo IV.,” *MdF*, 17.3.1929.

<sup>247</sup> “Incompatível!” *MdF*, 6.12.1925.

Christianity and Spiritism. Menezes' claims about Spiritism being a sort of reformed Catholicism provoked an immediate reaction from the Church officials in Bahia, when D. Manoel Joaquim da Silveira (1807-1875), the archbishop of Olinda, wrote a pastoral letter in June 1867, warning the faithful of the errors contained in Menezes' Portuguese translation of selected excerpts from *The Spirits' Book* by Kardec that were published under the name *Filosofia Espiritualista – o Espiritismo*.

The bishop's pastoral letter called Spiritist ideas "dangerous superstitions" absolutely "contrary to our religion," and addressed those theological errors of most concern.<sup>248</sup> Typically for him, Menezes based his defense of Spiritism on excerpts from the Holy Scripture, but local Church authorities continued their condemnation and the archbishop even successfully intervened in blocking Menezes' attempt to register the Brazilian Spiritist Society officially, doing so "in the name of the Catholic Church, religion of the state, and in the name of science, public morale and family" (Ferreira 2014: 111).

### **Spiritism v. Catholicism: Ally of the liberal cause**

Such an unfriendly response to Menezes' initial conciliatory approach to Catholicism strongly influenced future relations, with anti-Catholic hostility growing within the next generation of Brazilian Spiritism. While its mainstream branch represented by the FEB continued (and continues) to label Spiritism as a Christian movement, it became very critical of the Catholic Church as an organization, blaming it for its accumulation of wealth, ridiculous rituals and reactionary beliefs. While Spiritists, in their own view, represented modernity and progress, Catholicism represented an obsolete and power-hungry institution not allowing freedom of choice and denying Brazilians a truly modern religion (Diniz Silva 2009).<sup>249</sup>

Especially during the course of the Old Republic, the Spiritist press, intellectuals and organizations became strongly aligned with the secular cause, and for logical reasons stood on the same side of the fence as opponents of Catholic hegemony, including Protestants, liberals, atheists and even some progressive Catholics. Spiritism, therefore, became an integral part of what was considered by the Catholic Church to be a united, anti-clerical front deadly to its interests – even though Spiritism itself was not fully accepted by even a significant part of the republican establishment (Diniz Silva 2009). The new 1890 republican penal code actually prohibited Spiritist practices as part of "crimes against public health" and put it on the same shelf as magic and sorcery, setting up severe fines and even one to six months of prison.

After 1900, however, Spiritism-related articles of the penal code became largely obsolete, thanks partly to strong criticism in the Spiritist and friendly liberal press, and Spiritist activities begun to spread rapidly in Brazil in the form of new centers, study groups and publishing houses with their respective newspapers and magazines, prompting the Catholic press to warn about dangerous "infiltration", affecting "every social class", from intellectuals to analphabets (Diniz Silva 2009: 132).

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<sup>248</sup> SILVEIRA, Manoel Joaquim da. 1867. *Carta Pastoral Premunindo os seus Diocesanos contra os erros perniciosos do Espiritismo*, Bahia: Tip. De Camilo de Lellis Masson & C.

<sup>249</sup> DINIZ SILVA, Marcos José. 2009. "Catolicismo e espiritismo: dimensão conflituosa do campo religioso cearense na primeira república". *Revista Brasileira De História Das Religiões*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 123-144.

“Oh Dear God, we have the laws – and good ones, but what a shame they only stay on paper without being enforced, because of the indifference of those who are responsible for their rigorous compliance!” lamented Zacharias Luz on the pages of the *Mensagem da Fé* in 1917, criticizing police authorities for not respecting the Brazilian penal code and allowing “perverse propaganda“, now even among children.<sup>250</sup>

### **Spiritism in the “good press”**

As an emblematic adversary, both in theological and practical terms, Spiritism turned into a strongly discussed topic on the pages of the *Mensagem*, first significantly appearing on 21 July 1907 in a text called “Spiritism on trial”, reporting on an article by the famous French astronomer and formerly close friend of Allan Kardec, where, after years of public support, he denounced Spiritist doctrine.<sup>251</sup> While Spiritism was occasionally mentioned in the following years, especially in theological polemics over compliance between Catholicism and Spiritism, it got further attention in 1914 when the first articles on the dangers of Spiritism (including medical ones) appeared, and most visibly from 1916 onwards, when the *Mensagem* published a long pastoral letter from Northeastern bishops called “Spiritist Doctrine“<sup>252</sup> on its front page.

This period coincided with the spread of Spiritism into the Northeast and with the escalating “re-spiritualization“ campaign of the Brazilian episcopate, including the very active Archbishop of Bahia. In late 1910s and 1920s, Spiritism reoccurred periodically almost every month, with the *Mensagem* getting into much detail about its doctrine, daily practice, and supposed mental/spiritual threat. In 1925, the first warnings appeared, disseminated in the middle of unrelated articles over the pages of the *Mensagem*, writing: “Beware of SPIRITISM!“<sup>253</sup> Its presence only became significantly less important after 1937 Vargas’ coup and during his “New State“, that once again re-established a “special relationship” between the State and the Catholic Church and Spiritists, especially the so-called “lower Spiritists“,<sup>254</sup> started to be more actively persecuted, culminating in the 1941 police closure of all Spiritist centers.

- **First image: Sectarians, heretics and servants of the devil**

As already mentioned, theological criticism of Spiritism was first and foremost picked up by the Catholics, including the *Mensagem*. Brazilian Church officials repeatedly condemned Spiritist beliefs as heretic, and the first articles concerning Spiritism from 1909 were obviously published with the intention of convincing the Brazilian public that Spiritism and the Catholic faith were absolutely *incompatible*: “Well, Spiritists do not believe that Jesus Christ

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<sup>250</sup> Zacharias Luz, “Propaganda perversa!“ *MdF*, 4.11.1917.

<sup>251</sup> “O Espiritismo em julgamento“, *MdF*, 21.7.1907.

<sup>252</sup> “Doutrina Espiritista“, *MdF*, 6.2.1916.

<sup>253</sup> Much earlier similar warnings appeared related to other Catholic adversaries, e.g. Protestantism – “Beware of Protestant propaganda!“

<sup>254</sup> A somewhat derisive name used for the adherents of Umbanda, a religion mixing Afro-Brazilian tradition with Spiritism and Catholicism.

is God, so it means Spiritism and Christianity are contradictory”<sup>255</sup> and its attempts to define itself as Christian could not be taken seriously.

“On the one hand, it presents itself as a continuation of Christianity. But on the other, it eliminates all its mysteries and interprets the doctrine of Jesus Christ in a rationalist way, conformed with the passions of our times.”<sup>256</sup> And while extensively using the bible for their own purposes, it meant nothing for them: “From time to time, they seem to respect the bible, quoting even sections from the ‘word of God’. But in fact, the bible for them has no more value than any other book.”<sup>257</sup>

Therefore, Spiritism was a heretic and “abominable sect”, as was one of the most common labels present in almost every article concerning it, “a disgusting caricature of religion”<sup>258</sup> that is “first and foremost forbidden by God”<sup>259</sup> and no true Catholic can ever tolerate it, as he cannot tolerate other heretic religious movements, such as Protestant “sects”. But its practice of speaking with the presumed spirits of the dead made it even more abominable and truly a “diabolical invention,”<sup>260</sup> as these spirits had certainly nothing in common with the true souls of the deceased. No Christian was ever allowed to take part in a Spiritist séance, because the “spirits that usually appear there are not and could not even be good spirits. They are, therefore, evil spirits or demons and under no circumstances is it allowed to invoke or consult a demon.”<sup>261</sup>

To demonstrate the demonic nature of the Spiritist “sect”, Mensageiro published some illustrative stories: for instance, an anecdotal story of a French cardinal and the Archbishop of Rouen, Hénri de Bonnechose (1800-1883), who personally attended a séance in his diocese. What he witnessed was indeed telling: “The cardinal placed a cross on the table. The cross was, however, immediately thrown on the floor, without anyone being able to tell by whom. When it was once again placed on the table, the same scene was repeated. So the cardinal got proof that the spirits were not friends even of a mere image of Our Lord.”<sup>262</sup> And as demonic possession required a Catholic response, holy water could “certainly succeed, because when confronted with diabolical arts, such means serve as a remedy,” as suggested by Mons. Fernando de Mello.<sup>263</sup>

It is no surprise that those Catholics who took any part in Spiritist activities or even visited or financially supported their institutions, such as hospitals or asylums, would be committing grave sins and could not be considered Catholics anymore, as an official statement of the archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro warned: “Even mere attendance from curiosity is gravely illicit, being the sin of companionship, acclaim and indirect cooperation with an evil cause. Those

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<sup>255</sup> “Espiritismo: Pode o Christao Católico ser espirita?” *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>256</sup> “O Allanismo,” *MdF*, 16.11.1924.

<sup>257</sup> “Espiritismo: Pode o Christao Católico ser espirita?” *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>258</sup> “Illusao perigosa”, *MdF*, 16.11.1924.

<sup>259</sup> Argemiro Macedo Soares, “O Espiritismo I.,” *MdF*, 3.2.1929.

<sup>260</sup> “Aos Espiritas”, *MdF*, 7.8.1932.

<sup>261</sup> “Espiritismo: Pode o Christao Católico ser espirita?” *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>262</sup> “A estas linhas de nosso dedicado colaborador accrescentamos as seguintes, tiradas do ‘Lar Catholico’ de Juiz de Fóra”, *MdF*, 3.2.1929.

<sup>263</sup> “O Allanismo”. *MdF*, 16.11.1924.

who accept and profess the Spiritist doctrine [...] cease to be Catholics, and even if they claim to be, they are not and cannot call themselves Catholics. They must be treated [...] as true heretics.”<sup>264</sup>

- **Second image: Enemies of the Catholic Church**

The first image was dominantly theological to its core, building arguments on the Catholic interpretation of the bible and later condemning the tradition of summoning evil spirits and being inseparably connected to the Roman Catholic notion of concepts such as heaven, hell and resurrection. But there was also a strong political argument, seeking to portray Spiritists not only as enemies to Jesus Christ and God Himself, but also as staunch adversaries of the Catholic Church that did not miss any opportunity to attack it. Of course, these two portrayals cannot be completely separated, as the Catholic Church defined itself at the time as the only relevant representative of Jesus Christ and Christianity in Brazil.

It was already noted that the Brazilian Catholic Church felt besieged by enemies during the Old Republic; it was not uncommon to read worried comparisons of republican Brazil to France, Mexico or revolutionary Portugal.<sup>265</sup> How numerous and diverse the enemies of Catholicism were considered to be can be seen in an article written by Soares de Azevedo in 1919,<sup>266</sup> where he attempted to summarize the challenges that he believes Roman Catholics must currently fight at the time, noting that there are many more and these are only the greatest:

- Theatre and cinema
- The “bad press“
- Different kinds of anarchism
- Attacks on the Papacy
- Religious ignorance
- Workers’ demands
- Protestantism, Spiritism and Masonry
- Female education
- The atheist state

It is not a coincidence that Protestantism, Spiritism and Masonry were named in one line, as they seemed to be the most important “spiritual“ foes of Catholicism, interconnected and defending each other on the pages of their media and being similarly heretical in their nature.<sup>267</sup> Furthermore, they shared the same “hatred“ (*ódio*) for the Roman Catholic Church – Argemiro Macedo Soares called Spiritism “the sister of Masonry and its companion in

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<sup>264</sup> “Sessoes espiritas“, *MdF*, 4.1.1925.

<sup>265</sup> On many occasions, very openly e.g. Soares de Azevedo in “Contra as egrejas e contra a Igreja“, *Mensagem da Fé*, 18.5.1919.

<sup>266</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Defesa de Todo o Geito“, *MdF*, 2.3.1919.

<sup>267</sup> Sometimes there were subtle hints of Judaism being part of this “front“ as well, mentioning for instance the Jewish origins of prominent Spiritists, séances taking place in synagogues, and connections between the Jewish nation and Masonry, such as sharing the same press and general influence over journalism. See e.g. “Jornal Catolico“, *Mensagem da Fé*, 2.3.1919.



attacking the Church.<sup>268</sup> In his view, Spiritism is inherently anti-Catholic, anti-clerical and even in favour of persecution of the clergy.<sup>269</sup>

This “hatred” for the Church and the anti-Catholic nature of Spiritism and its supposed allies actually referred mostly to public criticism of the behavior of the Catholic Church as an institution, both in Brazil and globally, that was common at the time in much of the pro-secular media, including the Spiritist press. For instance, it criticized the Catholic Church’s wealth: “These dangerous sectarians say that Christ lived in poverty, while popes, bishops and clergy live their life in wealth. That everything that Church does is just focusing on lavish bell ringing and fireworks for the celebrations of feasts,”<sup>270</sup> complains Macedo Soares.

Another source of criticism was a Catholic intolerance of different opinions and religious beliefs: “Should not the Catholic Church be a little more condescending and tolerant with the adherents of other religions, for example Protestants, Spiritists, Masons etc.?” asked an anonymous reader in the *Mensagem*, echoing calls for less combative treatment of Catholic competitors that appeared periodically in Brazilian press. The answer was, of course, a strict no: “For the error of Protestantism, of Spiritism, of Masonry etc., we are and always will be intolerant, because error is error and can never be approved. [...] Tolerance for the error would mean betraying the truth,” explained the Brazilian editor-in-chief, Benigno Randebrock, using the pen name F.B.R.<sup>271</sup>

- **Third image: Charlatans and imposters**

Somehow contrary to the first image, those practicing Spiritism were often accused of being simply fake, serving as a means to gain personal wealth rather than as actually being capable of summoning evil spirits: “The marvels of Spiritism were unmasked countless times as ridiculous charlatanism and magic tricks.”<sup>272</sup> While some of the accounts found on the pages of the *Mensagem* primarily focused on the diabolical nature of the séances, others portrayed them as deceptive shows that must seem absurd to those with “common sense” (*senso comum*).

*Often at such meetings, one or more of the hypnotized, that are previously instructed, speak with cavernous voices to certain determined persons to make them believe a terrible lie.*<sup>273</sup>

And the same can be said about all the claims of practitioners of Spiritism, from their communication with the supposed spirits of the deceased, to their supposed healing powers. To illustrate this, the *Mensagem*’s editorial from November 11, 1924 called “Dangerous Illusion” narrated a particular story of two “ambassadors of Spiritism” that practiced their tricks directly in Salvador – one calling himself Mozart and the other Maximus Niemeier. Even their names were fake, as they pretended to be Germans but, in fact, they were both secretly Jewish.

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<sup>268</sup> Argemiro Macedo Soares, “O Espiritismo I.,” *Mensagem da Fé*, 3.2.1929.

<sup>269</sup> Argemiro Macedo Soares, “O Espiritismo I.,” *Mensagem da Fé*, 3.2.1929.

<sup>270</sup> Argemiro Macedo Soares, “O Espiritismo II.,” *Mensagem da Fé* 17.2.1929.

<sup>271</sup> F. B. R., “Consulta”, *MdF*, 20.1.1929

<sup>272</sup> “O Espiritismo é inimigo de Jesus Christo”, *Mensagem da Fé*, 19.7.1926.

<sup>273</sup> “A falsidade do espiritismo”, *Mensagem da Fé*, 2.2.1919.

This Niemeier claimed to be an extraordinary healer, “intending to heal all the illnesses, including cancer, leprosy and affirming even that he can resurrect the dead, if they are not completely dead (!).”<sup>274</sup> But when he actually attempted to demonstrate these powers in the local hospital, accompanied by a certain Dr. Pinto de Carvalho, he failed miserably, as the doctor himself testified. In the example of this story, we can see how a Catholic newspaper, mostly strongly opposed to the notions of modernity or scientific authority, did not hesitate to use medical authorities in its effort to defame Spiritist opponents and their practices. Medical authorities and scientific knowledge at that time will, however, play even more prominent roles in the following image.

- **Fourth image: Dangerous madmen and the mentally ill**

Here, the Catholic portrayal of Spiritism is inseparable from the contemporary Brazilian medical discourse – but also vice versa, as Catholic doctrine strongly influenced the psychiatric theories on the negative effects of Spiritism, especially its relationship with madness. As Giumbelli (1997) shows, many prominent psychiatrists defined Spiritism in religious terms and using religious arguments, as being not only in contradiction to science but also with “good religion“ (Giumbelli 1997: 38), bringing in primitive and superstitious practices harmful to society.

While medics and psychiatrists took an interest in Spiritism since imperial times, “research“ on this topic spiked dramatically over the course of the Old Republic, especially in the 1920s and early 1930s, with the involvement of prominent psychiatrists like Henrique Roxo and Xavier de Oliveira from the *Hospício Nacional de Alienados*, who both published numerous influential works on the matter.

Both were also often quoted on the pages of major Catholic journals and newspapers, including the *Mensagem*, that sought to portray Spiritism as dangerous to mental health at least since 1914, when the first such notice appeared:<sup>275</sup>

*Spiritism is an imminent danger for the health of its adherents, especially for their mental health, as it easily leads to madness.*<sup>276</sup>

This statement was not yet supported by the statistics from Brazil itself, but was based instead on European experience. “In Zürich, out of 200 [hospitalized] lunatics, one fourth owed its mental state to Spiritism. In Gand (Belgium), out of 255 lunatics, 95 were Spiritists.”<sup>277</sup> The article noted that a similar proportion was found in Brussels, Munich and other cities, prompting the German emperor to forbid the practice. Similarly, many prominent Americans petitioned the Congress to do the same, because Spiritism is linked to “adultery, murder, suicide and madness.”<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> “Illusao perigosa“, *Mensagem da Fé*, 16.11.1924.

<sup>275</sup> Before this date, arguments against Spiritism were mostly based on theological disputes and warnings for falsely claiming to be Christians.

<sup>276</sup> “Espiritismo: Pode o Christao Católico ser espirita?“ *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>277</sup> “Espiritismo: Pode o Christao Católico ser espirita?“ *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>278</sup> “Espiritismo: Pode o Christao Católico ser espirita?“ *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

With the advance of the local Brazilian “research” on the topic, coming most commonly from the aforementioned *Hospício Nacional de Alienados*, the medical argument soon became prevalent and occurred periodically, supported by authorities from this institution and by the works they published. Spiritism, both in its addictive nature and harmful effects, was compared to drugs and alcohol: “Such as smoking, cocaine, or alcohol, Spiritism, theosophy and magic are poisonous. While the first ones poison the nervous system, these poison mental health. They all start as entertainment but in the end, it is impossible to be without them,”<sup>279</sup> quotes the *Mensageiro* doctor Gemelli.

In terms of the causes of madness, Spiritism might be also comparable to drugs, alcohol, and syphilis – or maybe even worse, depending on the source and statistics that the *Mensageiro* used in a particular article. Macedo Soares believed that Spiritism was “the major factory for lunatics in the whole universe and 90% of those interned in mental institutions had their unfortunate fate caused by that hideous sect,”<sup>280</sup> basing his 90% on an estimate by Drs. Henrique Roxo and Juliano Moreira, both from *Hospício Nacional*.<sup>281</sup>

Their colleague from the same institution, the aforementioned Dr. Xavier de Oliveira, however, gave rather different statistics: that out of 18,281 hospitalized in the *Hospício Nacional* between 1917 and 1928, 1,723 had Spiritism as the direct cause of their mental state.<sup>282</sup> But even Dr. de Oliveira believed in a strong correlation between Spiritism and madness, listing it as third most frequent cause after alcohol and syphilis and asking every new patient: “What Spiritist center did you visit?” For these purely scientific reasons, the *Mensageiro*’s authors argue that the practice of Spiritism must be strictly forbidden in any part of the country, being “dangerous to the population and the Fatherland.”<sup>283</sup>

Who knows if, without some form of intervention, a mad Spiritist will not cut someone’s throat, as almost happened in the case of the barber in S. Geraldo, Minas Gerais? According to a short story published in 1938, this barber, a regular visitor to Spiritist sessions, was ordered by a spirit to cut his customer’s throat. Thankfully, the poor customer escaped this danger, notified the authorities and the barber was imprisoned. But as it turned out he was completely mad, he was hospitalized in a mental institution. “Beware, good men,” warned the anonymous author of the story, “before you get yourselves clean shaven, make sure the barber doesn’t participate in Spiritist sessions or if he doesn’t read Spiritist literature. [...] Beware of the Spiritists... the neck-cutters!”<sup>284</sup>

- **Fifth image: Poor, uneducated and manipulated**

If Spiritism is such a dangerous ideology that can both spiritually and mentally harm those involved, as proved by numerous accounts and statistics in the *Mensageiro da Fé*, how does the journal explain its popularity and prevalence in Brazil? And even its rapid spread, about

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<sup>279</sup> “O Allanismo“, *MdF*, 16.11.1924.

<sup>280</sup> Argemiro Macedo Soares, “O Espiritismo I.“, *MdF*, 3.2.1929.

<sup>281</sup> “O Espiritismo“, *MdF*, 16.5.1926.

<sup>282</sup> “Espiritismo e loucura“, *MdF*, 1.11.1931.

<sup>283</sup> “O Espiritismo“, *MdF*, 16.5.1926.

<sup>284</sup> “Espiritismo cortador de pescoco“, *MdF*, 2.1.1938.

which Catholics repeatedly warned? Some part is, of course, the force of its propaganda and the weakness of the “good press”: “The Spiritist and esoteric propaganda is intense. Their books and tabloids swarm all over the country, from big cities to the most remote parts of our interior, mocking the apathy of the Catholic press. [...] Spiritism promotes itself with frightening speed. We must fight until as long as we can,” writes Armindo Ferreira da Silva<sup>285</sup> even in 1937, when Spiritism had already ceased to be one of the Mensageiro’s hot topics.

But the most vulnerable, those “seduced by the books and conferences of Spiritist propaganda,”<sup>286</sup> were obviously those not gifted with the aforementioned “common sense”.<sup>287</sup> People mentally weaker, acting in “good faith”, in other words feeble-minded, are the most likely to become Spiritists:

*Its unlucky adherents, those weak, acting in good faith, led by the influence of false friends [...], deserve in the first place our compassion, not our harshness.*<sup>288</sup>

This feeble mind was also often associated with low education and poverty, allowing the success of those “tricking the good faith of the people;”<sup>289</sup> an anonymous author in Mensageiro called it “a new illness of our times“ that successfully “embodied itself in the weak body of the poor class.”<sup>290</sup>

In this context, Brazil as a country was particularly fertile ground for Spiritism and similar sects, as it was a land of “absolute religious ignorance in the lower social classes,”<sup>291</sup> or, as put by Ferreira da Silva, it had “the most credulous people that exist.”<sup>292</sup> We should not forget that Brazil was still a very young and immature country that was readily influenced by anything that came from Europe or the United States, and that easily adopted their bad habits – whether it was Spiritism, Methodism or Portuguese operettas, as Soares de Azevedo argued.<sup>293</sup>

### 2.3.3. Others

Protestants and Spiritists were by far the most represented religious competitors on the pages of Mensageiro. Occasionally, however, other religions appeared as well in a specific context and situations, revealing the attitudes of the Brazilian Catholics towards them. These included Orthodox Christians, Muslims and, most importantly, the Jews.

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<sup>285</sup> Armindo Ferreira da Silva, “Espiritismo“, *MdF*, 5.12.1937.

<sup>286</sup> “O Allanismo“, *MdF*, 16.11.1924.

<sup>287</sup> “A falsidade do espiritismo“, *MdF*, 2.2.1919.

<sup>288</sup> “Aos Espiritas“, *Md F*, 7.8.1932.

<sup>289</sup> “Illusao perigosa“, *MdF*, 16.11.1924.

<sup>290</sup> “O Allanismo“, *MdF*, 16.11.1924; Maybe the most striking paradox of this image is that Brazilian Spiritism actually attracted mostly intellectuals and people from higher social classes rather than the poor – as it does till the present day, at least based on the census data. For instance, a brief look at the signatories of the Brazilian Spiritist Society proposed by Teles de Menezes included noblemen (one viscount and one baron), physicians, lawyers, journalists and university professors. See Ferreira 2014.

<sup>291</sup> “A ignorancia religiosa“, *MdF*, 18.4.1937.

<sup>292</sup> Armindo Ferreira da Silva, “Espiritismo“, *MdF*, 5.12.1937.

<sup>293</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Defesa de Todo o Geito“, *MdF*, 2.3.1919.

Even though Muslim and Orthodox Christian communities existed in Brazil as a result of mass immigration, both of these religious groups appeared with no direct relationship to Brazil – they were either part of the news from the Catholic world, or part of articles dedicated to the Church’s history and theology.

### **Orthodox heretics**

Orthodox Christians were routinely designed as “schismatics” or “heretics”<sup>294</sup>; in fact, a text describing the history of the Greek Orthodox Church called it the “mother of all heresies”<sup>295</sup>, therefore even indirectly blaming it for the rise of Protestantism. Their rupture with the Catholic Church also served to explain various kinds of seemingly unrelated difficulties facing the Orthodox churches, such as declining number of monks on the holy island of Athos (Greece), because “as they are schismatics and they have no sense of obedience and benediction of the Holy Father in Rome, it seems they also lack these qualities in their relationship to God”.<sup>296</sup>

As for the news, by far the most common references to Orthodox Christians in *Mensagem* took place during the First World War, describing the atrocities committed by Tsarist Russia on the Catholic populations both at home and abroad. So in 1915, the *Noticiário* published a story on the kidnapping and deportation of the archbishop<sup>297</sup> of Russian-occupied Lviv<sup>298</sup> and his replacement by a “schismatic Russian archbishop” who “usurped the Catholic cathedral and declared they are taking over all of the Catholic churches in the city”, proving an Orthodox “desire to extinguish all Catholics”.<sup>299</sup> Just a few months later, the same section mentioned that “400 Catholic priests were deported to the extremities of Russia because they refused to accept the schism”.<sup>300</sup>

This is linked closely to the perception of the First World War by *Mensagem*’s authors as a sort of religious war, clearly sympathizing with Germany (thanks to the German origins of its founders) and Catholic Austria-Hungary against its many enemies, including the Orthodox Russia whose victory “would be a major loss for Catholicism, as the Moscovian Orthodoxy oppresses for centuries with the most brutal means Catholic Poles and intends with no doubt to force all the Slavs under its political and also religious domination”.<sup>301</sup>

Interestingly enough, this critical view of Orthodox Christians did not improve during the post-Tsarist revolution in Russia; in fact, *Mensagem* praised the revolutionary government in 1918 for allowing Catholic processions and approving laws on religious freedom and when it then painted horrific narratives of Bolshevik religious repressions, it was usually restricted to the violence on Catholics, not on their Orthodox brethren.

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<sup>294</sup> These terms appear to be used interchangeably. For example, the 1913 article on the murder of a Franciscan missionary in Albania call Orthodox Serbians and Montenegrins that allegedly committed this crime in both ways and their church as a “Schismatic church” and “temple of heresy”. See “O Martyr mais recente da Ordem Franciscana”, *MdF*, 15.6.1913.

<sup>295</sup> “A Egreja grega orthodoxa”, *MdF*, 16.1.1916.

<sup>296</sup> “Notas e noticias: Grecia”, *MdF*, 19.10.1930.

<sup>297</sup> Polish prelate and future saint Józef Bilczewski (1900-1923).

<sup>298</sup> Briefly occupied between September 1914 and June 1915.

<sup>299</sup> “Noticiário: Austria”, *MdF*, 3.1.1915.

<sup>300</sup> “Noticiário: Russia”, *MdF*, 16.5.1915.

<sup>301</sup> “Noticiário: Allemanha”, *MdF*, 1.11.1914.

## Barbarian Muslims

Muslims got even less attention in *Mensagem* than Orthodox Christians and whenever they appear, their characteristics are closely linked to the sense of an “Oriental”<sup>302</sup> brutality, such as in the narrative of the “martyrdom” of a twelve year old boy who, imprisoned by the Turks, refused to convert to Islam and was therefore decapitated.<sup>303</sup>

Brutality, combined with a centuries-old sense of sexual desire, was also present in the scarce articles on Muslim faith and its role in history. For instance, the prophet (or, in the words of *Mensagem*, “imposter”<sup>304</sup>) Muhammad, was mockingly referred to in different as the “son of a pagan man and a Jewish woman”<sup>305</sup> and as he who “founded his religion on the liberation of all passions and on the brutal force that he used to quell the opposition”.<sup>306</sup>

The violent nature of Islam is present even in Muhammad’s own last (and apocryphical) words: “I will wage holy war in the name of God, and I will massacre all those who will refuse to submit to him”.<sup>307</sup>

## All-powerful Jews

Anti-Jewish sentiments based on religious grounds have been present in Western Christianity from its very beginnings, often culminating in pogroms and expulsions. In fact, the early Jewish presence in Brazil was linked to this long history of repression, as the so-called New Christians often emigrated to the New World in order to escape the Inquisition. This institution, seeking out those who secretly worshipped their ancient religion, nevertheless later also became active in Brazilian territory, leading many New Christians to emigrate further to the Netherlands and its colonies.

In 1810, however, the Portuguese government invited the Jews from Morocco (paradoxically often descendants of the formerly expelled Spanish and Portuguese Jews) to assist in the colonization of Amazonia – and the immigration of these “Amazonian Jews” continued after independence, especially by the turn of the century. This Sephardi community was later reinforced by waves of Ashkenazi immigration from Eastern Europe settling predominantly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, with the total Jewish population in the country jumping from about 15 thousand people in 1920 to 75 thousands in 1940 (Cruz 2009).<sup>308</sup>

While the rising levels of Jewish immigration formed an important part of the anti-Semitic discourse in both Catholic circles (especially those related to *A Ordem* journal and extreme

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<sup>302</sup> “Orient” is described as “focus of the most abominable sexual desires, center of all the heresies, of all the philosophical errors and all the miserable theses”. See “Mahomet e sua doutrina”, *MdF*, 2.4.1916

<sup>303</sup> “Um joven martyr nos nossos tempos”, *MdF*, 16.2.1913.

<sup>304</sup> “História da Igreja: Mahomet”, *MdF*, 16.4.1916.

<sup>305</sup> “Mahomet e sua doutrina”, *MdF*, 2.4.1916.

<sup>306</sup> “História da Igreja: Mahomet”, *MdF*, 16.4.1916.

<sup>307</sup> “História da Igreja: Mahomet”, *MdF*, 16.4.1916.

<sup>308</sup> CRUZ Natália dos Reis. 2009. “A imigração judaica no Brasil e o anti-semitismo no discurso das elites”, *Política & Sociedade* v. 8, n. 15, pp. 225-250.

right-wing movements inspired by Italian Fascism, *Ação Integralista Brasileira*) and the political elite, until 1930, *Mensagem* related to the Jews rather in terms of traditional religious criticism and also to denounce alleged links to Freemasonry and Bolshevism. Furthermore, these mentions were rather scarce yet again in comparison with *A Ordem* or even *Franciscan Vozes de Petrópolis* and often borrowed from other Brazilian and even European media, such as the prominent French Catholic newspaper *La Croix*.

As noted by Hershcopf (1966),<sup>309</sup> accusations of the links with Freemasonry and generally with the hated secularist forces date back to the period of Enlightenment and the subsequent revolutions that helped the Jewish emancipation due to the abolition of the segregatory laws. This association remained obvious on the pages of *Mensagem*, whose authors did not forget to note that the Jews (and also the Protestants) never became the victims of “revolutionary hatred”, escaping persecution during the French Revolution while the Catholics were slaughtered.<sup>310</sup>

Derogatory terms such as “Judeo-Masons” was occasionally used in association with the secular press in European countries<sup>311</sup> or in the United States<sup>312</sup> and there are mentions of “Judeo-Bolsheviks”<sup>313</sup>, but unlike in more radical media, Jews were not routinely linked with ongoing revolts and revolutions and clearly play merely a side role in comparison with other allegedly anti-Catholic forces.

This discrepancy might be possibly linked to the fact *Mensagem* was based in Bahia where there was no significant Jewish immigration. But since it published renowned national authors such as de Azevedo (who otherwise wrote wildly anti-Semitic texts for *Vozes de Petrópolis* including some in defence of infamous *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*<sup>314</sup>) and reprinted in other Catholic media, the explanation must be more complex and part of a deliberate decision by the editorial board. I would offer a hypothesis it could be due to the intimate connection between *Mensagem* and the clerical hierarchy that, unlike an influential part of Catholic lay intellectuals that embraced Integralism in the 1930s, never assumed openly anti-Semitic positions and conspiratory theories.

Even so, in 1922 *Mensagem* referred in great detail to another “classic” of anti-Semitic literature, Henry Ford’s four volume *The International Jew* that “shows the power of the Jews in everything”<sup>315</sup> and described the alleged persecution of Christians by American Jewry including attacks on their most fundamental religious symbols:

*Americans do not talk about the Jews and never persecute them and yet the Jews strive to destroy everything that is Christian, including the Old Testament that they should venerate if they were truly believers. So the Hebrew colony in Tamaqua prohibited reading the bible in*

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<sup>309</sup> HERSHCOPF Judith. 1966. “The Church and the Jews: The Struggle at Vatican Council II”, *The American Jewish Year Book* vol. 67, pp. 45-77.

<sup>310</sup> Carlos de Laet, “Fraternidade?” *MdF*, 2.4.1916.

<sup>311</sup> See e.g. “Notas e notícias: Austria”, *MdF*, 18.9.1921.

<sup>312</sup> See e.g. “Notas e notícias: Estados Unidos”, *MdF*, 18.6.1922.

<sup>313</sup> See e.g. “Notas e notícias: Palestina”, *MdF*, 4.9.1921.

<sup>314</sup> See Soares de Azevedo, “O Perigo Judeu”, *Vozes de Petrópolis*, 1.11.1920.

<sup>315</sup> “Notas e notícias: Estados Unidos”, *MdF*, 18.6.1922.

*schools. In Baltimore, the League of Jewish Women asked the government to ban Christmas and in New York, workers' associations had to fight against a law that proposed seven obligatory days of work including Sundays.*<sup>316</sup>

This theme of the Jewish persecution of Christians that they shared with other religious groups was similarly present in Mensageiro's news about the "Holy Land" after the First World War. The Jewish High Commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Samuel (1870-1963), was said to be carrying out purges of the Christian (and also Muslim) officials, replacing them with Jews and encouraging large scale Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, that was claimed to be mostly made up of "adherents of the Third Moscovian International" (i.e. the Bolsheviks).<sup>317</sup> Apart from threatening the sacred Christian sites and spreading communist ideas such as strikes, Mensageiro also claimed that these immigrants disseminated harmful cultural influences such as "immoral dances just like in Europe"<sup>318</sup> and the holy city of Jerusalem was now "full of men seeking pleasure"<sup>319</sup>, reinforcing the ancient stereotype of the Oriental perversion noted above with the image of the Muslims.

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<sup>316</sup> "Notas e notícias: Estados Unidos", *MdF*, 18.6.1922.

<sup>317</sup> "Notas e notícias: Palestina", *MdF*, 4.9.1921.

<sup>318</sup> "Notas e notícias: Palestina", *MdF*, 6.11.1921.

<sup>319</sup> "Notas e notícias: Palestina", *MdF*, 6.11.1921.



## 2.4. Moral enemies

The Catholic Church during the First Republic aimed to "respiritualize" Brazil which did not mean to only get rid of competing ideologies and religions, but also combatting trends in the society perceived as contrary to the Catholic sense of morality (even though these trends were often sometimes associated with ideologies or religions). I have decided to call this broad category "moral enemies", deriving from what Mensageiro's authors considered to be corrupting their vision of an ideal Catholic society.

As apparent from the previous pages, representatives of the "good press" felt Brazilian republican society faced immense dangers and threats, gradually losing its Catholic moral values. How Mensageiro authors saw the state of the society in Brazil is clear from the following description written by its editor-in-chief, Manderfelt, himself:

*There is no respect for age or sex. Not even the slightest consideration either to dignity, or to honour, or to position. Everything is attacked, invaded, smeared. [...] Without a doubt, we returned to pagan times when vice was planted even in the middle of the court and immorality became a goddess that was sacrificed to.*<sup>320</sup>

This overall negative vision requiring permanent Catholic agitation did not really change over the course of the First Republic - what changed were some of the perceived threats as the list of moral enemies grew longer and longer. Some of these bothered the Church authorities (and therefore Catholic writers) for a very long time, for instance the "traditional" vices such as alcoholism and gambling that were regularly panned on the pages of Mensageiro both as destructive to the individual body and soul, and to the very soul of society, tearing families apart and leaving children without parents.

Medical arguments became very important in the recurring campaigns against alcoholism as Mensageiro informed its readers that addiction to liquor was (similarly to Spiritism) linked to insanity and the production of imbecile offspring. Manderfelt (this time under his other pen name, Zeca) claimed that "from 100 idiots, 50 are children of alcoholics. 60 percent of all the epileptics are children of alcoholics".<sup>321</sup>

Another article pointed out that combating alcoholism was in fact a "Christian and Brazilian obligation" because of being "the most important factor in criminality and insanity, filling prisons and madhouses, robbing society of precious elements of activity, destroying the family and making their victims incapacitated, parasitic, impulsive and manic, if not complete imbeciles and idiots".<sup>322</sup> Firmo Antonio recommended "cup of milk" as a perfect substitute to alcohol, and also criticized smoking alongside drinking even though he called it an "innocent

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<sup>320</sup> João do Norte, "Meu cantinho", *MdF*, 17.12.1916.

<sup>321</sup> Zeca, "Pedacinhos", *MdF*, 2.4.1922.

<sup>322</sup> "Alcoolismo", *MdF*, 20.1.1929.

vice”<sup>323</sup>; at that time, consumption of tobacco was not linked to any scientific arguments, even though some Catholic authors still did not appreciate its addictive nature.

Other moral enemies were related to the way Brazilians chose to spend their free time. Mensageiro stressed that leisure is not by itself negative and deemed recreational activities as natural as “there is necessity of the body and the spirit to rest and to be distracted” from work.<sup>324</sup> But what Catholics considered “modern day” recreational activities were at best only distracting from God – and at worst both spiritually and physically harmful for those who took part in them.

### 2.4.1. Bad literature

The dangers for good Catholics were everywhere around. Take, for instance, literature. Mensageiro obviously encouraged its audience to read, reviewing books, advertising other Catholic journals and publications on its pages and even printing and distributing its own books. Other recommended literature could be ordered through Mensageiro’s editorial board.

At the same time, however, secular Brazilian publishers released many other books (let’s now only focus on literature and not journals and newspapers as I previously referred to the “bad press”) in the category of “embarrassing modern literature”<sup>325</sup> available to the general public, thus endangering the souls of readers with obscene content (Mensageiro often warns against what it called “pornography”) and atheist ideas.

Representatives of such openly immoral literature and its authors were numerous; but perhaps none so hated on the pages of Mensageiro as Anatole France (1844-1924) who visited Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 1909. In this year, France earned two articles in Mensageiro under the headline with his name, where he was titled “the worst contemporary writer”<sup>326</sup> of “absolute impiety and animalistic immorality”,<sup>327</sup> and a “degenerate Frenchman, responsible for the horrible persecution of Catholics in his country and a pornographer who helps to dismantle society”.<sup>328</sup>

But even just failing to implant strong moral values in literature might be harmful, as noted by Coriolano, who commented on the effects of reading “novellas” that “make their readers lose interest in serious studies, ruining the literary taste and also losing their precious time”.<sup>329</sup> Coriolano demanded that Brazilians should read books that “analyze our moral nature, examine our obligations, teach us how to practice good deeds or deal with other useful and instructive issues”.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> Firmo Antonio, “Para crianças de 7 a 70 annos”, *MdF*, 2.10.1921.

<sup>324</sup> “Divertimentos”, *MdF*, 1.6.1913.

<sup>325</sup> “A má leitura”, *MdF*, 18.10.1908.

<sup>326</sup> “Anatole France”, *MdF*, 4.7.1909.

<sup>327</sup> “Anatole France”, *MdF*, 4.7.1909.

<sup>328</sup> “Anatole France”, *MdF*, 22.8.1909.

<sup>329</sup> Coriolano, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 21.7.1918.

<sup>330</sup> Coriolano, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 21.7.1918.

Making this distinction was difficult even for adult readers, not to mention the youth. But this was exactly the role of the “good press”; and as such, Mensageiro offered clear guidance to its readers: Catholics should only read literature published with the blessing of the Church authorities or at least recommended by the Catholic media.

As for “bad literature”, it should be banned by state, sought out by the police and burnt – a demand that was repeated over and over again in Mensageiro and that finally got at least partially satisfied by a law approved in 1923 that prohibited the circulation of materials that were considered “offensive to morality and good manners” (Cássia dos Santos 2016: 85).<sup>331</sup>

In 1921, Manderfelt even offered a short anecdote to defend this approach. In a conversation between Pedro and João, the first argued that the prohibiting of certain books by the Catholic Church was an “act of barbarism”. But when João suggested that his own daughter should read Émile Zola, Pedro was terrified: “But you want the Pope, father of all the innocent children, to allow it, don’t you?” noted João triumphantly, thus winning the argument.<sup>332</sup>

#### 2.4.2. Decadent dances

Dance was another popular target of Mensageiro’s criticism – or more specifically the “modern” dances that became popular after the First World War, as noted by Manderfelt who stressed that “there are doubtlessly beautiful dances carried out with artistic soul”.<sup>333</sup> But the “large majority of modern dances demand our disgust and condemnation”, he added, panning their “extravagances that open the way to the dissolution of good manners”.<sup>334</sup>

The Charleston was depicted as especially abhorrent, being called “set of infamies and obscenities in movement” and “a true assault on art and good taste” by Manderfelt<sup>335</sup>; or “a disgusting, brutal and ugly aesthetic aberration” and “an epileptic puppet show that stinks of its origins” by Soares de Azevedo.<sup>336</sup> But other styles of dancing were targeted as well, including the tango, maxixe<sup>337</sup> and foxtrot.<sup>338</sup>

Similarly to other topics, Mensageiro liked to use scientific arguments in order to deal with its moral enemies, as apparent from Manderfelt’s article in 1924 that referred to “many learned doctors” who concluded “there is no worse threat to the existence of the conservation of the human species than dancing”.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> CÁSSIA DOS SANTOS, Fernanda. 2016. “Censura Moral e Discursos sobre Gênero nos Primeiros Anos da República: O Caso de Mademoiselle Cinema, de Benjamim Costallat”. *Revista Ártemis*, Vol. XXI, pp.75-88.

<sup>332</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 21.8.1921.

<sup>333</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 17.4.1927.

<sup>334</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 17.4.1927.

<sup>335</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 17.4.1927.

<sup>336</sup> De Azevedo refers here to the African-American origins of Charleston, reference that is made clear by calling it a “savage and sweaty *negrada*”. See Soares de Azevedo, “Uma enormidade”, *MdF*, 1.5.1927

<sup>337</sup> Popular dance originating in Brazil.

<sup>338</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 15.6.1924.

<sup>339</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 15.6.1924.

This supposedly serious claim was supported by referencing a certain Dr. Bernard, who listed all the horrible symptoms from which those who enjoy dancing might suffer, for instance “insomnia, retardation of normal development, lack of appetite, fainting, changes in blood circulation, autointoxication, spasmodic neurosis, character instability, intellectual fatigue, perversion of the sense of morality and sometimes very serious accidents”.<sup>340</sup>

### 2.4.3. Criminal films

One especially significant moral enemy that got massive attention on the pages of *Mensagem* surged only after the creation of the republic: cinema. According to Araújo (1985)<sup>341</sup>, the first film screening in Brazil took place in 1897 by doctor José Roberto da Cunha Sales. More systematic cinematographic production on the national level boomed from the year 1907 onwards, giving birth to the so-called *Belle Époque* of Brazilian cinema when films ceased to be projected only on special occasions and screening rooms popped up in all the major cities.<sup>342</sup>

The Bahia-based *Mensagem* reacted to cinema from early on, primarily reflecting on the development abroad and attempts to regulate or censor the film distribution<sup>343</sup> and praised the establishment of a Catholic film production company in the United States.<sup>344</sup> Such a development was “absolutely necessary”, claimed *Mensagem*, since cinematography became “a mighty arm of hell to attack religion and good manners”.<sup>345</sup> Foreign examples also provided the first allegation of the link between cinema and violence, citing various Swiss cantons who began to censor films because cinema “activates and propagates crimes and inflames the lowest instincts of human nature”.<sup>346</sup>

Attention shifted to Brazil itself during the First World War when cinema even penetrated to the Northeast and not just the central (and more prosperous) areas of the federation – and so in 1917, Manderfelt opened the front page with an extensive article suggestively titled “Criminality and Cinema”. In this piece, *Mensagem*’s editor-in-chief warns of the effects of cinema on its viewers that “produce truly suggestive effects on the susceptible mind of children and on the understanding of adults who are tragically not benefitting from the perks of a real culture”.<sup>347</sup>

Manderfelt saw children as especially endangered by cinema, citing horrific examples from Spain where some children under the influence of movies allegedly committed suicide and others performed “all kinds of cries that proved to be inspired” by a popular American film

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<sup>340</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 15.6.1924.

<sup>341</sup> ARAÚJO, Vicente de Paula. 1985. *A Bela Época do Cinema Brasileiro*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva S.A.

<sup>342</sup> The first screening room in Brazil was actually open to the public in 1897 in the capital but cinemas could only expand after problems with electricity supply were solved, from about 1907.

<sup>343</sup> For example, the news section from 1914 praises censorship in the U.K. that “should be instituted all across the globe”. See “Noticiário: Inglaterra”, *MdF*, 16.8.1914.

<sup>344</sup> “Noticiário: America do Norte”, *MdF*, 3.1.1915.

<sup>345</sup> “Noticiário: America do Norte”, *MdF*, 3.1.1915.

<sup>346</sup> “Noticiário: Suíça”, *MdF*, 3.9.1916.

<sup>347</sup> “A Criminalidade e o cinema”, *MdF*, 21.10.1917.

*Black Hand* (1906) and a French film *The Vampires* (1915).<sup>348</sup> *Mensagem* issued such warnings concerning the youth repeatedly<sup>349</sup>, calling for stricter censorship inspired by the British and “all the truly civilized and progressing nations”<sup>350</sup> for the entire period of the First Republic up to its very end in 1930.<sup>351</sup>

But unlike fashion for instance (see below), cinema was not perceived to be inherently evil and it turned out it could be even used for spiritual purposes. For example the movie *Christus* (1916) deeply impressed the otherwise staunchly conservative Soares de Azevedo who called it a “film that all Catholics should watch”.<sup>352</sup> In *Mensagem*, using films for the Catholic cause was first proposed by Manderfelt<sup>353</sup> and soon put into practice by creating a new section dubbed “In the world of the ‘Films’”<sup>354</sup> that reviewed movies screened in the capital, based on their moral and artistic qualities and whether they could be recommended to be viewed by children, adults or rather nobody at all. *Mensagem* also recommended which particular cinemas in Bahia were acceptable to visit and which should be avoided altogether, such as “Au Caveau” in Salvador that Manderfelt called a “true hell” and warned fathers of families to do everything they can not to permit their children to visit this “disgusting place”.<sup>355</sup>

#### 2.4.4. Perverted carnival

A tradition that is contemporarily so strongly associated with Brazil raised regular condemnation by the Catholic Church and the “good press,” including *Mensagem*, over the course of the First Republic and long before – Brazilian carnival had its origins in Medieval Portugal even though it transformed into more Venetian-style festivities in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and finally by the end of the 1920s, it became associated with now famous schools of samba (Oliveira 2012).<sup>356</sup>

*Mensagem da Fé* described carnival as “three days of insanity and a triumph of immorality”<sup>357</sup> that threatened the very integrity of family life, penetrated all the big cities and all the social classes and caused many disasters every year, such as “[family] disputes, financial troubles, disasters, diseases, deaths and countless tragedies”.<sup>358</sup> Catholic authors also condemned carnival as “orgies” that originated in pagan Rome and were reasonably prohibited by the early Church.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> “A Criminalidade e o cinema”, *MdF*, 21.10.1917.

<sup>349</sup> E.g. in August of 1918 when Manderfelt called cinema “the modern school of crime”. See João Bahiano, “Uma explicação”, *MdF*, 4.8.1918.

<sup>350</sup> “A Criminalidade e o cinema”, *MdF*, 21.10.1917.

<sup>351</sup> See e.g. Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Legislação prophylactica”, *MdF*, 5.10.1930.

<sup>352</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Christus, um bello ,film“”, *MdF*, 1.9.1918.

<sup>353</sup> “A Criminalidade e o cinema”, *MdF*, 21.10.1917.

<sup>354</sup> First in September 1918. See “No mundo dos ‘Films’”, *MdF*, 15.9.1918.

<sup>355</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos“, *MdF*, 15.6.1919

<sup>356</sup> OLIVEIRA, José Luiz de. 2012. “Pequena História do Carnaval Carioca: De suas origens aos dias atuais“. *Encontros 10, no. 18*, pp. 61-85.

<sup>357</sup> “O Carnaval“, *MdF*, 15.2.1914.

<sup>358</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: Carnaval“, *MdF*, 2.3.1919.

<sup>359</sup> Affonso Celso, “O Carnaval”, *MdF*, 3.2.1929.

Mensageiro found it particularly enraging that in 1927, carnival was officially embraced by the city of Rio de Janeiro similar to Paris or Venice. Argemiro Soares, reacting to an interview with the new mayor of Rio that announced this idea, wrote that “people of good taste and Catholics should be horrified” and the mayor's plans should be opposed to it in all possible ways.<sup>360</sup> This, however, never resulted in overturning the mayor's decision and carnival got paradoxically widely embraced on the national level by the new regime of Getúlio Vargas that otherwise accommodated many Catholic demands (Oliveira 2012).

#### 2.4.5. Excessive fashion

Many of the previous moral enemies are directly or indirectly linked to the Catholic ideal of family hierarchy and gender roles in society that are thoroughly examined in the third part of this dissertation. None, however, as clearly as “fashion” (*moda*) whose criticism exclusively targeted women even though a lot of blame was actually put on men, as they were considered to be responsible for the upbringing and behavior of their daughters, wives or sisters because the “head of the family [...] is the primary responsible for its failure of disorganization.”<sup>361</sup>

The term “fashion” is treated rather broadly but in a purely negative sense – following the latest trends of how women dress, using makeup and even how they “act and live, depending on the ideas that are dominant in certain period and certain country”, as explained by Manderfelt in his “Three questions and three answers” concerning fashion in 1919.<sup>362</sup> According to Mensageiro’s editor-in-chief, those who set up and spread the latest fashion trends were actresses in theatres and cinemas, models or mannequins.<sup>363</sup> But Mensageiro’s authors occasionally claimed darker influences responsible for fashion, such as Jews<sup>364</sup> or Masons that generally spread immorality to destroy Christian values, and fashion was considered to be one of the worst offenders.<sup>365</sup>

Temporality associated with the fashion was one of the main sources of its criticism, and contrasted with allegedly timeless Catholic values, specifically **modesty** that was at one point described as “the most distinct characteristic of women”<sup>366</sup>. Women should dress and act moderately, not provoking with “extensive cleavages, short dresses, bare arms or painted faces”.<sup>367</sup> Mensageiro actually provided several detailed guidelines over how exactly *not* to dress to be in accordance with the Catholic standards of modesty. Manderfelt himself compiled one of these in 1921:<sup>368</sup>

1. *Do not use makeup. [...]*

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<sup>360</sup> Argemiro R. M. Soares, “Carnaval”, *MdF*, 20.2.1927.

<sup>361</sup> “Luxo e Moda”, *MdF*, 1.11.1914.

<sup>362</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: Tres perguntas e tres respostas,” *MdF*, 2.2.1919.

<sup>363</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: Tres perguntas e tres respostas,” *MdF*, 2.2.1919.

<sup>364</sup> See e.g. João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: A moda e os Judeus”, *MdF*, 6.12.1925.

<sup>365</sup> See “Pedacinhos: A moda e a maçonaria”, *MdF*, 21.12.1930.

<sup>366</sup> “As modas”, *MdF*, 18.5.1913.

<sup>367</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: Tres perguntas e tres respostas,” *MdF*, 2.2.1919.

<sup>368</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: Bendita cruzada”, *MdF*, 16.10.1921.

2. *Cover up your lap. Slight cleavage is acceptable but transparent material is prohibited.*
3. *Cover up your arms. [...] Your forearms can remain uncovered.*
4. *Wear a dress that goes at least to your hands and to the middle of your knees.*
5. *Stay away from transparent stockings.*
6. *Do not use very high heels, they are not hygienic.*
7. *Stay away from expendable, even though not scandalous fashion.*
8. *Stay away from inappropriate dancing that provokes a restless spirit.*
9. *Do not get carried away by new trends in fashion.*
10. *Always maintain due modesty and innocence of the soul.*

Ideally, women should look as natural as possible – fashion was perceived as contradictory to God’s creation and attempting to hide the defects and deceiving others. “Fashion is nothing but an art of lie that attempts to replace beauty with *appearance*, attempts to suppress natural defects and fake its blessings,” explained Francisca de Paula e Silva and added: “Apparent, fake, lying beauty is a deviation of aesthetics that perverts morality, divides society and destroys the economy.”<sup>369</sup>

Claiming that the fashion “destroys the economy” is another characteristic trait of fashion because it was perceived to be leading women to vanity and encouraged egoistic materialism. Mensageiro mentioned that in its core, fashion was not only anti-Christian – it was anti-social especially in the higher classes that obviously had more resources to follow the latest trends and invest in them.

“Among the rich, [...] luxury<sup>370</sup> and fashion mollify the soul and character and harden the heart,” wrote Mensageiro in 1914. Then the money was not spent in the right places, such as “alms for the poor, holy masses, projects of Catholic regeneration or religious press”.<sup>371</sup> And the situation was even worse among the lower classes, forcing many devout and reasonable men to delay marriage as they would simply not have enough resources for all the possible expenses of their future wives:

*Many young men would like to have a family but when they realize that all the expenses on the ‘toilette’ will cost them ten times more than on the food, they naturally hesitate [...] and remember that single life will be much more simple than an honest and honourable married life.*<sup>372</sup>

Since fashion hinders the creation of family, threatens existing families and could even lead to losing one’s very faith, it must be fought on all fronts, from the very families where fathers “must prevent for every cost to introduce such deplorable abuse”<sup>373</sup>, to the Catholic community overall that should confront fashion in its press and through lay associations such

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<sup>369</sup> Francisca de Paula e Silva, “Ah! Certas Modas!”, *MdF*, 18.8.1918.

<sup>370</sup> Called in this context “father of fashion”. See “Luxo e Moda”, *MdF*, 1.11.1914.

<sup>371</sup> “Luxo e Moda”, *MdF*, 1.11.1914.

<sup>372</sup> “Luxo e Moda”, *MdF*, 1.11.1914.

<sup>373</sup> “As modas”, *MdF*, 18.5.1913.

as the League for morality<sup>374</sup> that even created a special branch to combat “indecent” fashion based on the Belgian example.<sup>375</sup>

Finally, Mensageiro’s authors demanded a change of laws and police action that would act against public “exhibition of this ridiculous fashion that cry out loud of immorality”, as formulated by Francisca de Paula e Silva<sup>376</sup>. After all, the League for morality actually regularly appealed to police forces for collaboration and help in what its members found offensive (Cássia dos Santos 2016). The organization of beauty contests was considered especially scandalous, immoral and worthy of the involvement of the police and legislative action; and they drew the condemnation of church authorities and lay associations. For instance, an international beauty contest that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1930, caught even attention of an organization of Catholic women from faraway Natal that described it as an “assassination of morality”:

*We, the women and young ladies from Natal are terrified of the surge of paganism insulting our Christian faith and the dignity of Brazilian women demonstrated especially with this exposure of nudity and the shamelessness of the judging committee. Because in these kinds of competitions, on the top of the false altars of the carnal beauty, is sacrificed and immolated the true and superior beauty of the woman that is the moral beauty of its soul, demonstrated in the exterior with modestly with a chaste body.*<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Originally called the League against Pornography founded in 1912 by the Brazilian Catholic Union and approved by the Church authorities with the objective to seek out all kinds publications contrary to “good manners”. It renamed itself in 1917 and broadened its interests to include other “immoral” activities. See Cássia dos Santos 2016.

<sup>375</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 5.1.1919.

<sup>376</sup> Francisca de Paula e Silva, “Ah! Certas Modas!”, *Mdf*, 18.8.1918.

<sup>377</sup> “Notas e notícias: Rio Grande do Norte”, *MdF*, 2.3.1930.



## 2.5. Foreign enemies

The last category of perceived enemies of the Catholic Church concerns foreigners and especially foreign *influences*, in contrast with what were construed as authentically domestic (and of course inherently linked to Catholicism). Brazil was painted as the “Land of the Holy Cross“, founded on religious principles that had to permanently face external corruptions from the very beginning, as attested by the fact it did not keep its original name; instead, it received its name after its only precious (and very mundane) commodity – brazilwood.

External pressures, however, reached their height after the declaration of the republic. It is important to note that basically all the enemies mentioned in the previous chapters were attached to some degree of foreign influences and Mensageiro authors branded them as inherently anti-national and anti-Brazilian. Evils associated with Protestantism came from the United States, other enemies originated in various European countries but most crucially France.

This doesn't mean that everything foreign was seen as inherently bad; Mensageiro was well-aware of the international nature of Catholicism and actually found itself on the opposing side of the nationalist spectrum on the issue of the foreign friars. While the secular and anticlerical press and politicians routinely accused the friars coming to Brazil from countries such as Portugal (1910) or France (1880) from where they were expelled as suspected agents of Rome (that is, a foreign interfering power), Mensageiro and most of the other Catholic media defended them as part of a wider Catholic family.

As formulated by Carlos de Laet:

*Whoever hates them and repels them merely for not being compatriots does not have a truly Catholic spirit. [...] The most important transformation in the world that happened due to the Gospels was the destruction of the barriers separating people that considered all the others to be barbarians and enemies.*<sup>378</sup>

After all, the very founders of Mensageiro were Germans and they often used Germany as a prime example of religious policies and public morality. Some other countries were referred to as exemplary – literally calling them “model states” – such as Belgium, praised for its Catholic government that made it the “forefront of civilization” and its political institutions were “admired by the entire world”.<sup>379</sup> Later, from the 1920s, Mussolini's Fascist Italy became one of these model states and effectively overshadowed Belgium (see below subchapter **3.2.3. Model states**).

Mensageiro's writers instead argued that Brazilians suffered from a “sick tendency to imitate”<sup>380</sup> the worst of what came from the outside instead of taking up the good examples,

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<sup>378</sup> Carlos de Laet, “Nativismo religioso“, *MdF*, 2.6.1907.

<sup>379</sup> “Um Estado Modelo: O Governo Catholico na Belgica“, *MdF*, 21.11.1909.

<sup>380</sup> Firmo Anonio, “Imitações“, *MdF*, 3.2.1924.

such as prohibition campaigns in the U.S. and even in Lenin's Russia.<sup>381</sup> "We like to imitate everything that implies 'civilization'", summarised an anonymous writer in 1921. "But we don't imitate everything; we just mirror the most fantasmagorical things instead of those that could be useful."<sup>382</sup>

### 2.5.1. Masonic French

These negative influences tended to come especially from two countries that were ascribed very clear national characteristics<sup>383</sup>: France and the United States. France was the "old" enemy in this context, the epicenter of all the dangerous ideologies formulated since the revolution of 1789, including Masonry and Atheism that were routinely portrayed as ruling over its government.<sup>384</sup> Basically every top French politician was called out as a Mason – including multi-term prime ministers Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929)<sup>385</sup> and Aristide Briand (1862-1932),<sup>386</sup> or president Raymond Poincaré (1854-1912),<sup>387</sup> "convicted enemy of the Church [...] that will be useful instrument in the hands of the [Masonic] 'lodge' just as his predecessors were."<sup>388</sup>

Guided by Masons, French politicians pursued severely anti-Catholic policies including the persecution of Christians, the implementation of immoral laws such as divorce law that they attempted to spread to other countries<sup>389</sup> and even forcing priests and friars to serve in the army during the First World War.<sup>390</sup>

While the aforementioned First World War provided a welcome opportunity to criticize the French government (and praise the German and Austrian-Hungarian one), it also temporarily shifted the image of France, due to certain expectations of a spiritual and maybe even political rebirth. For instance, *Mensagem* enthusiastically reported in 1914 about the rising number of conversions and churches full of people, waiting in lines to receive sacraments before being recruited to the army.<sup>391</sup> One year later, it published an article called "Faith in War" about the striking displays of Catholic devotion on the battlefield that "reveal a new France that we did not know".<sup>392</sup>

However, this shift back to the pre-republican past of the "France of Saint Luis" and "homeland of Saint Joan of Arc" never really materialized, even though France gradually

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<sup>381</sup> "Demais e de menos", *MdF*, 21.8.1921.

<sup>382</sup> "Demais e de menos", *MdF*, 21.8.1921.

<sup>383</sup> For instance, the Portuguese, Spanish and Russian revolutions all got extensive and extremely negative coverage but they were not linked to the characteristics of their respective nations – Communism wasn't described as inherently "Russian" or anarchism as "Spanish", while both Americans and French allegedly exported their "national values" (i.e. materialism, anti-clericalism and all revolutionary ideologies) abroad.

<sup>384</sup> "Noticiario: França", *MdF*, 17.3.1909.

<sup>385</sup> Prime minister between 1906-1909 and 1917-1920.

<sup>386</sup> Prime minister between 1909-1911; 1913; 1915-1917; 1921-1922; 1925-1926; 1929.

<sup>387</sup> President between 1913-1920.

<sup>388</sup> "Noticiario: França", *MdF*, 2.3.1913.

<sup>389</sup> "O Divorcio", *MdF*, 16.3.1913.

<sup>390</sup> Thanks to a "masonic law". See e.g. "Noticiario: França", *MdF*, 4.7.1915.

<sup>391</sup> "Noticiario: França", *MdF*, 1.11.1914.

<sup>392</sup> "A fé na guerra", *MdF*, 18.7.1915.

ceased to be the epicenter of negative attention in the 1920s, instead giving place to revolutionary developments in Spain, Portugal or Russia and, of course, activities of the United States.

### 2.5.2. Materialistic Americans

The image of the “Yankees” is somewhat more ambivalent and Americans were occasionally admired and used as an example, especially in case of religious freedom given to Catholics, in contrast to anti-clerical France<sup>393</sup> and even republican Brazil. “In our Brazil, it is not supported that the president of the Republic speaks of God and even less that it could be permitted to pray in the Congress,” complained *Noticiario* from 1909. “In the United States on the contrary, all the great meetings like that of the Chamber of Deputies open with a prayer”.<sup>394</sup>

While Protestant in its majority, the United States were generally not depicted as openly persecuting Catholics at home<sup>395</sup> – instead, American Catholicism was constantly perceived to be on the rise in statistics published in *Mensagem*, attracting new converts both among the general population and also among notable people that Catholics liked to boast of.

But the rest of the country was in religious decay and decadence, losing “fake” Christian adherents (i.e. Protestants) to outright paganism. “There are more pagans in the U.S. than in Japan,” claimed *Mensagem*’s news section in 1914, referring to the words of the bishop of Natchez in Mississippi.<sup>396</sup> These conditions had similar results in “Masonic” France as to the moral decay of American society and the rise of such “mortal wounds to the family”<sup>397</sup> as divorce<sup>398</sup> and suicide.

*Mensagem*’s authors pointed to materialism (or “love of money”) as the main source of this decay – and as the most typical American “value” exported to other countries: “It is in the United States where the golden calf is worshipped more than in any part of the world,” wrote an anonymous author in *Mensagem* in 1913, calling the U.S. “a country of unscrupulous mercantilism where everything is up for sale” and decrying corruption even in the highest political circles and police that are ready to make “financial pacts with criminals”.<sup>399</sup>

Potential financial gains motivated Americans to spread their influence through the means of imperialism (and, as mentioned above, under the veil of the Protestant missions), “dreaming to dominate all the Americas with their great fleets, great industries and great loans”.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> See e.g. “A perseguição da Igreja catholica na França”, *MdF*, 3.3.1907.

<sup>394</sup> “Noticiario: America do Norte”, *MdF*, 21.3.1909.

<sup>395</sup> Even though institutional discrimination of Catholics is decried on several instances and in certain American states such as Georgia, where “Catholics are systematically excluded from public services”. See “Notas e noticias: Estados-Unidos”, *MdF*, 15.1.1922.

<sup>396</sup> “Noticiario: America do Norte”, *MdF*, 4.1.1914.

<sup>397</sup> “Notas e noticias: Estados Unidos”, *MdF*, 20.11.1921.

<sup>398</sup> For alarming statistics of divorce and subsequent mass production of orphans, see e.g. “Noticiario: Estados Unidos”, *MdF*, 3.12.1916.

<sup>399</sup> “Religião reclame”, *MdF*, 6.7.1913.

<sup>400</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Perigo imminente!”, *MdF*, 18.11.1917.

“Yankees” already managed to take over several countries, from Mexico, to Nicaragua, to Peru, in all cases with destructive results.

And Brazil was next. Soares de Azevedo denounced the United States repeatedly as a source of the negative trends that endanger traditional Catholic values in his homeland – including smoking, ice cream, gymnastics, football or women’s education. “What a sad mania we have, to imitate everything that comes from the outside without convenient selection,” lamented de Azevedo. “Many mothers of our families believe that once their daughters reach 14 years, they should have more freedom. Why? Because Americans have it. Only for this reason. They should go out by themselves, shop by themselves, go to Mass by themselves, take the train by themselves.”<sup>401</sup>

Negative coverage of the United States certainly served the Catholic press to point out the corrupted face of so-called “modernity” as presented by the liberal forces in Brazil; Brazilian liberals, and especially Protestants, often used the United States as an example of progress and material development they would like to see in their country as well. In the American case, *Mensagem* rejected the notion that there is an equation between material progress and true “civilization”, even though its writers generally argued that embracing Catholic government would also bring economic benefits to the country. But when it came to the United States, Soares de Azevedo claimed that America’s prosperity was entirely dependent on its “geographical position, its climate and the products it exports”.<sup>402</sup>

“We should point out that civilization has little to do with the general or particular wealth of its population,” de Azevedo reacted to an article in *Jornal do Commercio* that made the link between Protestantism and the development of a country, so often used by Brazilian liberals and Protestants. „After all, I know many hillbilly analphabets from Rio that made a lot of quick money, and many famous intellectuals that struggle to survive.”<sup>403</sup> For de Azevedo, the United States were sort of representative of these “rich analphabets from Rio” because they “lack literal culture, they lack any art history and their people live almost exclusively concerned with money, industrial and agricultural companies etc.”<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: As Meninotas“, *MdF*, 16.2.1919.

<sup>402</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Malabarismo“, *MdF*, 16.2.1930.

<sup>403</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Malabarismo“, *MdF*, 16.2.1930.

<sup>404</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Malabarismo“, *MdF*, 16.2.1930.

**PART 3:**  
**IDEAL STATE, IDEAL SOCIETY**

### 3.1. Monarchy, or republic?

During the Old Republic, the Catholic “good press,” represented here by *Mensagem da Fé*, not only identified enemies responsible for – in their view – the corrupted nature of the state and society overall, but also formulated an alternative vision of what they should look like. Comtures of this alternative and highly idealized vision are the focus of the third part of this dissertation thesis, complemented by particular strategies suggested and employed by Brazilian Catholics to at least partially achieve it.

Essentially, the very first question Brazilian Catholics had to deal with after the 1889 coup was whether they would support the new republican regime or remain loyal to the idea of a monarchy (or even particular dynasty). This ideological decision was complicated by the fact that, while the imperial regime never officially divorced Catholicism from the State as early republicans did – and the very persona of the emperor was still considered divine in the Catholic worldview – it treated the Catholic Church as a wholly subordinate institution.

Absolute dominance over the “state religion” under the *padroado* was definitely not in line with the ultramontanist, Romanized Catholic Church that established itself by the end of the 19th century; not even mentioning the fact that the imperial administration planned to carry out many of the same “anti-clerical” reforms that took place during the early republican years between 1889-1891, including the secularization of education or religious equality in the state’s constitution (Leite 2011).

But then, it was the First Republic that undertook these crucial steps, even if far less extensive than originally planned; and many Catholics developed a sort of nostalgia for the “old days” of the monarchy. In *Mensagem da Fé* in particular, this was reinforced by the German origins of its founders and by the fact that most of the early contributors openly admired the German and Austrian empires and their respective rulers. For instance, *Mensagem* published the speeches of Wilhelm II (r. 1888-1918) whom they praised as “faithful” and put his firm beliefs in contrast with “those who are Catholics by name alone”<sup>405</sup> – an honor otherwise extremely rare for a Protestant. “That most fervent Catholic” Franz Joseph (r. 1848-1916) of Austria-Hungary got even more favourable treatment and *Mensagem* mourned his death with an extensive obituary.<sup>406</sup>

Nostalgia for past times and admiration of foreign governments, however, never reached the level of openly advocating for the return of monarchy on the pages of *Mensagem*. This put *Mensagem da Fé* in contrast with a significant portion of the French ultramontane press represented for instance by journalist Louis Veillot (1813-1883), but even with the more radical Brazilian magazine *A Ordem* that regularly published ultra traditionalist Catholic

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<sup>405</sup> “Noticiário: Alemanha”, *MdF*, 15.10.1916.

<sup>406</sup> See “Francisco José”, *MdF*, 17.12.1916.

intellectuals from initiatives such as *Ação Imperial Patrianovista Brasileira*<sup>407</sup> (Moreira 2013).<sup>408</sup>

While *Mensagem* depicted the foundations of the republican constitution as “anti-religious” and appreciated the link between Church and State during the monarchy,<sup>409</sup> it claimed it did not give preference to any model of government if it was Catholic in its principles which was in line with the French-language encyclical *Au milieu des sollicitudes* published by Pope Leo XIII in 1893. “Just as with all human institutions, this system has its inconveniencies but also offers doubtless advantages,” explained Coriolano which claimed that, in fact, there were only two “diametrically opposed” political systems: Christian and anti-Christian.<sup>410</sup> Therefore, he called on Brazilian Catholics to use the given opportunity (or in his words, “sacred duty”) to reshape the current republic by political participation and subsequently “save the society”.<sup>411</sup>

This call for political participation was echoed over and over again by all *Mensagem*’s writers, whether by supporting individual Catholic candidates in the elections, or by supporting the project of a nationwide Catholic Party that never really materialized. It demonstrates the widespread acceptance of the republican regime and some sort of democratic participation, even if under the guidance of the religious authorities and ultimately used to impose the will of the alleged Catholic majority on the rest of the population, including religious minorities.

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<sup>407</sup> Organization founded in 1928 to advocate returning to monarchy and a corporatist economic model.

<sup>408</sup> MOREIRA, Cândido Rodrigues. 2013. “Imprensa católica no Brasil entre os anos 1928-1940: a revista *A Ordem*”. *Albuquerque: revista de História* v. 5 n. 9: pp. 161-193.

<sup>409</sup> See e.g. Augusto de Lima, “A Constituição e o Catholicismo”, *MdF*, 19.9.1926.

<sup>410</sup> Coriolano, “Catholicos e politica”, *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

<sup>411</sup> Coriolano, “Catholicos e politica”, *MdF*, 1.2.1914.

## 3.2. Catholic state, Catholic laws

Even though Mensageiro did not openly call for the restoration of the monarchy, it certainly argued for a different form of return – to the union between the Catholic Church and Brazilian state. In this discourse, oppressive royal patronage was soon forgotten and substituted by a fictional history of harmony between state, its Church and the whole nation.

As Mensageiro reminded its readers, “Brazil was born, developed and prospered in the shadow of the Cross. Decisive principles of its evolution were established by the Catholic religion.”<sup>412</sup> When Pedro Alvares Cabral “discovered” Brazil in 1500, he “erected the Cross before erecting the crest of the king of Portugal”.<sup>413</sup> Catholicism was also depicted as a unifying element for the extremely diverse Brazilian nation:

*All this enormous country, one of the largest ones in the world, a country where different races of its inhabitants did not yet create a genuinely Brazilian race, are united by the same faith, the same religion.*<sup>414</sup>

Bishop Manuel Nunes Coelho (1884-1967) from Aterrado in Minas Gerais, whose pastoral letter on the relationship between Catholicism and nation was published by Mensageiro in 1930, called defending the Catholic faith the “true nationalism”.<sup>415</sup> Innumerable other articles stressed that Brazilian patriotism could be only based on religion – of course the only true religion, the Roman Catholicism.

“Religion and Fatherland are inseparable,” explained Manderfelt. “Fatherland and the Church [...], fatherland opening up ways for the Church and the Church’s blessing and making the Fatherland nobler.”<sup>416</sup> Atheists, on the other hand, could never truly love their nation because they did not believe in immortality and could never sacrifice their lives for something as abstract as a nation in the time of crisis.<sup>417</sup> And of course nor could the Protestants that served as agents of the foreign, aggressive America, rather than Brazilian national interests.

### 3.2.1. State religion

Based on this perceived link between Brazilian history, its nation and the Catholic Church, Mensageiro argued that the “leading role” of Catholicism should be embedded in the country’s constitution, just as it was in the previous 1824 imperial constitution. This was clearly in line with the papal positions<sup>418</sup> but also with the general demands of the Brazilian

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<sup>412</sup> “Sejamos sinceros!”, *MdF*, 15.3.1914.

<sup>413</sup> “Sejamos sinceros!”, *MdF*, 15.3.1914.

<sup>414</sup> “Sejamos sinceros!”, *MdF*, 15.3.1914.

<sup>415</sup> “A Voz do Episcopado”, *MdF*, 5.1.1930.

<sup>416</sup> João Bahiano, “Religião e Patria”, *MdF*, 21.5.1922.

<sup>417</sup> João Bahiano, “Religião e Patria”, *MdF*, 21.5.1922.

<sup>418</sup> E.g. Leo XIII’s aforementioned encyclical *Au milieu des sollicitudes* considered separation of Church and State “equivalent to the separation of human legislation from Christian and divine legislation“. See Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Au milieu des sollicitudes*. Accessed 11 February 2020, <[http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_16021892\\_au-milieu-des-sollicitudes.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_16021892_au-milieu-des-sollicitudes.html)> A later encyclical



Catholic hierarchy, as attested by the pastorals from 1890 onwards and also by individual statements from the high clergy. For instance, Francisco de Paula e Silva claimed in an interview that he “disapproves of the modern doctrine of separation [between Church and State], especially in a country like Brazil” because he “cannot understand that being a citizen and being a Catholic could be separable” from each other.<sup>419</sup>

Neighboring countries provided a model for such a relationship, as noted in Mensageiro’s front page article from 1916, complaining that in “all the great South American republics, the constitution always guarantees in one form or another the superiority of our saintly Catholic religion”.<sup>420</sup> Soares de Azevedo referred specifically to the Peruvian example where the constitution “established that Catholic, apostolical and Roman religion is the official and only recognized religion by the State” and its elected representatives “act like faithful interpreters of the people that sent them to the Senate and Chamber of deputies”.<sup>421</sup>

In this case, however, de Azevedo was quite misrepresentative of the Peruvian model: while the 1920 constitution indeed recognized that “the religion of the Nation is Catholic, Apostolic and Roman” and “the State protects it”, it dropped more extensive protections for the Catholic Church mentioned in the previous constitutions and for the very first time enshrined that “nobody can be persecuted for the reason of his ideas or his [religious] beliefs“ (in Yupanqui 2012: 54).<sup>418</sup> Moreover, the new constitution that was published only a few years after de Azevedo’s article (in 1933) stripped the Catholic Church of its privileges and recognized the freedom of religion (Yupanqui 2012).

But Brazilian Catholics argued for the opposite and Mensageiro reacted to every parliamentary discussion over possible constitutional changes by arguing it should contain the officialized role of the religion. “Now that the president intends to reform the constitution, he should make sure that the article promulgating separation between Church and State is removed,” wrote J. Elesbão de Castro in 1924, referring to the plans of president Artur Bernardes (1922-1926).<sup>422</sup>

Mensageiro also published an extensive text by Francisco Campos, then deputy of Minas Gerais and future minister of education during the regime of Getúlio Vargas, proposing that the “constitution should at least recognize the Catholic religion as the religion of the Brazilian people”.<sup>423</sup> Neither of these propositions were ever accepted and Bernardes’ constitutional amendment from 1926<sup>424</sup> did not address religious matters at all. Catholicism did not retain its leading role even in the constitutions from Vargas’ era in 1934 and 1937, even though the latter constitution was paradoxically written by the same Francisco Campos.

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*Vehementer nos* (1906) issued by Pope Pius X called it “a most pernicious error” and “obvious negation of the supernatural order“. See Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Vehementer nos*. Accessed 11 February, <[http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-x\\_enc\\_11021906\\_vehementer-nos.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_11021906_vehementer-nos.html)>

<sup>419</sup> “Balança da Fé”, *MdF*, 20.6.1909.

<sup>420</sup> “Conquistas“, *MdF*, 20.8.1916.

<sup>421</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Para evitar o atropelamento das almas“, *MdF*, 18.8.1929.

<sup>422</sup> J. Elesbão de Castro, “Decadentes e retrogados“, *MdF*, 20.7.1924.

<sup>423</sup> “A reforma da Constituição“, *MdF*, 16.8.1925.

<sup>424</sup> Only amendment ever passed to the 1891 constitution.

### 3.2.2. Catholic laws

Behind the demand for the role of the Catholic Church in the constitution, there were a series of both abstract and more particular ideas how it would function in practice formulated by Mensageiro's authors. From the very advent of the First Republic, Catholics most vigorously targeted two institutions established in the republican regime: civil marriage and the ban on religious education.

#### No more civil marriages

During the imperial period, there was no form of civil union recognized in Brazil, even though various lawmakers unsuccessfully presented proposals inspired by French civil law; marriage instead remained regulated by canon law just as during colonial times. Non-Catholics only gained the right to be married in 1861, due to the rising level of mainly Protestant immigration. Inter-religious marriages, however, remained illegal until the beginning of the First Republic (Leite 2011).

Civil marriage became the only state-recognized form of marriage by Decree 181 in January 1890. For Brazilian Catholics, this development was unacceptable because marriage was considered a sacrament – an inseparable union consecrated by God himself, not a “mere formality”<sup>425</sup> enshrined in human law and sealed by state officials rather than “ministers of God”. “We reject it because, for the clergy, marriage is more than a contract repealable by the will of the respective parties. It is a sacred sacrament, indispensable thanks to divine intervention,” explained Affonso Celso in 1907.<sup>426</sup> He argued that, just like all the human laws, civil marriage was dangerously “threatened by possible changes and revocations”<sup>427</sup>

What Celso and other Catholic authors actually feared with this “temporality” was the looming option of approving a “immoral divorce law”<sup>428</sup> that would break the sanctity of marriage and even cause a variety of social disasters, from mass suicides to insanity, as had allegedly happened in countries from Germany, to the United States, to France.<sup>429</sup> Mensageiro also frowned upon<sup>430</sup> the possibility given by the event of civil marriage to unregulated union between Catholics and non-Catholics that was strongly discouraged by the canon law until 1970.

Civil marriage was acceptable only as a formal recognition of the sacrament for legal purposes, such as inheritance laws, but never as a substitution for religious marriage that would be, however, only put on the same level in 1934 – four years after the end of the First Republic. Until then, Mensageiro supported legal changes along with lay (but Catholic-

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<sup>425</sup> “O Matrimônio: continuação”, *MdF*, 19.4.1914.

<sup>426</sup> Affonso Celso, “Manejos Impios”, *MdF*, 6.10.1907.

<sup>427</sup> Affonso Celso, “Manejos Impios”, *MdF*, 6.10.1907.

<sup>428</sup> “Noticiário: Rio de Janeiro,” *MdF*, 5.9.1915.

<sup>429</sup> See e.g. “Pelo mundo: Alemanha”, *MdF*, 17.11.1907.

<sup>430</sup> See e.g. O Silencioso, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 4.4.1915.

organized) organizations such as *Obra dos Matrimonios* that sought out people married only by civil law and attempted to convince them to get remarried in the church.<sup>431</sup>

### **Mandatory religious education**

Even more prevalent among Mensageiro's authors were calls for the reestablishment of religious education in public school that was mandatory both during the colonial and imperial period, although "non-Catholics" were allowed to opt-out from it by 1879. On the contrary, the decree from 1890 and subsequent republican constitution instituted a purely lay public education based on "objective" scientific knowledge, excluding all religious elements and participation of the clergy. However, not all the states of the Brazilian federation immediately pursued this change and the strongly Catholic Minas Gerais, for example, only prohibited religious education in 1906 (Cechetti – Valdir 2016).<sup>432</sup> Religious education also continued to be taught in private Catholic institutions that soon appeared all across the country.

This development was immediately protested by the Catholic hierarchy, followed by its "good press". In an article from 1908, Mensageiro blamed this "radical revolution" on "a young and inexperienced" Brazilian minister of education who "broke with the determination of his predecessors, disavowing past experience and going against the understanding of the major geniuses of Science and Arts, putting such a terrific concept into practice".<sup>433</sup>

Reestablishing religious education became the principle Catholic demand and an essential part of Mensageiro's vision of an ideal state. "We want Catholic schools and Catholic professors to convert this immense and beautiful country," declared Mensageiro's editor-in-chief. "Because Catholic education must indeed lay the foundations of a true civilization and secure a Catholic hegemony in Brazil."<sup>434</sup>

Mensageiro presented innumerable benefits of a mandatory religious education that ranged from the individual to society as a whole. On the individual level, Catholic schooling brought up children with a sense of morality because "no morality can exist without religion".<sup>435</sup> Religion was supposedly "the most powerful instrument of education because it is a force of discipline, a light of instruction and an efficient basis for the physical care necessary for the development and maintenance of human body" while to go to a so-called "school without God" was "dangerous to the youth that risk becoming proud and corrupted, only satisfied with material goods".<sup>436</sup>

As for society as a whole, a religious education was presented as the "most efficient remedy"<sup>437</sup> against "dangerous ideologies", such as anarchism, Bolshevism or Spiritism, but also for instance against military dissatisfaction and the threat of a military coup because of

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<sup>431</sup> "Noticiario: Argentina", *MdF*, 2.6.1918.

<sup>432</sup> CECCHETTI, Elcio. VALDIR dos Santos, Ademir. 2016. "O Ensino Religioso na escola brasileira: alianças e disputas históricas". *Acta Scientiarum* v. 38, n. 2: pp. 131-141.

<sup>433</sup> "Prodromos de Lucta", *MdF*, 1.3.1908.

<sup>434</sup> João Bahiano, "Catholicismo versus analfabetismo", *MdF*, 15.1.1922.

<sup>435</sup> "Ensino religioso", *MdF*, 15.2.1907.

<sup>436</sup> "Ensino religioso", *MdF*, 15.2.1907.

<sup>437</sup> Zeca, "Pedacinhos", *MdF*, 20.1.1924.

implanting a sense of patriotism, discipline and “unconditional submission to the legitimate superior institutions”,<sup>438</sup> thus appealing to the conservative sectors of the society. “If the governments were clever enough to institute religious education in schools, they could use at least 80 % of the soldiers, police officers, war material etc. for the defense of the nation and public order maintenance”, proposed Manderfelt in 1924.<sup>439</sup>

The kind of lay education that Mensageiro equated with a state-sponsored diffusion of atheism, on the other hand, brought horrible results, as apparent from the worst example of “liberal, atheistic and Masonic France” that suffered from a surge of infanticide, underage criminality, prostitution, suicides and, of course, divorces.<sup>440</sup> As Mensageiro explained: “These are doubtlessly results of schooling without God, without religion and without faith”.<sup>441</sup>

Unlike in many other areas, the Catholic effort on the educational front bore certain fruits, first in the state of Minas Gerais whose minister of education (and occasional contributor to Mensageiro) Francisco Campos reinstated religious classes on a state level in 1927 (Cechetti – Valdir 2016). Mensageiro applauded this “reform” even though religious education was only allowed outside of regular school hours and depended on parents’ approval.

Macedo Soares, Mensageiro’s regular contributor, called Minas a “model state“ for all Brazilian Catholics and praised that its governor “gave this beautiful example to all that other states will hopefully all follow”.<sup>442</sup> After the 1930 coup d’état, Francisco Campos was actually able to implement a similar law on the national level as federal minister of education and public health – but it maintained the principle of optionality that defied the original Catholic demands.

### **Other demanded laws**

Apart from religious education and civil marriage, Mensageiro frequently suggested the approval of various other laws that would put Brazil in line with their Catholic vision of the state. These notably included Sunday rest laws and laws against “evil freedoms”, as Mensageiro dubbed the fundamental liberal freedoms enshrined in the 1891 constitution that it perceived as thinly-veiled tools of oppression of Catholicism.

The idea for the rest laws came directly from the biblical example and it was essentially of a theological nature: Sunday was supposed to be a day of prayer and celebration of God and desecrating it with work was a grave, even mortal, sin that used to be punished by stoning in the Old Testament. Mensageiro never failed to mention this and warned those who dare to work of retribution from the “divine justice”.<sup>443</sup> It criticized both Brazilian society for not

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<sup>438</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: O verdadeiro remedio para os levantes militares“, *MdF*, 7.9.1924.

<sup>439</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos“, *MdF*, 20.1.1924.

<sup>440</sup> “Olhemos para a França... atea“, *MdF*, 20.10.1907.

<sup>441</sup> “Olhemos para a França... atea“, *MdF*, 20.10.1907.

<sup>442</sup> Argemiro R. de Macedo Soares, “O Exemplo do Minas“, *MdF*, 7.4.1929.

<sup>443</sup> “Descanso dominical“, *MdF*, 6.10.1907.

observing it and the government for not making it legally binding, unlike other countries including even the Protestant United Kingdom.<sup>444</sup>

And just as the individuals could be punished, the same could happen to the country as a whole:

*If desecrating Sunday is a certain sign of upcoming catastrophe, like a thunderstorm over humanity, we are undeniably close to it. Because this desecration turned into a true national crime, a sort of public confession of social atheism.*<sup>445</sup>

But Sunday rest laws represented more than just an ancient divine demand – they gradually turned into an integral part of the Catholic social teaching that proposed alternatives to the increasing workers’ demands (see chapter **3.4. Social Question**). Alongside being in accordance with God's laws, it became a “necessity, an indispensable right preventing the worker from turning brutish, losing health and human dignity”.<sup>446</sup>

Apart from this, Mensageiro also demanded curbing the “excessive” liberties that formed the basis of the liberal republican values. These included “freedom of trade, freedom of industry, freedom of association, freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom of the press, freedom of education, freedom of religion, freedom of everything”, as summed up by Coriolano who offered a thorough critique of the republican notion of freedom.<sup>447</sup>

In other words, Mensageiro considered the proclaimed republican freedoms to be the instruments of oppression of Brazilian Catholics, their beliefs and their political cause. “Think of everything that you enjoy, just not of religion,” reads another article that ironically summarized what liberty meant for Masons and free thinkers. “Read whatever you’d like, except for the Gospels, catechism or the publications of the good press. Vote based on your conviction but never for a practicing Catholic. Do not forget that all people are brothers and sisters, so they belong to a Masonic lodge. Enter any syndicate if it is a socialist one.”<sup>448</sup>

Such understanding of freedom was “absurd and monstrous” and “the Catholic Church could never stop condemning it and fighting against it”.<sup>449</sup> In practical terms, this transformed into Mensageiro’s demands of state-sponsored censorship of press, literature and film and laws concerning public morality, especially targeting alleged nudity and pornography.

According to Manderfelt, the “evil freedom” that needed state intervention most urgently was the freedom of the press – paradoxically the same freedom that allowed for, during most of the First Republic, such an expansion of the Catholic media including Mensageiro. Manderfelt called the freedom of press “the worst flaw of our century that allows everyone to print and spread everything that crosses his mind: all the smear, all the most monstrous errors,

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<sup>444</sup> “A Sanctificação do Domingo”, *MdF*, 5.10.1913.

<sup>445</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 3.4.1927.

<sup>446</sup> “Uma obrigação grave”, *MdF*, 21.6.1908.

<sup>447</sup> Coriolano, “Liberdade”, *MdF*, 18.10.1914.

<sup>448</sup> “A liberdade dos livres-pensadores”, *MdF*, 3.1.1915.

<sup>449</sup> Coriolano, “Liberdade”, *MdF*, 18.10.1914.

all the most disgusting attacks against individuals, families and social order”.<sup>450</sup> Of course, he was especially referring to the free publication of content that was critical of the Catholic Church. For this reason, he demanded laws that would institute “severe punishments” on the representatives of the “bad press” for publishing personal attacks on Catholic journalists and also other public personalities.<sup>451</sup>

### 3.2.3. Model states

Even though Mensageiro claimed Catholicism to be inherently Brazilian and that its proposals stemmed from the Brazilian reality, it still worked with examples from the foreign countries deemed inspirational for what they wanted to achieve at home. Certain countries provided inspiration only for very particular measures they adopted. These include the United States for the prohibition policies targeting alcoholism between 1920 and 1933,<sup>452</sup> the United Kingdom for elaborate film censorship<sup>453</sup> or harsh punishment for those who spread pornographic materials,<sup>454</sup> and even the Soviet Union that forbade “indecent” dances, namely the fox-trot, tango, shimmy and Charleston<sup>455</sup> and supported prohibition. Two countries, however, at different points provided entire models of Catholic-led government worth imitating. The first of these was Belgium which served as triumphant proof that Catholicism can be successful as a political ideology – in fact, the Belgian Catholic party controlled the government continuously on its own between 1884 and 1917 (Strikwerda 1988).<sup>456</sup>

#### Belgium

To be clear, Mensageiro’s authors did not seem to have a particular understanding, or even interest, in the exact policies pursued by the Belgian Catholic party. Instead, it portrayed in great details its social, economic and technological achievements, publishing figures of its external trade, alphabetization or workers’ conditions, all this in contrast with the previous liberal governments and with neighboring France, which was supposedly in chaos and overall decay.

In an article from 1909 tellingly named “Model State: Catholic Government in Belgium”, its anonymous author declared passionately that “in a short time span, Catholics turned Belgium, a nation for so long poorly governed by liberals, into a showcase of trade and industry, leading it to such progress and magnificence that it now marches triumphantly at the forefront of civilization.”<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> João do Norte, “Meu cantinho”, *MdF*, 16.5.1915.

<sup>451</sup> João do Norte, “Lei necessaria”, *MdF*, 6.1.1918.

<sup>452</sup> See e.g. “Demais e de menos”, *MdF*, 21.8.1921.

<sup>453</sup> See e.g. “Noticiario: Inglaterra”, *MdF*, 1.9.1918.

<sup>454</sup> See e.g. Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 4.12.1921.

<sup>455</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Uma enormidade”, *MdF*, 1.5.1927.

<sup>456</sup> STRIKWERDA, Carl. 1988. “The Divided Class: Catholics vs. Socialists in Belgium, 1880-1914”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 30, No. 2: pp. 333-359.

<sup>457</sup> “Um Estado Modelo: O Governo Catholico na Belgica”, *MdF*, 21.11.1909.

For instance, Mensageiro claimed that while only 59,37 % of children under 8 years were capable of reading and writing in 1866, this number rose to a staggering 88,8 % in 1900.<sup>458</sup> And the Belgian workers had the very best treatment in all Europe:

*Thanks to the Catholic initiative, Belgium has work accident laws, pensions for their workers, Sunday rest laws, reduced work hours etc. [...] While France, governed by the sectarians Briand and Clemenceau, treats its workers with cannons and ammunition.*<sup>459</sup>

Here, Mensageiro was probably referring to the military repression of strikes following the infamous Courrières mine disaster in 1906 that killed more than a thousand people<sup>460</sup>; we can therefore see an interesting paradox where Catholic journalists in Brazil on the one hand criticized the French leadership for spreading revolutionary sentiments, and on the other hand also panned it for actions unfriendly to striking workers, even though they clearly otherwise disapproved of strikes as an instrument of workers' emancipation.

“Tiny Belgium”<sup>461</sup> was thankful for all this to the wise Catholic government that was based on religious principles, unlike the economically failing and criminal-filled France led by the Freemasons. But as the electoral dominance of the Catholic Party began to wane after the end of the First World War in favour of the socialist Labour Party, so the Mensageiro shifted its attention elsewhere: to Italy where Mussolini's Fascists took power after the 1922 infamous *March on Rome*.

## Italy

Mensageiro noticed Mussolini for the first time back in 1916 when it reprinted an article by Franciscan *Vozes de Petrópolis*, calling its future favourite dictator a “radical socialist” and sworn enemy of the papacy.<sup>462</sup> Of course, its presented picture of Mussolini and his new regime changed dramatically in the 1920s when he began reversing the anti-Catholic measures of previous liberal governments, including reintroducing obligatory religious education in public elementary schools in 1923.<sup>463</sup> Mensageiro praised that the Italian government even “ordered that in all the schools, from elementary ones to the universities, and in all the courtrooms, the sacred symbol of the cross was placed”.<sup>464</sup>

In the following years, the Fascist government implemented basically all the actions that the “good press” demanded in Brazil itself – and Mensageiro reported about it in great detail. These included restoring Catholic feasts as public holidays, officially recognizing religious marriages<sup>465</sup> and detailed public morality regulations both on a local and national level. For instance, Mensageiro commended the mayor of Calabrian town Cotrone for fining women

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<sup>458</sup> “Noticiario: Belgica“, *MdF*, 19.1.1913.

<sup>459</sup> “Um Estado Modelo: O Governo Catholico na Belgica“, *MdF*, 21.11.1909.

<sup>460</sup> See TILLY, Charles. 1974. *Strikes in France, 1830-1968*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>461</sup> “Echos do Estrangeiro: Congressos Catholicos“, *MdF*, 7.11.1909.

<sup>462</sup> Pedro Sinzig, “Alerta! Conjurados!“, *MdF*, 16.4.1916.

<sup>463</sup> “Notas e noticias: Italia“, *MdF*, 3.4.1927.

<sup>464</sup> “Notas e noticias: Italia“, *MdF*, 3.4.1927.

<sup>465</sup> “Notas e noticias: Italia“, *MdF*, 19.5.1929.

dressing “immodestly”; that is “with dresses too short, excessive cleavages and exhibiting bare arms”.<sup>466</sup>

The very same article also informed the reader about the proposal of law against “immorality” that would punish dissemination of pornographic materials and contraception advertisements, and about the decree from the minister of education to enforce public libraries to ban “all works promoting immoral theories and written in the spirit of socialism”.<sup>467</sup> Mensageiro also praised Mussolini’s laws that forbade all dancing in clubs and cabarets and limited their opening hours.<sup>468</sup> Another text commended art censorship, publishing a long set of rules for artistic expressions that, among many other things, strictly banned insulting the Pope, religious sentiments and family principles, thus fulfilling Mensageiro’s demand to limit the freedom of press and expression.<sup>469</sup>

Most importantly, however, Fascist Italy granted the Pope the territory of the Vatican City through the so-called Lateran Pacts in 1929 that also confirmed pro-Catholic measures, such as mandatory Catholic education at all levels of the public education system and recognition of Catholicism as the state religion (Votavová – Šmíd 2018).<sup>470</sup> Mensageiro celebrated this act with a series of articles in 1929, starting with the 17<sup>th</sup> of March<sup>471</sup> where it described the long history of the Pope’s presence in Rome and his struggle for recognition after the annexation by the united Italian state. It also reported about festivities from the large immigrant Italian communities in Brazil including Bahia state where the catholic archbishop celebrated Mass with the Fascist sympathizers.<sup>472</sup>

At least during the 1920s, Mensageiro found no particular interest in describing or explaining Fascist ideology, internal disagreement within the Italian Catholic Church towards Fascism or even Fascist repression of the Italian Catholic Action (Votavová – Šmíd 2018). It was more concerned with the measures the regime implemented, including the exclusion of members of hated groups, such as Freemasons and Protestants, from the Fascist party ranks.

The ruling regime was presented rather as a conservative monarchy than any sort of a personality cult; king Victor Emmanuel III (r. 1900-1946) together with his spouse received considerably more attention than Mussolini himself who came, after all, from suspicious socialist circles. However, Mensageiro made sure its readers were informed that Fascism was – unlike other political ideologies – in no way incompatible with the Catholic Church, as attested by Pope Pius XI himself, whose statement on this issue was published in 1930.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> “Notas e notícias: Italia”, *MdF*, 20.9.1929.

<sup>467</sup> “Notas e notícias: Italia”, *MdF*, 20.9.1929.

<sup>468</sup> Soares d’Azevedo, “Cariocas: Uma enormidade”, *MdF*, 1.5.1927.

<sup>469</sup> “Notas e notícias: Italia”, *MdF*, 19.1.1930.

<sup>470</sup> VOTAVOVÁ, Petra; ŠMÍD, Marek. 2018. “Dlouhá cesta k Lateránským smlouvám: Diplomatické styky Svatého stolce a Itálie od nástupu fašizmu k moci do uzavření Lateránských smluv“. *Studia Theologica* 20, č. 2: pp. 185-208.

<sup>471</sup> “Notas e notícias: Italia”, *MdF*, 17.3.1929.

<sup>472</sup> “Notas e notícias: Capital”, *MdF*, 19.5.1929.

<sup>473</sup> “Notas e notícias: Santa Sé”, *MdF*, 4.5.1930.



### 3.3. Catholic family

The fundamental unit of the Catholic state, as construed by Mensageiro, was family – as opposed to the individual that was the cornerstone of the liberal ideal. After all, the Catholic Church was often portrayed and depicted as a family with Christ as its head. Healthy Catholic families made Catholic society possible; a society free from “religious ignorance” (i.e. lack of interest or knowledge about the Catholic principles), living according to Catholic moral principles on all levels of responsibility, from diplomats, to businessmen, to judges and politicians.<sup>474</sup>

Of course, the Brazilian family during the republican regime was not considered to be healthy by any means; it was endangered by just as many enemies as the Catholic Church as a whole but most urgently by women’s emancipation which threatened its disintegration and fall into anarchy. “We see that all over the world, women are taking care of positions they were never allowed to,” lamented Soares de Azevedo in 1919. “She is a suffragist here, divorced over there, turned away from the household.”<sup>475</sup>

#### 3.3.1. “Traditional” family model

The Catholic Church voiced by Mensageiro argued for maintaining a strictly patriarchal family model that was established over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>476</sup>, and that clearly divided responsibilities between men (fathers and husbands) and women (daughters and wives). In this model, women could receive certain level of education,<sup>477</sup> most importantly focused on religion and their duties; but their “sacred mission”<sup>478</sup> was to get married and to produce offspring, not to pursue careers or to have some sort of intellectual or even political agency (Azzi 1987a).

By the “natural law”<sup>479</sup>, the man was the head of the family and also the head of state, as clearly articulated by Manderfelt:

*God made man stronger than woman, endowed him with the authority, firmness and steadiness in his undertakings and entrusted him with the rule both over the family and the people.*<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> “Religião e Política”, *MdF*, 18.1.1914.

<sup>475</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Defesa de todo o geito”, *MdF*, 2.3.1919.

<sup>476</sup> In the early centuries of colonial Brazil, concubinage was actually much more common than regular and religiously sanctioned marriage due to the constant lack of “suitable” (i.e. white) brides. See AZZI, Riolando. 1987b. “Família e Valores na Sociedade Brasileira numa Perspectiva Histórica (1870-1950)”, *Síntese* No. 41: pp. 87-109.

<sup>477</sup> A law from 1827 granted Brazilian women access to elementary educations (of course segregated and most often controlled by the religious orders) and in 1879, they were allowed to study at most universities. See SOUZA Rodrigues, Marta de; ALVES da Silva, Artur. 2014. “A emancipação da mulher na imprensa feminista nos primeiros anos da República no Brasil.” *Humanidades em diálogo* v. 6: pp. 209-224.

<sup>478</sup> João do Norte, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 21.5.1916.

<sup>479</sup> O Silencioso, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 4.4.1915.

<sup>480</sup> João do Norte, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 21.5.1916.

He was responsible for financially securing the household and for ensuring that his wife and children maintain good manners both at home and in public. Woman, on the other hand, was described as physically and mentally fragile, more sensitive, prone to suffering and instability.<sup>481</sup> Her divine purpose was supportive since “God created woman to be man’s encouragement and companion and entrusted her to take care of their household and upbringing of children”.<sup>482</sup> She had to learn how to handle practical things, such as “preparing desirable meals, washing clothes, ironing, sewing and repairing clothes”<sup>483</sup>, not to study intellectual matters that could only stray her away from her natural responsibilities. As an anonymous author writing under the pen name O Silencioso warned:

*It is suitable that women of a certain position acquire some sort of basic knowledge. But we should make sure they do not turn into ridiculous smart alecks, too concentrated on the studies that could make them proud. Since their spirit is weaker and their imagination is more passionate, it is necessary to proceed with maximum caution.*<sup>484</sup>

### 3.3.2. Dangers of emancipation

The Catholic Church was well aware that its preferred family model was under threat over the course of the “Old Republic” where it witnessed profound social transformations, including calls for a more equal role of women in society and political life. While women continued to be systematically discriminated against during all this period, many of them raised burning issues such as suffrage and equal opportunity in the workplace, arguing there were no differences in mental capacities of both sexes.

Feminist media flourished – for instance the radical weekly magazine *A Família* founded in São Paulo in 1888 by Josefina Álvares de Azevedo that, apart from other demands, claimed that women acquire the right to vote and stand in elections (Souza-Alves 2014). In 1918, the biologist Bertha Lutz founded the influential Brazilian Federation for Female Progress (*Federação Brasileira pelo Progresso Feminino*, FBPF) that loudly represented women’s interests in the following years, eventually achieving universal suffrage in 1932 (Azzi 1987b).

Mensageiro regularly lamented this development, describing it as a deadly influence from the United States<sup>485</sup>, or even a plot organized by the Freemasons to “allow Atheism or disbelief in Jesus to enter women’s souls”<sup>486</sup>:

*This condemned Masonic sect is using all the available means of destruction. Its goal is to remove God, faith, religion and Catholicism from the heart of women.*<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> See e.g. “A Mulher”, *MdF*, 21.12.1930.

<sup>482</sup> Coriolano, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 2.7.1916.

<sup>483</sup> “Mulher Forte”, *MdF*, 15.11.1914.

<sup>484</sup> O Silencioso, “Reflexões ligeiras”, *MdF*, 4.4.1915.

<sup>485</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: As Meninotas”, *MdF*, 16.2.1919.

<sup>486</sup> “A Maçonaria e a mulher”, *MdF*, 5.1.1919.

<sup>487</sup> “A Maçonaria e a mulher”, *MdF*, 5.1.1919.

Women's interest in pursuing anything other than family life threatened that children could be left without their mothers and endangered the very foundations of Catholic society, leading it to violent anarchy.<sup>488</sup>

### 3.3.3. Catholic "Feminism"

Even though Mensageiro's editor-in-chief bluntly declared in 1922 that a woman's mission in society is "not to be pharmacist, dentist, journalist or doctor. It is to be a wife and mother",<sup>489</sup> his magazine actually embraced several high-profile female intellectuals that became regular contributors, most often precisely on the issue of women. These included Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves and Amélia Rodrigues, both native to Bahia state and very public intellectual (*sic*) figures.

Such an apparent paradox reflected that, while the ideal Catholic family model remained rhetorically unchanged, the Catholic Church, including its "good press", in fact reacted to the emancipatory movement with an increased agency of Catholic women. Intellectuals such as Maria Luiza were allowed and even encouraged to publish their – obviously conservative Catholic – views under the auspices of the "good press" (including publishing their own magazines aimed at female readers) and women in general took very important roles in the mobilization of Catholic organizations, such as the Women's Alliance (*Aliança Feminina*) and the Women's League (*Liga Feminina*).

Mensageiro's regular contributor Amélia Rodrigues was actually the founder of the Women's Alliance in Rio de Janeiro in 1919 (previously founding local-based *Liga Católica das Senhoras Baianas* in 1910),<sup>490</sup> becoming sort of the Catholic antidote to Bertha Lutz. These organizations aimed to fulfil women's rising intellectual demands, organizing conferences, concerts, libraries equipped with national and international press or scientific and high literature<sup>491</sup>, indeed the very opposite of what Mensageiro and other Catholic media tended to claim about their capabilities.

So modified a position was it that the "good press" gradually assumed during the 1920s, that it was called "Catholic feminism" (or "true feminism") by Maria Luiza, who explained its principles in opposition to secular feminism on the pages of Mensageiro: in this vision, woman was supposed to be recognized as "a powerful agent of world progress"<sup>492</sup> through its "emancipation" within the family. She would be allowed and even encouraged to study and get equal treatment before the law (even though not obtaining political responsibilities that she did not need)<sup>493</sup>, but not at the cost of responsibilities to take care of her husband and children.

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<sup>488</sup> Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves, "Porque?", *MdF*, 18.5.1924.

<sup>489</sup> Zeca, "Pedacinhos", *MdF*, 21.5.1922.

<sup>490</sup> Soares de Azevedo, "Cariocas: Defesa de todo o geito", *MdF*, 2.3.1919.

<sup>491</sup> "Notas e notícias: Rio de Janeiro", *MdF*, 17.7.1921.

<sup>492</sup> Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves, "A Bussola de Esperança", *MdF*, 1.1.1922.

<sup>493</sup> See e.g. Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves, "A Bussola de Esperança", *MdF*, 1.1.1922.

“A woman who nurtures [Catholic feminism] is educated in science and art and controls the house but does not disdain the preparation of meals and transforms her household into a place of rest for her husband who respects her,” explained Maria Luiza.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves, “Porque?”, *MdF*, 18.5.1924.

### 3.4. Social Question

Due to a rapidly accelerating and geographically spreading industrialization, the period of the “Old Republic“ was, among other topics, dominated by the so-called “social question” (*questão social*), that was the living conditions of the growing working class. The Catholic Church reacted globally to this issue – and to the responses offered by various Marxist ideologies – with the “social doctrine” clearly formulated in the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* whose publication in 1891 coincided with the constitution of the new republican regime in Brazil.

The Brazilian Catholic Church and its “good press” quickly picked up the main points of the doctrine that decried the “utter poverty of the masses” (in Waterman 2016: 29)<sup>495</sup> but, at the same time, absolutely condemned socialism and its solutions. Opposed to many later reinterpretations, Catholic social doctrine was strongly conservative at its core, advocating inherent inequality between the poor and the rich.

Buarque explained this position in *Mensagem*, using a typical comparison with the natural order. “Human equality is a common lie,” he claimed. “There are mountains and valleys, fields and forests. A humid environment is different from a dry one. In this way, individuals also differ in their features and the color of their skin and some receive five, some three and some two talents.”<sup>496</sup>

Soares de Azevedo even considered inequality “the source of all the beauty of the human existence”<sup>497</sup> and asked his readers to imagine a dystopian world of universal equality where a decent man couldn’t even find a driver:

*Imagine what would happen to all the dark-haired boys if girls would only like the blonde ones. And imagine what society would look like if everybody would be rich and would not need to work. Where would we find a gardener, a driver, a bootblack or a small farmer?*<sup>498</sup>

In the spirit of *Rerum Novarum*, *Mensagem* also defended private property and the right (Manderfelt calls this literally one’s “right“ because “man can use what is his in whatever way he wishes to”<sup>499</sup>) to amass wealth even though it often contrasted the simplicity of poverty with the difficulty of being rich. De Azevedo did in one his columns named tellingly *For the poor to read*:

*They say that Rockefeller is the richest man in the world. I have no doubt. But is Rockefeller happier than my cook that sends 40 thousand réis every month to her mother? [...] With all his riches, Rockefeller has worries and troubles that I never had as a poor Catholic journalist*

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<sup>495</sup> WATERMAN, A. M. C. 2016. “Rerum Novarum and Economic Thought“, *Faith & Economics* no. 67: pp. 29–56.

<sup>496</sup> Manoel Buarque, “Igualdade”, *MdF*, 5.10.1924.

<sup>497</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Caso para pensar”, *MdF*, 18.9.1927.

<sup>498</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Caso para pensar”, *MdF*, 18.9.1927.

<sup>499</sup> João do Norte, “Meu cantinho“, *MdF*, 15.8.1915.

*in Brazil. [...] So let's be poor and satisfied! God has special preference for the poor. Let's live calmly in our poverty, in accordance with God and our conscience.*<sup>500</sup>

In the same way, Manderfelt warned his readers that the rich “cry other tears, come through other difficulties and [...] suffer from other paths that you [i.e. the poor] do not suffer”.<sup>501</sup> Wealthy life could actually be dangerous, “producing pleasures, vices and premature death”,<sup>502</sup> while life in poverty was simple. Manderfelt went into great detail to describe its beauty, painting an image of a happy worker coming home to “hug and kiss and laugh and share and live”.<sup>503</sup>

Interestingly, even Manderfelt provided two sharply distinct images of poverty – one portrayed a poor life as inherently more happy and satisfying, not threatened by the perverting influences of luxury and materialism. This image of poverty could be understood as in line with the Franciscan tradition, where lack of material distractions brings you closer to God; but it was also related to a sense of pre-industrial nostalgia for agricultural times often articulated by Mensageiro's editor-in-chief, and numerous other writers, that lamented people moving from the countryside to the cities, only to figure out their wages were lower and their lifestyle was falling apart.<sup>504</sup>

On the other hand, Manderfelt portrayed poverty in much more negative terms, mainly as a logical (and of course natural) result of people's individual faults, as he explained in a column from 1919:

*The principal causes of poverty are the vices of one's very nature, corrupted by the sin: laziness, debauchery, drunkenness, gambling, lavishness, carelessness. Physical and moral suffering comes from the sin and they are well-deserved punishment. Just as it is impossible to get rid of sinning, it is impossible to get rid of poverty.*<sup>505</sup>

Linking poverty to some of the vices the Catholic Church routinely fought against seems much less idealistic than the previous image; but it might offer some hope for improvement of one's individual situation, if not hope for eradicating poverty overall. It also provided Mensageiro's writers with one more argument for enacting the aforementioned Catholic laws and regulations because they would eventually improve the material standards of Brazilian citizens.

### **3.4.1. Ideal outcome: Class harmony**

On a theoretical level, *Rerum Novarum* proposed a rather idealistic alternative both to the Marxist class warfare and to the capitalist free market based on survival of the fittest – that is class harmony (Waterman 2016). This was to be cemented by the authority of the Catholic

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<sup>500</sup> Soares de Azevedo, “Cariocas: Para os pobres lêrem”, *MdF*, 19.1.1919.

<sup>501</sup> João do Norte, “Meu cantinho”, *MdF*, 15.8.1915.

<sup>502</sup> João do Norte, “Meu cantinho”, *MdF*, 15.8.1915.

<sup>503</sup> João do Norte, “Meu cantinho”, *MdF*, 15.8.1915.

<sup>504</sup> See e.g. “Religião e Pobreza”, *MdF*, 17.1.1915.

<sup>505</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: A Religião não destróe a miséria”, *MdF*, 18.5.1919.

Church because as Mensageiro explained, “in all the countries where the voice [of the Church] is listened to, poverty diminishes, the rich man turns into a friend, brother and protector of the poor.”<sup>506</sup>

In this model, the wealthy and the poor, the business owners and the workers, would essentially stay in their place. The workers would stop their excessive, revolutionary demands and continue their hard work as mandated by God; Mensageiro had little sympathy for those who did not work and thus disrespected God’s law “given to us to maintain harmony in the universe and conservation of its creatures”.<sup>507</sup>

*Those who do not work break the law. And those breaking the [God’s] law must suffer.*<sup>508</sup>

The owners and the wealthy, on the other hand, would alleviate the workers by improving their conditions (especially by granting them their spiritual “rights”, such as the aforementioned Sunday rest), and give alms to the poor in the spirit of charity. Then it would be possible to “come back to the times when people were not egoists, when classes did not treat each other as enemies, in which they complied better with the principle of loving each other for the love of God”.<sup>509</sup>

As a Franciscan publication, Mensageiro rather paradoxically added the figure of St. Francis as representative of this class harmony – and in staunch opposition to the Brazilian socialists that often attempted to adopt this saint as the patron of their cause. “The fact that St. Francis put himself in a way on the side of the oppressed hardly means we should liken him to today’s revolutionaries that have all kinds of ideas imaginable but propose no sincere ideal of unselfish peace and true, eternal justice,” explained brother Mosca, one of Mensageiro’s Franciscan contributors, who usually did not comment on political matters.<sup>510</sup>

A few years earlier, Manderfelt offered an even more thorough interpretation of Franciscanism as an opposing concept to socialism – in his opinion actually the most powerful opposition since “no other order became so close to the masses as the Franciscans”:

*Ah, how necessary Franciscanism is today. This Franciscanism that lives in the current working class, that reconciles the worker with his employer [...], that preaches not only with words but with example, the universal brotherhood, to the wolf and to the sheep.*<sup>511</sup>

Of course, class harmony was only a distant goal and definitely not a reality, as Mensageiro’s authors were well aware since they repeatedly warned of the threat of revolution. Catholic rhetoric gradually shifted from putting equal blame on both sides – workers and the employers – as was still apparent in Manderfelt’s opening article from 1921,<sup>512</sup> to a more

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<sup>506</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: A Religião não destróe a miséria”, *MdF*, 18.5.1919.

<sup>507</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu Cantinho: O trabalho”, *MdF*, 18.8.1918.

<sup>508</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu Cantinho: O trabalho”, *MdF*, 18.8.1918.

<sup>509</sup> Zeca, “Pedacinhos”, *MdF*, 4.9.1921.

<sup>510</sup> Irmão Mosca, “S. Francisco Socialista?”, *MdF*, 5.9.1926.

<sup>511</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho: Franciscanismo”, *MdF*, 2.10.1921.

<sup>512</sup> Here, he described the situation of intensifying class warfare but while he mentioned that the employers do not pay fair wages, he paid even more attention to the greed of the “envious” workers that “want to work less and get paid more”. See João Bahiano, “Pela ordem social”, *MdF*, 7.8.1921.

radical criticism of employers. For instance, Soares de Azevedo's article from 1929 described the oppression of the worker class in unusually strong terms, fearing a "global revolution" if there is not first a Catholic "revolution":

*The revolution stems from the workers, these unlucky victims, anonymous masses for which there have been no gestures of care and love. Wealth is being made at the cost of their sweat and their blood in such an apparent imbalance between rights and duties, and even against the most basic principles of justice and kindness.*<sup>513</sup>

### 3.4.2. Practical solutions

Probably the most "practical" impact of the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical was the encouragement of the Catholic workers associations that were consciously designed as an alternative to the secular labour unions that were – in the Catholic view – "organized with revolutionary and atheist tendencies".<sup>514</sup> In Brazil, these associations boomed from the 1890s onwards, beginning with the Center of the Catholic Workers (*Centro dos Operários Católicos*) founded in São Paulo in 1899. Minas Gerais became especially influential due to the creation of the Catholic Work Confederation (*Confederação Católica do Trabalho*) that grouped all the existing local associations in the state under one roof (Amaral 2015).<sup>515</sup>

Unlike their secular counterparts, Catholic associations were both founded and led by the members of the clergy and used very different strategies even as they equally argued for the improvement of the workers' conditions (Lima 2013).<sup>516</sup> Striking, for instance, was deemed as an unacceptable instrument of negotiation and portrayed as socially destructive; instead, the Catholic workers associations often appealed directly to local or state-level politicians to change laws and introduce the desired legislation, from mandatory Sunday rest, to an eight hour work day for women and children. In return, Catholic leaders would ensure that workers would not revolt or demand radical changes but rather maintain the existing "social order" (Amaral 2015).

Apart from this, the Catholic workers' associations collected resources to help its members who suffered work-related accidents or required medical assistance, or to fund social and educational activities including access to religious literature and the "good press". After all, *Mensagem* itself often addressed the workers, presenting them with arguments of why to fear secular unions and join the Catholic associations instead. On one of these instances, Manderfelt responded to the self-posed question of "why am I a Catholic and not an anarchist worker" by setting up series of key principles based on loyalty to the Catholic Church:

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<sup>513</sup> Soares De Azevedo, "Cariocas: Antes que outros a façam", *MdF*, 15.9.1929.

<sup>514</sup> Firmo Antonio, "Demais e de menos", *MdF*, 21.8.1921.

<sup>515</sup> AMARAL, Deivison. 2015. "Cultura confessional e luta por direitos no mundo do trabalho: Belo Horizonte, 1909-1921". *Estudos Históricos* vol. 28, no 55: pp. 65-85.

<sup>516</sup> LIMA, Ana Cristina Pereira. 2013. "Sociabilidades operárias na Primeira República: o círculo de trabalhadores e operários católicos São José e a construção do 'divertimento lícito' em Fortaleza". *Revista Mosaico* Vol. 4, No. 6: pp. 25-41.



1. *Because I believe in God and I have a soul for whose salvation I am responsible by adhering to the moral law.*
2. *Because I believe the Catholic Church has the truth. [...]*
3. *Because I am an enemy of free love and I see family in the same way Catholicism does, monogamous and inseparable.*
4. *Because I am convinced that we can never all be truly equal.*
5. *Because I support private property. [...]*
6. *Because I do not understand society with no authority, as anarchists do, neither do I believe that an authority would own all the goods, as do the socialists.<sup>517</sup>*

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<sup>517</sup> João Bahiano, “Meu cantinho”, *MdF*, 4.9.1921.

## Final considerations

As I have attempted to demonstrate in this dissertation, more than three decades of the First Republic profoundly transformed what it meant to be a “Catholic” in Brazil. The formal separation between the Church and State ended a schizophrenic period of dual loyalties to the imperial throne on one side and the Chair of St. Peter on the other; two powers that equally claimed their spiritual supremacy and were supposed to act in mutual accord but were instead increasingly in conflict, which openly exploded during the “Religious Question” in 1870.

An entirely new framework set up by the regime change and enshrined in the 1891 constitution presented the Catholic Church both with opportunities and with painful obstacles that included the opening up of religious competition and loss of many privileges that the Church believed rightfully belonged to it. Even though the response to this situation from the Church hierarchy, inspired from abroad, advised by the papacy and communicated through the loyal “good press”, proudly claimed it was simply asking for “restoration” and a return to (imagined) traditions, there was in fact never any question of going back to the times of the tight state control known as *padroado*.

Instead, the reformed and Romanized Catholic Church framed its understanding of “Catholicism” in opposition to the new regime while simultaneously using many advantages that the proclamation of the republic brought along, from the very institutional independence that allowed the Catholic Church to internally reform itself, to liberal freedoms such as the freedom of the press and the freedom of association that were used to assemble a formidable media presence and achieve mass mobilization in the form of innumerable lay associations.

A “New Catholic” in an “Old Republic” perceived himself in a state of constant confrontation, surrounded by powerful enemies that strived to destroy him and root out God from the Brazilian nation with no protection from the State, which only helped anti-Catholic forces with their proclaimed religious “neutrality”. It was his sacred duty as a Catholic and as a faithful Brazilian to call out these perceived injustices, to attempt to spread the word to those of his compatriots that remained indifferent to religious matters, and to formulate an alternative vision of what a state and society based on Catholic principles would look like.

There is no doubt that these perceptions and the complex, quite coherent worldview that I attempted to present in my dissertation are extremely limited; limited by the source material that only speaks in the voice of the Brazilian Catholic hierarchy and a small group of Catholic intellectuals, and also limited by the selected time frame. As I already suggested on several occasions, the 1930 coup and subsequent development significantly changed the dynamics between the Catholic Church and the increasingly authoritarian state in Brazil. The Catholic hierarchy and especially its head, cardinal Sebastião Leme, entered into a close relationship with president Vargas, mediating a peaceful transition of power and, in turn at least, temporarily achieving some of the long-standing demands, from the return of religious

education in public schools, to the constitutional recognition of the inseparability of marriage and the special role of family in the 1934 Constitution.

Development abroad, and most importantly in Europe, was no less significant, with the simultaneous rise of Nazi Germany and the increasing fear of global revolution instigated by Stalin's Soviet Union, that forced the papacy to clarify its position towards totalitarian regimes, first in attempted concordats and then in critical encyclicals such as *Non abbiamo bisogno* (1931) concerning the Italian Fascism, *Mitt brennender Sorge* (1937) concerning Nazi Germany, or *Divini Redemptoris* (1937) on Bolshevism.

This situation presented considerable challenges both to the leaders of the Brazilian Catholic Church and to the various representatives of the "good press" that were forced to (re)formulate their positions in the context of friendlier but also more controlling (and even more censoring) government, which relied on using the Catholic apparatus as one of its important sources of legitimacy. Many enemies remained the same: anti-Protestant or anti-Spiritist campaigns, for instance, continued even more vigorously during the 1930s and onwards. But the domestic and global political and social transformations posed countless burning questions that needed to be addressed, for instance how to deal with an increasingly influential Integralist movement.

The Brazilian Integralist Action (AIB), led by the journalist Plínio Salgado, directly appealed for Catholic support (including electoral support, through the centralized Catholic Electoral League<sup>518</sup>) and claimed moral values that in many ways reflected those of First Republican Catholicism, as apparent from its motto "God, Fatherland and Family" (*Deus, pátria e família*). Furthermore, integralists fought vigorously against many of the Catholic's enemies, from the liberals to all the Marxist ideologies.

And yet, integralists bore many characteristics of the totalitarian movements criticized by the papacy, including the cult of the leader and traces of pagan symbolism. Salgado and other prominent integralists did not even deny their admiration and personal links to Mussolini's Fascism that became much more controversial for Brazilian Catholics than in its beginnings described here. The Catholic reaction(s) to the Vargas era and more specifically the changing, almost schizophrenic role of the "good press" would therefore be worth further examination, in a similar way that this dissertation approached the First Republic, even though it would face different challenges.

Furthermore, as stated in the "Introduction" and apparent from the thesis itself, I also deliberately omitted alternative Catholic identities to the dominant "New Catholicism", most importantly the progressive leaning Catholics that gained such important traction and both continental and international attention from the 1950s onwards, culminating in the formation of the Episcopal Conference of Latin America (*Conselho Episcopal Latino-Americano*; CELAM) and the liberation theology.

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<sup>518</sup> *Liga Eleitoral Católica* (LEC).

While reform-minded<sup>519</sup> Catholics received some scholarly attention in the period preceding the 1889 coup d'état, for example concerning the writings of senator José Thomáz Nabuco de Araújo (1813-1878)<sup>520</sup> and even more importantly father Júlio Maria (1850-1916)<sup>521</sup> who remained active in the initial years of the First Republic, I am not aware of any particular study that would address such tendencies in greater detail, however minor they might have been in comparison with the official Church, as I am equally not aware of any significant newspaper or magazine of a similar orientation during this period.

Small groups that actually broke ranks with the Catholic Church in order to establish independent national churches, such as the Brazilian Catholic Apostolical Church (*Igreja Católica Apostólica Brasileira*) founded in 1913 by Manoel Carlos do Amorim Correia, or the local branch of the Old Catholic Church brought to Brazil by the Polish and German immigrants in the early 1930s, remain understudied and detached from the religious context in general.

Finally, I believe this dissertation also presents a possible starting point for a more ambitious comparative study into the role of the evangelical (and especially in Mariano's terminology "Neo-Pentecostal"<sup>522</sup>) churches in contemporary Brazilian politics and society. While every historical parallel is, by definition, faulty, the response of the Neo-Pentecostal churches to the secular (not classically liberal but in this case neo-liberal) modernity after re-democratization in 1985 bears much resemblance to the Catholic revival during the First Republic; mainly in the formation of a distinct reactionary ideology based on invented traditions, the notion of a Christian nation based on biblical law, or the adaptation of cutting edge technological means (initially radio and television, now increasingly social media) to spread and foment this identity.

Interesting parallels could be also drawn with the invoking of numerous enemies including religious ones (mainly from the Afro-Brazilian heritage but also the Spiritists), that are framed as part of an ongoing spiritual war, as well as moral ones; divorce and civil marriage have been substituted by staunch opposition to equal marriage or abortion while conflict between secular and religious education remains present in the discussions over teaching evolution and sex education in public schools. In my view, studying the perceptions, attitudes and proposed solutions of the First Republican Catholicism might provide a unique basis in order to research the aforementioned issues related to the contemporary Brazilian religious landscape.

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<sup>519</sup> Meaning "reform" in terms of moving the Catholic Church more in sync with the so-called "modernity".

<sup>520</sup> See MOMESSO, Beatriz Piva. 2015. "A religião no Império compreendida a partir de manuscritos pessoais". *Revista Maracanan* n. 12, pp. 61-76.

<sup>521</sup> Father Maria was a passionate supporter of *Rerum Novarum* and a more socially oriented Catholic Church, a Republican and even, for a short time, a member of a Masonic lodge. See e.g. BORGES, Dain. 2016. "Catholic Vanguard in Brazil", in: Stephen J. C. Andes, Julia G. Young (ed.); *Local Church, Global Church: Catholic Activism in Latin America from Rerum Novarum to Vatican II*. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, pp. 21-53.

<sup>522</sup> i.e. the third wave of Pentecostal churches in Brazil. See e.g. MARIANO, Ricardo. 2014. *Neopentecostais: sociologia do novo pentecostalismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Edições Loyola.

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## Annex



**A Pio X**

Timoneiro seguro, em negra tempestade,  
Que se ufana da cruz o sceptro espedaçar,  
Ao furor da revolta oppondo a majestade  
Dos ensinos da fé, certa a encaminhar;  
Destemido condor, nos cimos da verdade,  
A palavra immortal deixando retumbar,  
Combatendo, sem tregua, os odios da maldade,  
Eil-o prompto, em Jesus, a tudo restaurar.

Se a descrença feroz dominando aereamente,  
Para a terra dirige apprehensões e trabalho  
Recusando do amor o bemdito agasalho,

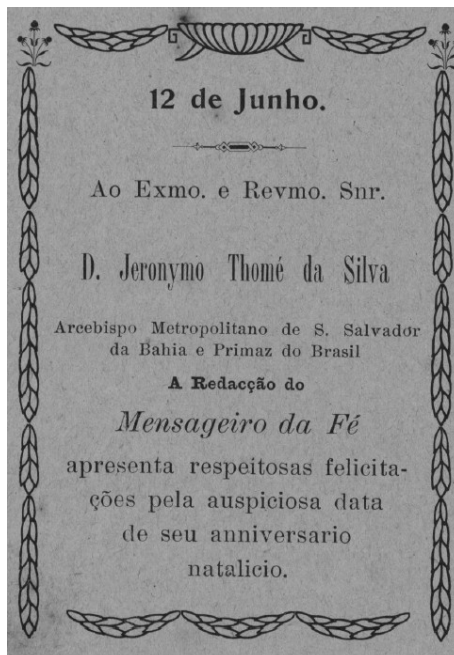
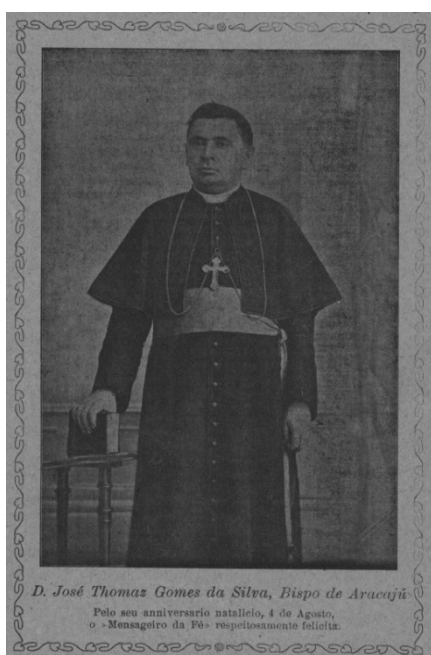
Mostra Pio o recurso: a Communhão frequente,  
Para em fogo tornar o coração gelado  
D' este seculo que em luz pretende estar banhado.

3—08

*Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves*

Images 1, 2:<sup>524</sup> - Mensageiro da Fé was published “with ecclesiastical approval”, that is officially sanctioned by the Catholic Church – and it showed absolute loyalty to its head, the “Holy Father”. The magazine was often illustrated by images of the popes presented as calm and fatherly figures and the reverence was shown even in poems. Here is one celebrating pope Pius X (r. 1903-1914).

<sup>524</sup> MdF, 3.8.1913; MdF, 3.8.1913; MdF, 1.3.1908.



Images 3, 4, 5<sup>525</sup> – Hierarchy of the Brazilian Catholic Church (especially from the Northeast) had a very important presence on the pages of Mensageiro as the magazine reported about the bishops' activities, printed their pastoral letters and other texts and even congratulated them when they celebrated birthdays.

<sup>525</sup> MdF, 4.7.1915; MdF, 2.8.1914; MdF, 15.6.1913.



Image 6<sup>526</sup> – The entire frontpage of this issue of Mensageiro is covered with a pastoral letter from the bishops of São Salvador archdiocese.

<sup>526</sup> MdF, 15.7.1908.

missão providencial no mundo, ao lado da Igreja e na Igreja: a de evangelizar, a exemplo e com zelo igual aos dos primeiros discípulos, os quais ouviram dos próprios lábios do santo fundador: «*Sus, meus filios, espalhaveis pelo mundo inteiro e annunciate a todos a paz*».

Acolhamos estas palavras do grande Patriarcha de Assis! Aceitemos o amoroso convite do Santo Padre Bento XV, e sigamos ao apello do Ministro Geral de toda a Ordem Seraphica, trabalhando, enquanto nos for possível, com todo o zelo e entusiasmo de nossa alma, pela diffusão, cada vez mais intensa, cada vez mais consoladora, da Ordem Terceira de S. Francisco tambem aqui no nosso caro Brasil, e promptamente sentiremos os saltares effeitos desta incomparavel Instituição no seio da familia e da sociedade, vindo voltar ao mundo, tão flagellado pelas continuas guerras e revoluções, a ordem, o amor, a concordia e a paz.

*Vti Franciscus, tibi paz!*

**João Bahiano.**

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**Caricocas**

**Mal remediavel**

**C**á lhea vou dizendo, aqui muito á puridade, que o frio dos ultimos dias — e tem cahido geado em S. Paulo e Minas! — prende aos *clubs* e mesmo ás casas de familia muito respeitavel cavalheiro que, com bom tempo, talvez se dêse ao prazer de trocar pernas pelas avenidas. Em casa e nos *clubs*, é a tentação do jogo. Vim agora a saber que até em casas de respeitaveis famílias cariocas se joga desenfreadamente a dinheiro.

Não sou positivamente partidario da opinião de que «supprimir o jogo seja supprimir o homem». Ha vicios mais arraigados, e mais prejudiciaes á alma e ao corpo, que, suprimidos violentamente que sejam, não matam ninguém, não suprimem pessoa alguma. Tambem não sou partidario de regulamentação do monte da roleta e do *baccarat*. Nesse particular, se os senhores me dão licença, sou simplesmente radical, ultramontano, intolerante. Os vicios não se regulamentam. Regulamental-os é reconhecê-los a *rehabilitar*.

Ora o jogo no Brasil tem merecido de alguns dos senhores Bispos campanhas de alto lá com

acrococadas pelas da doença. A protecção official ao jogo — deixem-me dizer a verdade toda — é o que se pode conceber de mais desastrado. A protecção official, mesmo lucra... Os *croppers*, os serventuarios, os frequentadores, os uaradores, todo esse mundo de jogadores, que aos milhares arrastam para a perdição tantas familias, pobres ou ricos, mas sempre honestas, esses homens não podem absolutamente ficar ao abrigo da lei. E se pensarmos que as crianças, as mocinhas e os estudantes tambem são admitidos nos salões de casino e estimulados á acção do panno verde, facilmente podemos concluir quanto não é nociva essa liberdade á geração que se está formando. Já não venho com pieguicas. Não me refiro aos suicidios, aos lares desolados, a crianças com fome, ás falencias fraudulentas, aos roubos premeditados. Refiro-me ao caso moral em si. Atenho-me á moralidade da questão.

Disse-me o outro dia o proprietario de um hotel de Caxambú, e ao mesmo tempo proprietario de uma das mais concorridas e luxuosas casas de jogo daquella cidade, que a psychologia do jogo é a coisa mais interessante deste mundo. Ha maridos que ficam doentes, mas doentes mesmo de verdade, se por qualquer motivo os impedem as mulheres de que frequentem o casino diariamente. Ficam doentes. Acha elle ainda que o jogo é essencial á vida, quando eu, e muitos como eu, afinal de contas, tenho vivido com a graça de Deus, sem jamais ter jogado um nickel no Macaco ou na B. rboleta. Não comprehendo francamente, que o homem, a obra prima da criação, o homem-intelligencia, o homem-vontade, o homem-força, se deixe arrastar tão ignobilmente para uma larga mesa envernizada, por onde correm fichas de todas as côres. Nesse caso, força é convir, o homem é barro, é terra, é cinza, porque o proprio animal, quando prevê o perigo, foge delle a leguas. O jogo atrophia. Conheço um jogador, tuberculoso em ultimo gráu, a quem os medicos aconselham dois mezas na roça.

— Não é possível. Sei que estou sem pulmões e que viverei pouco. Mas tenho a absoluta certeza de que morreria na mesma hora em que me embarcassem num trem, com destino ao campo.

Isto é simplesmente horrivel. Pelos testemunhos que posso dar, pelos factos de que tenho conhecimento, é extremamente facil concluir que o jogador profissional é um novo aspecto de loucura. Não se comprehende isto, mormente numa quadra em que se congregam todos os esforços para a regeneração da humanidade, não só sob o ponto de vista das grandes enfermidades do corpo, como tambem das grandes aberrações dos bons costumes. Dir-se-á que ha molestias incuraveis, e que o jogo é uma dellas. Nego. O alcoolismo parecia uma

**Aos amigos**

**DO MENSAGEIRO DA FÉ**

**U**m appello á generosidade dos amigos da *Bôa Imprensa!*  
Um appello aos bondosos e illustres assignantes do *Mensageiro da Fé*.

Approximando-se a epoca em que costumam ser renovadas as assignaturas da nossa Folha, tomamos a liberdade de lembrar aos estimados assignantes este sagrado dever, pedindo, ao mesmo tempo, que aquellos que nos honraram, no anno passado, com LISTAS de NOVOS ASSIGNANTES, se esforcem, para que todos continuem com a assignatura tambem no anno de 1922.

Como em 1920, dirigimos tambem neste anno um vibrante appello a todos os nossos generosos assignantes, rogando-lhes a fineza de **cada um nos angariar, pelo menos, uma nova assignatura para o anno de 1922.**

As **renovações** das assignaturas ANTIGAS e os nomes das **novas**, esperamos então até o fim de Novembro, sendo possivel.

Quem nos enviar, pelo menos, **10 novas assignaturas pagas**, receberá, como premio, um Almanak para o anno de 1923.

E quem angariar, até o dia **31 de Dezembro**, o maior numero de **novos** assignantes, receberá, como justo premio de seu esforço, um VALIOSO MIMO.

Mãos á obra! Por amor de Deus! Pela Igreja e pela Patria!

Bahia, Setembro de 1921.

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**Exercícios da HORA SANTA**

**Preço . . . . . 200 rs.**

Image 7<sup>527</sup> – Mensageiro often appealed to its readers to promote the magazine, offering various kinds of incentives. In this issue, for instance, it offered a copy of its yearbook to those who attract ten new subscribers. And the person who arranged the highest amount of subscribers was promised an (unspecified) “VALUABLE GIFT”. “Put hands to work! For the love of God! For the Church and the Fatherland”!

<sup>527</sup> MdF, 4.9.1921.



Image 8<sup>528</sup> – Mensageiro regularly published lists of deceased subscribers. These lists allow us to verify proclaimed reach of the magazine beyond the state of Bahia. In this list, for instance, deceased subscribers come from six different Brazilian states, from the Northeast (*Nordeste*) to the Southeastern (*Sudeste*) region.



Image 9<sup>529</sup> – This post is formally addressed to the Brazilian post office, complaining that Mensageiro is delivered late to its subscribers and bemoaning the “stubbornness and bad mood” of the postmen.

<sup>528</sup> MdF, 20.4.1924.

<sup>529</sup> MdF, 6.3.1921.



## Diario Catholico

Para o futuro *Diario Catholico* recebemos e agradecemos:

Padre Joaquim Martins Dourado . . . . .	20\$000
Sr. Francisco Ferreira Mello . . . . .	10\$000
Sr. Manoel Hypolito da Cunha . . . . .	5\$000
D. Angelica Vieira Caldas . . . . .	2\$000
Anonyma . . . . .	2\$000
Sr. Manoel Muniz . . . . .	2\$000
Sr. Odorico Martins . . . . .	2\$000
Sr. Thomaz Felix . . . . .	2\$000
D. Anna Almeida . . . . .	1\$000
D. Anna Souza . . . . .	1\$000
D. Antonia Coelho . . . . .	1\$000
D. Benedicta Santos . . . . .	1\$000
Quantia já publicada . . . . .	1.393\$100
<b>Total :</b>	<b>1.442\$100</b>

**Caro leitor, já renovaste a tua assinatura do *Mensageiro da Fé*?**

Image 10<sup>530</sup> – Mensageiro tirelessly raised money for their long-desired project of a Catholic daily newspaper. It never materialized and any references to the planned newspaper quickly vanished from the pages of Mensageiro after the fiasco.

ANNO XIX      PERIODO NO 1.º E NO 2.º DOMINGO DE CADA MÊS      BAHIA, 2 de Outubro de 1921      Assinatura por anno: 2\$000      NUM. 19

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\* S. FRANCISCO D'ASSIS \*

ESTES centenários separam-nos do século treze; porém o homem que ressurte em si o movimento religioso social daquela época, conserva, todavia, como no dia da apothose, os traços da physionomia incomparavel através dos seculos, e o nome do Seraphim do Assis está preconizado como uma bandeira de lucta efficaç e de orientação renovadora no meio das revoluções beneficas, das quaes a humanidade espera a regeneração.

Todos os homens de pensamento e de acção admiraram-no e continuam a admirá-lo como a uma providencia salvadora no crepusculo de uma civilisação, como uma caridade vivente, sustentando, com a força portentosa do genio, o derrubar de uma época que logrou renovar, instaurando-a pela senda do verdadeiro progresso.

Instrumento da Providencia, para uma nova reintegração da humanidade no bem, cuja noção exacta perigava no naufragio de todos os valores moraes, S. Francisco presagiava, nas ambições de gloria, que um destino superior lhe era reservado. Havia energias indomaveis na vontade do gigante, fluctuavam-lhe no espirito aspirações fe-



**S. Francisco d'Assis**  
(Quadro do Franciscano Frei Damasceno Hahuel)

de outr'ora, voltaram para rejuvenecer-se no crysol de um ideal ratificado, que seria o amanhecer de uma civilisação sazoadada pelos desenganos da que se afundava sob o peso das proprias des-venturas.

Ha épocas em que, na ordem moral, as tendencias fazem as leis, e estas são então a preconisação de uma moral ego-

no rugir soberbo do mar. — O determinismo historico julga ser o factor economico o que faz prosperar ou decahir as civilisações. Porém, si bem que seja este um modo de ver explicavel dentro do conceito materialista do desenvolvimento historico da humanidade, é antilógico, porque confunde o phenomeno com a causa.

A nota de dôr produzida pelo choque de classes, ou seja da lucta pela existencia, sente-se desde de logo que varia em intensidade, conforme os grãos de approvação que os individuos e as collectividades prestam ás leis da moral de Jesus Christo.

E é porque o mundo não seguiu nunca aos preceitos desta moral, que esta nota de dôr jamais desaparece totalmente. Por isso, para attonal-a, não basta começar por suavisar a dureza da vida, proporcionando o bem estar material com exclusão do factor moral, da transfiguração das consciencias.

Todo o movimento de caracter social que procura mitigar a dôr da lucta pela existencia, deve inspirar-se no Christianismo, para que seja verdadeiro e efficaç. E todo o movimento christico que não se inicia por uma renovação do espirito, está, fatalmente, destinado a fracassar, por ser, exclusivamente, humana.

S. Francisco, conhecedor profundo das necessidades da época, começou a remedial-as, começando, sem destruir o que existia, por uma transformação da qual devia resultar uma civilisação nova, e na qual o vagalhão da dôr, procedente da lucta pela existencia, retrocede-

Image 11<sup>531</sup> – Mensageiro da Fé was published by the Franciscan order, as it never failed to remind its readers. Here is a long article concerning St. Francis' legacy in contemporary Brazilian society.<sup>532</sup>

<sup>530</sup> MdF, 2.12.1917.



Image 12 – Photograph of St. Anthony’s convent, one of the oldest Franciscan monasteries in Brazil built between 1608 and 1620.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> *MdF*, 2.10.1921.

<sup>532</sup> *MdF*, 2.10.1921.

<sup>533</sup> *MdF*, 4.9.1921.

**Para a Catechese dos Indios**  
 Foram-nos enviados, para serem entregues á  
 Pia União das Missões Franciscanas, os seguin-  
 tes donativos:

P Antonio Ribeiro Folha . . . . .	1\$000
D. Cordovil Neves . . . . .	3\$500
Sr Severino De Biaggi . . . . .	2\$000
Convento dos Passos—S. Leopoldo . . . . .	17\$000
D Isabel Oliveira Salles . . . . .	2\$000
Sr. Bonnegros E. Trevião . . . . .	11\$000

Lista de Antonio Pedralino de Alencar—  
 Assara-Ceará—Theresa Pereira e Silva 2\$500,  
 José Alexandre da Silva 1\$000, Maria Gon-  
 galves [de Jesus 1\$000, Raymundo Pereira  
 da Silva 1\$000, Argentina Maria da Concei-  
 ção \$500, Joaquim Patrio da Silva \$800, Ma-  
 noel Pereira da Silva \$400, Roque Pereira  
 da Silva \$300, Antonia Pereira de Maria  
 \$200, Antonia de Maria e Silva \$500, Fran-  
 cisco José e Silva \$500, Manoel Pass Odrão  
 \$400, Antonio Pereira da Silva \$400, Paulo  
 Patrio de Alencar \$400, Belchior Pereira da  
 Silva \$400, José da Silva Pereira \$200, Pe-  
 dro Pereira da Silva \$200, José Pereira Pri-  
 mo \$200, José Pereira da Silva \$200, Joao  
 de Souza \$200, Antonio da  
 Silva Pereira \$200, Fortunato Paes Odrão  
 \$100, Raymundo Pereira Primo \$100. Total  
 12\$300.

Agradecidos.

**Para a Missão Franciscana**  
 Entre os indios Mundurucús  
 N. N. . . . . 7\$000  
 Agradecidos.

**Cuidado com a propaganda protestante!**

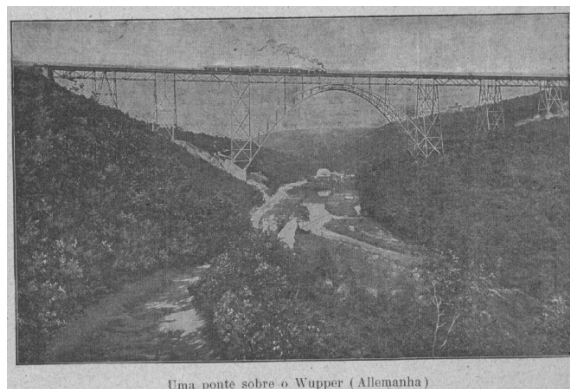
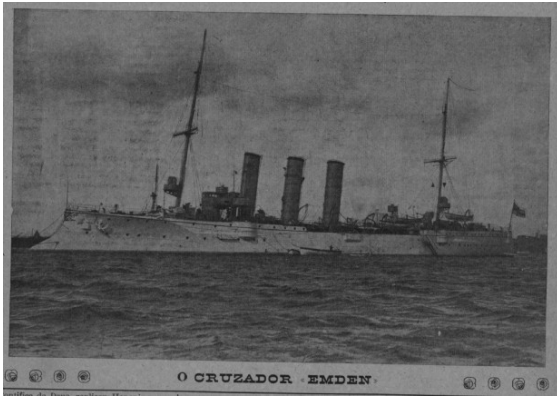
Images 13, 14<sup>534</sup> – Of course, Brazilian Franciscans did not live merely in the past – they also participated very actively in missionary activities among the indigenous population. And Mensageiro regularly raised money for this purpose while warning its readers (on the right image): “Beware of Protestant propaganda!” Similar messages warning readers of Protestantism, Spiritism and other “enemies” appeared routinely on the pages of Mensageiro, alongside pleas for support of the “good press”.



Image 15<sup>535</sup> – Franciscans that resuscitated the order in Brazil and that founded Mensageiro da Fé (and other influential magazines, such as *Vozes de Petrópolis*) came predominantly from Germany. The pages of Mensageiro are therefore not only full of usually positive information about Germany (and Austria-Hungary), but also of images of the old homeland. In the picture above is the Franciscan convent in Fulda.

<sup>534</sup> *MdF*, 6.2.1927; *MdF*, 7.8.1921.

<sup>535</sup> *MdF*, 21.10.1917



Images 16, 17, 18, 19<sup>536</sup> – Mensageiro’s frequent images from Germany showed not only religious buildings but often also celebrated Germany’s technological and military advancements.

**Echos ao «Grito angustioso»**

Registramos hoje, com a expressão do nosso profundo agradecimento e os votos a Deus pela felicidade dos generosos offerentes, mais os seguintes donativos para as pobres criancinhas d’Alemanha :

Por intermédio do convento Franciscano de Perqueira . . . . .	1708000
Sr. Possidlo Martins . . . . .	18000
Sr. Bartholomeu Oliveira . . . . .	18000
Sr. Otaçillo Santos . . . . .	18000
D. Petronilla Pedreira . . . . .	18000
Sr. Mariano Roberto . . . . .	18000
Sr. Emilio Lustosa . . . . .	18400
Sr. Galdino Pereira . . . . .	18000
Sr. Manoel Duarte . . . . .	28000
Sr. Amancio Coelho . . . . .	8000
Sr. Francisco Moura . . . . .	8000
Sr. José Rodrigues de Araujo . . . . .	18000
Sr. Amansio Costa . . . . .	8000
Sr. Joaquim Barroso . . . . .	18000
Sr. Francisco Simão . . . . .	18000
Sr. Yacoua Pedreira . . . . .	18000
Sr. José Campos . . . . .	18000
Sr. Antonio Sampaio . . . . .	18000
Sr. Manoel Marins de Souza . . . . .	18000
Sr. Lucas Evangelista de Souza . . . . .	18000
Sr. Marcelino Assunes de Souza . . . . .	18000
Sr. João O Madureira . . . . .	28500
D. Elias Beltrão . . . . .	80000
Sr. Sebastião Thomé de Medeiros . . . . .	54000
Sr. Francisco Ladislao de Souza . . . . .	58000
D. Anna Rosa . . . . .	18000
D. Salomé Joaquina . . . . .	18000
Sr. Nestor Januario Souza . . . . .	28000
Sr. Luiz Ladislao Souza . . . . .	18000
D. Maria Magdalena . . . . .	8500
D. Maria Bôni . . . . .	8300
Uma devota . . . . .	8300
Sr. Benedicto Maria Freia . . . . .	18000
Sr. Samuel Maria Fimonta . . . . .	58000
Sr. Antonio Pereira Siqueira . . . . .	18000
Sr. Simão Antunes de Souza . . . . .	18000
Sr. Jeronymo G. Ferreira . . . . .	18000
D. Celestina Brandão Santos . . . . .	38000
Sr. Dioclecio Matos . . . . .	48000
Sr. Henrique de Castro . . . . .	208000
Sr. Paulino de Castro . . . . .	28000
Sr. José Severo de Castro . . . . .	58000
Sr. José Martinho de Castro . . . . .	18000
Sr. Luiz Antonio Domingues . . . . .	18000
Sr. Manoel Lucio de Assis Moraes . . . . .	18000
Sr. Raymundo Pedro . . . . .	18000
D.ivo e Zezinho . . . . .	18000
Sr. Manoel Martins Quintão . . . . .	28000
Diversos . . . . .	18200

Image 20<sup>537</sup> – The “German connection” is obvious from another of Mensageiro’s activities after the first World War: collecting money for “poor little children from Germany”.

<sup>536</sup> MdF, 6.2.1914; MdF, 5.10.1913; MdF, 19.10.1913; MdF, 19.1.1913.

**A Nova Cruzada**  
 CASA DE MIUDEZAS e BRINQUEDOS

Especialista em artigos de Religião como sejam:  
*Medalhas, Terços, Crucifixos,  
 Santinhos, Bentinhos, Escapularios, Livros de  
 Missa em celluloidé, couro, etc. etc.*

ACEITA ENCOMENDAS PELO CORREIO

VENDAS EM ATACADO e a VAREJO

Rua dos Droguistas, 32  
 — BAHIA —

**GYMNASIO YPIRANGA**  
 Internato e Externato

Sob a direcção do DR. ISAIAS ALVES  
 DE ALMEIDA.

Educação physica, intellectual, moral e ci-  
 vica.—A educação moral se baseia na edu-  
 cação religiosa, ministrada por virtuoso Sa-  
 cerdote.

O Gymnasio Ypiranga prepara cuidadosa-  
 mente os seus alumnos para os exames offi-  
 ciales, dando-lhes tambem aulas de gymnas-  
 tica, musica, desenho, dactylographia e es-  
 cripturação mercantil.

SODRÉ, 43 — BAHIA.

**“Flores da Biblia”** de Amelia Ro-  
 drigues, encon-  
 tra-se na CASA SANTA CRUZ, á Rua  
 da Lapa 77.—Preço 4\$500.

*Cuidado com o ESPIRITISMO!*

Images 21, 22, 23<sup>538</sup> – Mensageiro was used not only to promote activities linked to the “good press” but served as advertisement space for “respectable” (i.e. Catholic) local institutions, shops and articles. Here are three different examples: shop called “The New Crusade” selling religious items (left); a private Catholic “gymnasium” that provided the necessary religious education lacking in public institutions (right); and a book authored by one of the most prominent “Catholic feminist” writers of the time, Amélia Rodrigues, who also contributed regularly to Mensageiro (down). Underneath the book by Rodrigues is a customary warning: “Beware of Spiritism!”

<sup>537</sup> MdF, 20.4.1924.

<sup>538</sup> MdF, 6.2.1927; MdF, 6.4.1924; MdF, 4.5.1924.





Bons amiguinhos

**Anjos do Bem**

Ha nesta terra, tão fecunda em pranto,  
Um grupo de Anjos de semblante ameno,  
De gesto ledo, de falar sereno,  
Trazendo flores em sidereo manto.

Ao que padece dá conforto santo,  
Extingue as magoas do viver terreno,  
Mostrando apenas, num bondoso aceno,  
Sobre o Calvario, um Deus soffrendo tanto!

Nobre phalange, cuja mór ventura  
E' conceder, nas horas de amargura,  
Carinho, amor, thesouros de bondade,

Bem dita sejas! Que o Senhor clemente  
De mais a mais, multiplicando, augmente,  
Por toda a parte, Irmãs de Caridade.

5-1- 927.

MARIA LUIZA DE SOUSA ALVES.

*NOTA—Por ter sahido errada a 4.ª estrophe da poesia do numero anterior «Para a frente», a mesma segue aqui rectificada:*

De muitas almas abandonou vezames,  
A muitos peitos enrijou na luta;  
Todos preuendo em fraternas liamês,  
Longe da furia de cruel disputa.

 MAIO

Maio é o doce mez das alegrias,  
Mez dos hymnos, das preces e das flores;  
No espaço vibram suaves harmonias  
E atapelam-se os campos de verdes.

Mez em que, no decurso de seus dias,  
Cantam-se ladainhas e louvores,  
A' bem dita Maria das Marias,  
Consoladora Mãe dos peccadores.

Quem me dera ter minha despedida,  
Da turba-multa negra desta vida,  
Nesse mez que é das graças o thesouro,

Ouvindo, na agonia derradeira,  
O' Virgem Mãe, ó santa padroeira,  
Teu nome immaculado e immorredouro!

Pilar-Alagoas. . . NILO RAMOS.

Images 27, 28, 29<sup>541</sup> – Even though Mensageiro da Fé proudly and openly called itself a political magazine, much of its contents was completely apolitical, even though mostly with a religious and educational agenda. Under the image are two examples of poetry that tended to appear in almost every issue of the magazine. One on the left is authored by another prominent “Catholic feminist” author, teacher Maria Luiza de Sousa Alves. On the right is a poem by Nilo Ramos De Araújo Pereira (1894-1935), a local poet from the neighboring state of Alagoas.

<sup>541</sup> MdF, 19.2.1927; MdF, 16.1.1927; MdF, 18.5.1924.

