

# *My Public Life*

*A Complilation of  
Autobiographic Accounts*

*by*

*Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*

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Rua Visconde de Taunay, 364 Bom Retiro

01132-000 São Paulo SP

Phone: (011) 3331-4522 / Fax: (011) 3331-5631

www.livrariapetrus.com.br

petrus@livrariapetrus.com.br

**Research, compilation and adaptation**

Enrique Loaiza

Abel de Oliveira Campos

**Revision of the Brazilian edition**

Antonio Augusto Borelli Machado

Gregorio Vivanco Lopes

**Layout and artwork**

Luis Guillermo Arroyave

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## Editor's Note

Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (1908-1995) did not write an autobiography. However, the fundamental traits of his remarkable life and work can be drawn from the vast collection of documents that the compilers of these *Autobiographical Accounts* had at their disposal. Most of these were obtained from recordings of conversations, lectures etc., that were later transcribed into digital form; statements he made at the request of his disciples and followers, excerpts from conversations, lectures, conferences, books about his epic saga, articles, manifestos, interviews, press statements, letters, etc.

This is not intended to exhaust the many aspects that characterize the good fight Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira fought in his nearly ninety years of life and seventy years of struggle for the cause of the Catholic Church and Christian civilization. Given the sheer scope of the material, the wealth of its content and different aspects to consider, such a project would not be feasible. We have only tried to highlight the elements that allow the reader to form a faithful, substantial, and clear idea of his outstanding contribution to public life in Brazil.

However, his influence was by no means limited to Brazil. It extended far beyond our borders, reaching the seven continents at different decisive moments in the twentieth century's history and even extending *post-mortem* into the twenty-first century, still pointing out an enlightened path toward a solution for our contemporary crisis.

Any reader not imbued with anti-Christian ideological prejudices will quickly discern the profoundly Catholic spirit that drove Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira to fight for the foundations of a genuine Christian order. He fought these battles with unique gallantry and pinpoint accuracy, always for a future restoration of Catholic civilization, so often announced by authoritative saints and prophets and by the Mother of God herself at Fatima.

Hence, at his express request, the epitaph inscribed on his tombstone: "*Vir catholicus, totus apostolicus, plene romanus*" (A distinguished Catholic man, entirely apostolic, fully Roman).

\*

Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, with a sense of reality that excluded all illusion, was always keenly aware that he was fighting his battles in a world that had distanced itself from God and was intent on maintaining this disastrous path, increasingly slipping into disorder and chaos. At the same time, he saw little sparks of genuine conversion beginning to appear here and there on the sluggish horizon like morning stars indicating a new day about to dawn. In his own words: "Beyond the sadness and highly likely punishments toward which we are heading, we glimpse sacral sparks of the dawning Reign of Mary" (*Catolicismo* magazine, No. 197, May 1967).

To make matters more accessible for the reader, we may say that the work of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira – although challenging to compartmentalize – focused on two

different fields that overlap each other. The first was a prophetic denunciation of the vast progressive conspiracy within the Church, which today has reached unsuspected levels; the second was the staunch and effective combat, always by legal means, against the revolutionary process which, starting in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and persisting in our days, strives to secularize completely, and consequently, to dechristianize our temporal society.

Even in this second field of action, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira repeatedly pointed out the harmful influence of Catholic leftism on civil society.

\*

In the first half of the twentieth century in the West, human society still reflected the pervasive influence of the spirit of the Gospel and the principles of natural law. The role played by Catholic leftists, both followers and advocates of most advanced forms of socialism, was precisely to replace this spirit and these principles – more or less subtly, depending on circumstances and occasions – with their differing and often entirely opposed concepts.

Against this revolutionary design, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira fearlessly raised the standard of the Counter-Revolution. Over many decades, he gathered countless adherents, especially young people, who were tired of revolutionary utopias, mediocrity and fatuous pleasures and eager to serve a higher ideal worth fighting for. His masterly essay, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, describes the core of revolutionary doctrine and action and the effective way to oppose them. The light shed by this work will provide enlightenment throughout this account of his public life.

Therefore, aiming to defend the Church and Christian civilization, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira extended the scope of his activities worldwide, helping to establish autonomous associations inspired by the same goals and ideals.

At the same time, he encouraged and supported organizations with similar goals in other countries to form a *broad front* to combat the Revolution. Such a *front* would bring together all those who oppose the destruction of any part, however small, of the sacred edifice of the Catholic Church or the equally sacred pillars of Christian civilization.

\*

The material used in this work comes from many and varied sources, making it necessary – as we have already mentioned – not only to adapt spoken language to written language but also to unify the style of the various texts for the reader's convenience. As far as possible, we also sought to present such texts as spoken or written in the first person by the subject of this biography, highlighting the autobiographical nature of the whole. This editorial license in no way diminishes or affects our fidelity to the documents that formed the basis of this compilation; on the contrary, it reflects our total commitment to the

authentic reproduction of the meaning of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira's words. That is also the reason why we have, as much as possible, transcribed this account of conversations and his narration word-for-word, with no pretensions to literary quality, but with the hope that they will make this account more easily readable. On rare occasions, we have permitted ourselves to add short phrases to provide a harmonious transition between one subject and another in the interests of readability.

From Part Ten onwards, as the facts are more recent and the autobiographical narrations made by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in his lectures become scarcer, the autobiographical tone that permeates the earlier pages of this book gives way to a somewhat more focused narrative and comments on current events, always made by him.

The vast and invaluable documentation underlying this book is meticulously indicated in the footnotes, which also contain clarifications by the compilers.

The List of Bibliographical Abbreviations below explains the significance of some acronyms repeatedly used by the same compilers.

The public documents and other texts by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira cited throughout this work may be consulted in the archives of the site [www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info](http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info).

\*

We hope this autobiographical account will allow the reader to appreciate the grandeur of this illustrious Brazilian who has done so much to honor our country. However, in stark contrast to the reputation he enjoys in cultured nations of the northern hemisphere as an intellectual, a Catholic and a man of action, his name and work are often the objects of a *conspiracy of silence* within our borders.

This book is, therefore, not only a tribute but also an attempt to do justice to a great man. It was dedicated to his memory on the twentieth anniversary of his death by the directors and volunteers of the Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira Institute, who enthusiastically continue his work.

São Paulo, September 8, 2015  
Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady  
**Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira Institute**



## List of Bibliographical Abbreviations

**Lunch or Dinner** (conversations recorded during meals)

**AC** (American Commission: meeting with visiting friends from the American TFP)

**Sup** (talk with TFP friends and supporters)

**Tea** (conversations with disciples while taking the afternoon tea)

**MC** (Medical Commission, meeting with TFP physicians and others)

**SNC** (Saturday Night Conversation, informal talk with disciples at Dr. Plinio's home on Saturday nights)

**Little Dispatch** (dispatches with his secretary on various matters)

**EANS** (meetings at a farm seat in the town of Amparo (SP), called Hermitage of Amparo of Our Lady)

**ENSDP** (meetings at a seat on Atibaia Street in the Perdizes neighborhood of Sao Paulo, called Hermitage of Our Lady of Divine Providence)

**EPS** (Praesto Sum Hermitage: meetings at a TFP seat in the Santana neighborhood)

**ESB** (São Bento Hermitage: meetings at a TFP seat that had belonged to the Benedictine Order, on Dom Domingos de Silos Street in São Paulo)

**ESM** (Saint Michael Hermitage: meetings with members of TFP farm seat in the city of Belo Horizonte)

**Rec** (words dictated on a recorder by Dr. Plinio, addressed to some person or group)

**MNF** (conversations with a group of persons on socio-philosophical topics)

**Quick word** (rapid conversations of 10 to 15 minutes with different groups)

**Lecture** (if not specified, it refers to regular lectures to members and volunteers)

**Ride** (dispatches recorded during car trips)

**Reports** (brief reports by persons who were with Dr. Plinio for a time)

**RR** (Clippings' Meeting: a meeting with disciples commenting on news clippings from papers and magazines).

**SD** (Saint of the Day: meeting with young people commenting on the Saint of the Day)

**Sefac** (Specialized Week of Anticommunist Formation: usually the closing lecture of study seminars for new volunteers)

**SRM** (meetings at the Seat of the Reign of Mary, the name given to the movement's central headquarters from the early 1960s)

## Introduction

# How I Formed My Mentality

### A) Temperament and Formation of Ideas: Home Environment

#### 1. A Fully Formed Ultramontane Mentality at the Age of Twenty

I can say that at the time when I joined the Marian Congregation of St. Cecilia and began to participate in the Catholic movement, I was already a full-fledged ultramontane<sup>1</sup> and that the roots of almost all the ideas I hold today were already present in them.<sup>2</sup> At age twenty, I had already seen, counted, measured and weighed everything in the contemporary world. Subsequent events have since clarified many things, but these events provided no more than clarification; they did not change my ideas.<sup>3</sup>

What were my ideas?

— I was an earnest believer in radical Catholicism, convinced that half-hearted Catholicism would provide no solution whatsoever.

— I was convinced that one could only be Catholic if absolutely faithful to the Papacy and that absolute fidelity to the Papacy is the substance of Catholicism.

— Another profound conviction was that the Church really is the column on which the world – the temporal order, civil order, and moral order – rests and that this is why only the Church, its commandments and teachings could provide an effective solution to the global crisis.

— I believed that all forms of political and social organization based on Protestantism and all that followed it, up to and including communism, were tantamount to the destruction of civilization.

— I was convinced that we had already progressed very far along this path of destruction and that a major crisis that would signal modern civilization's end was imminent.

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<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, *ultramontane* was the term used to describe the French Catholics who defended papal primacy and militantly opposed Catholic liberalism. Since Rome was beyond the Alps, it was said that they (or their hearts) were *ultra* (beyond) montes (the hills). The term was later used also in other nations, always as a reference to anti-liberal Catholics.

<sup>2</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I), 8/6/54.

<sup>3</sup> RR 4/14/74.

— Above all, I was convinced of the importance of devotion to Our Lady, although I did not yet know the *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* by Saint Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, which gave me the ultimate insight into the devotion to Our Lady. I knew devotion to Our Lady was essential to Catholic doctrine regarding questions of piety and my spiritual life.

— Finally (this was the essential characteristic of the worldview which— thank God— I had acquired very early in life), I had a vivacious sense of the difference between good and evil and an awareness of the constant fight between good and evil in history. My knowledge of the influence of the organized forces of evil was still very sketchy then; I only had a notion of their role in this fight.

Where did these ideas come from? How do you explain that a Brazilian, born in 1908 in a city like São Paulo, who had grown up entirely within the Brazilian environment, should already have acquired them at the age of twenty?

I think that for someone who is not from Brazil, and especially for a European, these questions could throw an interesting light on how ideas form in the head of a Brazilian. They might also help to understand what can be expected from a country like Brazil regarding its *ultramontane* potential.

## 2 Not Books, but the Observation of Reality

My ideas were not so much the result of reading the doctrine in a book and then applying what I had read to the facts, but instead of an instinctive attitude toward facts and an intuitive understanding of the doctrine contained in them.

My knowledge was, therefore, less a result of deduction than of a primary intuition that already contained all that I would go on to clarify later.

I did not owe the formation of my ideas to deduction but to an intuitive process that took in the essentials at first glance, with the details and connections appearing later, like a tree growing from a seed. But that first look would already have revealed all the essentials. That is how the Brazilian mind works.<sup>4</sup>

I do not intend to give the impression that I used to despise books. However, I consider it a fundamental mistake to regard culture as a mere result of the number of books a person has read. Reading always enriches the mind, not so much by the quantity or quality of the books read, but also, of course, depending on the quality of the reader and the way each book is absorbed.

In my opinion, a person who has read widely, who is very educated — that is to say, knowledgeable about many facts or ideas of scientific, historical or artistic importance — may yet be far less cultured than another who has taken in much less information.

Education will only properly enhance the mind if knowledge acquisition goes hand in hand with profound assimilation resulting from accurate reflection.

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<sup>4</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

So, someone who reads comparatively little but assimilates much will be more cultured than someone who has read a lot but has assimilated little.

Reflection is the first means of this positive action. A cultured man must be a thinker even more than a living repository of facts and dates, names and texts. For the thinker, the leading book to study will be the reality surrounding him, the author most frequently consulted will be his own mind, and all the other authors and books will be valuable but subsidiary elements.

Mere reflection, however, will not suffice. Man is not a pure spirit. As a result of an affinity that is not merely conventional, there is a link between the higher realities we consider with our intellect and the colors, sounds, shapes, and scents we take in through our senses. The cultural effort is only complete when man permits the values his intellect has formulated to penetrate his whole being.<sup>5</sup>

### **3. A Calm and Affectionate Nature**

My natural disposition was sensitive and affectionate; I was prone to like people.<sup>6</sup> In my childish candor, I imagined that everyone was very good.<sup>7</sup> However, I realized pretty early on that this was an illusion.<sup>8</sup>

I do not intend to confess, much less to apologize – but perhaps I shall commit an indiscretion. Given the above, I should provide a background for this narrative by describing my temperament. Please note that I will speak not of ideas but temperament – a fundamental Brazilian characteristic.

My native temperament was naturally very calm and quiet, almost to the point of passivity. It was also balanced to a pretty surprising extent but very firm in one respect: I throw all my weight behind what suits me.

On the other hand, it is a temperament that is very prone to laziness, loathe to fight and quarrel or face disharmony. But for a man conceived in original sin, and therefore, with all the reservations that this entails, my temperament was fundamentally calm and balanced.

Finally, my mind was focused on logic from an early age, which I greatly enjoyed.

### **4. My Family Ambience: Ceremonious, Calm, Balanced and Harmonious; the Role of Dona Lucilia**

This temperament and mentality found ideal conditions for development in the surroundings in which I grew up.

When I entered the age of reason, I had my first temperamental and emotional contact with members of my mother's family. My father's family was from the state of

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<sup>5</sup> Lecture at the Jesuit Seminary of São Leopoldo (RS) 11/13/54 (*Catolicismo*, No. 51, March 1955).

<sup>6</sup> SD 5/12/84.

<sup>7</sup> MNF 11/17/94.

<sup>8</sup> SD 5/12/84.



Pernambuco, and I hardly knew them.<sup>9</sup>

From both sides of my family, the maternal and the paternal, I inherited a Catholic spirit that was somewhat more fervent and more serious than was common, along with a monarchist-liberal — but relatively more liberal!—position with nothing ultramontane about it.<sup>10</sup>

My mentality developed and was shaped in that environment.<sup>11</sup>

I lived in a vast house belonging to my grandmother, Dona Gabriela Ribeiro dos Santos. She was a widow and shared the house with two married couples: my parents with two children (Rosenda, known familiarly as Rosée, and myself) and an aunt of mine with her husband and daughter (Nestor Barbosa Ferraz and Brazilina Ilka Ribeiro Barbosa Ferraz, known as Zili, the brother-in-law and sister of Dona Lucilia, and their daughter, Ilka). Each family occupied completely different apartments in the vast mansion, which many out-of-town relatives frequented.

This first part of my life was characterized by harmony in all areas.

First, there was harmony from a financial point of view. My family had never belonged to the super-rich, but they were rich. They had that form of comfort and largesse that nearly bordered on waste. They enjoyed a distinction that was almost luxury.

It was not precisely luxury, nor was there ever really waste. Without incurring any irrational expense— all expenses were rational — money was spent without the sense that there might ever be a shortage. There were no financial issues. It was all very harmonious,

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<sup>9</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>10</sup> The union of these two families brought together members of two aristocratic groups that had each left a profound mark on the history of Brazil: the sugarcane planters of the State of Pernambuco, represented by the father of Dr. Plinio, the lawyer João Paulo Corrêa de Oliveira, and the aristocracy of the “coffee barons” of the State of São Paulo, from which his mother, Lucilia Ribeiro dos Santos, a very traditional representative of the São Paulo society, was descended.

The Corrêa de Oliveiras descended from Brazil’s early settlers; “the well-born, the noblemen of their time,” according to the well-known sociologist Fernando de Azevedo (cf. *Obras Completas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. XI, *Edições Melhoramentos*, São Paulo, p. 107). Among its distinguished members stood out Councilor João Alfredo Corrêa de Oliveira, a congressman in several legislatures during the Empire, minister and state councilor, senator for life, and finally President of the Council of Ministers, during whose term of office Princess Isabel signed the *Golden Law* that freed the slaves.

For their part, the Ribeiro dos Santos belonged to the traditional group known as “Paulistas of four hundred years,” the founders of the city of São Paulo and descendants of the famous *Bandeirantes*, the indomitable explorers and pioneers of Brazil.

Their illustrious ancestors included the grandfather of Dona Lucilia, Gabriel José Rodrigues dos Santos, a congressman known in the Imperial Parliament as a brilliant orator and in the drawing rooms of São Paulo society as a man of great culture. His daughter, Gabriela Ribeiro dos Santos, the mother of Dona Lucilia, was a woman of strong personality and great personal style, who added a great deal of brilliance to social life at the plush townhouse of Dona Veridiana Prado, one of the most influential ladies of São Paulo society, and to that of Antonio Alvares Penteado, both centers social and intellectual life of São Paulo at the time.

Dona Gabriela was born on December 18, 1852 and died on January 5, 1934 at the age of 81. She was married to her cousin, Dr. Antonio Ribeiro dos Santos, one of the best lawyers of his time. Naturally, this illustrious ancestry had considerable influence on the formation of the personality and manners of young Plinio.

<sup>11</sup> Symposium with Argentines, 12/10/65.

very logical, very constant.

The members of my mother's family all had a certain tendency toward formalism. They were very courteous to each other and treated each other with ceremonious intimacy, which renders intimacy particularly pleasant. As a child, I never witnessed any disagreements or fights at home—not once! There were never any quarrels or even heated discussions.

On the other hand, everyone was very cheerful. Not in the sense that there was always laughter, which is not a sign of true joy. Sometimes, there would be laughter, but often, especially at mealtimes, the conversation would turn to serious matters or even sad affairs.

All this created an atmosphere of calm, gravity, serenity, and well-being. In my home, I felt I was in the place where I belonged, in an ambiance made for me, like a turtle within its shell and lagoon.

My family also maintained an active social life. They had many friends, but they were all kept at a distance. The domestic circle was very different from the public circle.

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My grandmother was a *grand dame* to the last degree. Her afternoons could have been set to music. She would sit in an armchair, rocking herself back and forth, conversing with an admiring friend or acquaintance; tea would be served, and she would help herself. For forty years, she lived in this kind of bubble. She was a friend of Princess Isabel and corresponded with her.<sup>12</sup>

As for my mother, Lucília Ribeiro dos Santos Corrêa de Oliveira, she had a very “French” comportment, underlaid with Brazilian kindness.

She was highly delicate, polite and noble in her affections, even in her most intimate circle. I felt enveloped by that affection and felt that her environment was similar to that created by Madame de Grand-Air.<sup>13</sup>

For me, I repeat, she provided a live version of the world of Madame de Grand-Air, as my grandmother did in her own way.<sup>14</sup> Due to Dona Lucilia's ladylike and distinguished look, I used to call her *little Marchioness*.

The elevated nature of her soul provided the key to everything she did in her intimate circle. And this elevation of the soul was immeasurable.

All that would have amounted to no more than banalities in a less exalted soul.<sup>15</sup> I revered and loved her with every fiber of my being. Since her death, there has not been a single day on which I have not remembered and missed her.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I), 6/8/54.

<sup>13</sup> One of the characters in the *Bécassine* comics, drawn by cartoonist Joseph Pinchon and published at the time in the French children's magazine *La Semaine de Suzette*. These stories provided veritable lessons in sociology, portraying the sweet and harmonious, highly catholicized blend of the aristocratic and lower-class environments of France's Belle Époque (1871-1914).

<sup>14</sup> ESB 5/15/80.

<sup>15</sup> CSN 24/5/80.

<sup>16</sup> “Spiritual Testament,” 1/10/78, in *Catolicismo* No. 550, October 1996.

What I loved most about her – with that elevation of the soul that characterized her – was a mix of almost incredible yet always gentle generosity and an unshakeable firmness in all matters of principle. The juxtaposition of these two harmonic contrasts fascinated and attracted me to the highest degree.<sup>17</sup>

At home, all this created a kind of “French” atmosphere mixed with the Portuguese influence from my father’s side.

My father, João Paulo Corrêa de Oliveira, was from the city of Goiana in Pernambuco, which is now just over one hour away from the state capital of Recife. He studied at the Recife Law School, and Pernambuco’s relations with Portugal were much more frequent and intense than here in the south. The citizens of Recife considered Lisbon the world capital, not Paris.

He knew many Portuguese songs and poems by heart, was very well-read in Portuguese literature, and had a strong Portuguese bent in his legal training.

He was not a great lawyer, but a very good one. He represented the Brazilian and Portuguese side of my upbringing, which blended with the French note of the Ribeiro dos Santos without conflict, resulting in a harmonious whole.

He had a strong voice with a pleasant timbre. When he laughed, his laughter filled the house. He was a very healthy man, always treating my mother and grandmother with great respect. This, then, was the environment in which I received my upbringing.<sup>18</sup>

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As a child, I instinctively clung to this order of things with all my strength because it suited all my qualities and faults. As you can see, all my qualities are temperance, logic, balance, etc. All my faults were due to my tendency toward softness.

## 5. Early Notions of the Existence of Evil

The big, bad wolf had not yet entered this “story of Little Red Riding Hood.” Eventually, of course, it did, and what happened was this:

I had an uncle by choice and an aunt by marriage from farming families. During their holidays, the children would be taken to the farm, where they rode on horseback, penetrated the jungle, got extremely dirty and muddy, and played games that involved throwing stones at each other.

I remember finding all this very strange. On the one hand, I disliked this way of being, but in other respects, they fascinated me, and I always wanted to be with them.

I felt a fundamental disorder in all that. I represented a proper but somewhat weak order. I felt less robust and weaker than other children. I knew I lacked that vitality, and it made me feel unsure of myself.

That was my first suspicion that these influences represented evil and that opposition to them represented what was good.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> CSN 5/24/80.

<sup>18</sup> ESB 15/5/80

<sup>19</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

## **B) At São Luis High School**

### **1. In Conflict with My Surroundings: The Idea of the Need to Fight Is Born**

Initially, all I wanted was to get along well with everyone. At home, with my cousins and other relations, this was no problem at all.

But in 1919, when I entered São Luis High School at the age of 10, I started to observe the behavior of the other boys and realized that I would have to redefine my aims.<sup>20</sup>

Turning things over in my young mind, only half aware of all the implications, I came to the following conclusions:

My colleagues get along very comfortably and pleasantly with each other. I am not quarrelsome by temperament; I am friendly and like peace and harmony. I like the easy, good life. I want to accept things as they are and to solve problems by mutual agreement. But I also see that no matter how friendly or conciliatory I am, no matter how many favors I do them, I will always get the worst of it because I am a Catholic. After all, I am chaste and a monarchist. And since I do not want to stop being Catholic but to remain chaste and a monarchist, the only way ahead for me will be to struggle and fight. I will learn to fight; if I can survive only by fighting, I will fight. But I will assert myself, I will discover their weaknesses, and I will prevail. Let's forge ahead!

### **2. How the Idea of a Counter-Revolutionary Strategy Took Hold of My Mind**

But how to carry on this fight?

Some fundamental ideas of how to conduct this fight came to me when I observed how pupils representing the revolutionary spirit would suffocate any attempt by a colleague to show himself a little chaste, a little bit Catholic, a little bit monarchist. Any manifestation would attract scorn, mockery, and considerable pressure from all sides.

So I concluded: "The thing to do is not to say that I am a little Catholic, a little chaste, a little monarchist, because that will bring them all down on me like a ton of bricks. I will do the opposite: I will tell them that I am very Catholic, very chaste, very royalist."

In this way, my colleagues and I established an armed truce: They did not attack me but ignored me. This situation eventually resolved itself into a relationship of mutual respect, in which both sides kept their arms ready. Under the circumstances, this

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<sup>20</sup> *Colégio São Luís* was founded by Jesuit priests in 1867 in the city of Itu (State of São Paulo). In 1917, soon after the expulsion of the Society of Jesus, which had been decreed by the Marquis of Pombal, had been revoked, the school was transferred to the city of São Paulo. It became the favorite center of education for the best families of the aristocracy and plutocracy of São Paulo.

was the best I could hope for.

As a result, I gradually developed a spirit of counter-revolutionary struggle, and I realized early on that diplomacy was part of this struggle.<sup>21</sup>

I also realized that the most revolutionary students sought to impose themselves with extreme skill and strength but frequently had to resort to subterfuge to master certain situations.

And I thought to myself, “I will be able to change this situation.”

I came to this conclusion quite calmly, without requiring the approval of others or their admiration; it was the result of keen observation but also of resolution. With the help of Our Lady, I was able to build a massive set of observations, analyses, and conclusions – all very logical, honest and serious.<sup>22</sup>

## **C) The Beginnings of My Public Life**

### **1. University Life: the Battle against Secularism; the “A.U.C.” Newsletter**

I began public action as a student at the Law School on São Francisco Square. The ambiance I found there was so thoroughly secularized that any apostolate seemed impossible among the student population of São Paulo.

At age twenty, I joined the Marian movement, which was at the beginning of its significant expansion. I also started a campaign to spread the Catholic apostolate at the Law School.

On that occasion, we founded University Catholic Action,<sup>23</sup> the first Catholic university movement established in São Paulo.<sup>24</sup>

Later, I was elected Congressman to the Constituent Assembly of 1934 on the slate of the Catholic Electoral League – a candidature I only accepted to ensure that Catholic claims would be implemented.<sup>25</sup>

### **2. Change of Emphasis: The Battle against Progressivism and the Catholic Left**

However, in the early ‘40s, the focus of my work changed.

Instead of concentrating exclusively on those who were not Catholic, I found myself facing the reality of the increasing penetration of Catholic circles by progressivism and

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<sup>21</sup> SD 12/2/94.

<sup>22</sup> Tea 3/24/95.

<sup>23</sup> University Catholic Action was founded in 1930 and its mouthpiece was a newsletter known as the A.U.C. The first issue of this newsletter was published on October 1, 1930, and contained the “A.U.C. Manifesto in Defense of the Highest Interests of the Church, Civilization and Country,” which represented an “insult” to the secularist and atheist mentality that dominated academic ambiances at the time (see <http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info>).

<sup>24</sup> Interview with the newspaper *Edição Mineira* (recording), Belo Horizonte, 11/16/83.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with *Folha de S. Paulo* (recording), 2/8/93.

leftism.

I realized immediately that the future of Brazil was in the hands of those who were willing to fight against these two evil tendencies in Catholic circles.

I then wrote a book titled *In Defense of Catholic Action*, thus opening fire inside the Catholic Movement against philosophical-theological liberalism and socio-economic leftism.

Since then, I have been fighting to defend Catholic opinion against the onslaught – sometimes open, sometimes hidden – of these currents of opinion.

Thus, the defense of Christian civilization and Brazil against this danger became the primary goal of my endeavors.<sup>26</sup>

All the persons, institutions and doctrines that I have loved during my life and continue to love today, I only loved because they were or are under the Holy Church, and to the extent that they were under the Holy Church. I have never fought or opposed institutions, people or doctrines except if – and to the degree that – they opposed the Holy Catholic Church.<sup>27</sup>

Our Lady has been generous to me. Many Catholics have placed their trust in me.<sup>28</sup> Our Lady has always been the light of my life, and I hope and trust that in her mercy, she will continue to be my light and my help to the last moment of my existence.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. The Crisis in the Church, the Greatest Bitterness of My Life

The great cross of my life was the crisis in the Church. Witnessing this crisis has caused me untold suffering.

In a letter I wrote to Carlos Cardinal Carmelo de Vasconcellos Motta<sup>30</sup> – in which I asked him for his judgment concerning the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*, which I will discuss later – I described my life and referred to the turbulent times in which we were living.<sup>31</sup> I also reminded him that recent events (a reference to the apostasy of the Bishop of Maura) showed that even the stars could fall from heaven, as the soul of our nation had trembled at the resounding crash caused by the breaking of a pillar of the Church.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with the newspaper *Edição Mineira* (recording), Belo Horizonte, 11/161/83.

<sup>27</sup> Spiritual Testament, 1/10/78, in *Catolicismo*, No. 550, October 1996.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with the newspaper *Edição Mineira* (recording), Belo Horizonte, 11/16/83.

<sup>29</sup> “Spiritual Testament,” 10/1/78, in *Catolicismo*, No. 550, October 1996.

<sup>30</sup> Carlos Cardinal Carmelo de Vasconcellos Motta (1890-1982) was Auxiliary Bishop of Diamantina (1932-1935), Archbishop of São Luís do Maranhão (1935-1944), Archbishop of São Paulo (1944-1964) and finally Archbishop of Aparecida until his death (1964-1982). Elevated to cardinalship in 1946, strong leftist sympathies marked his career; he greatly favored Catholic progressivism. When he took over the Archdiocese of São Paulo, he showed outright hostility against Dr. Plínio and the *Legionário* group, dismissing them from their functions in the archdiocese. Finally, he took away the *Legionário* itself. This hostility did not cease even when Rome praised the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*.

<sup>31</sup> Tea 6/19/95.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Dr. Plínio to Most Rev. Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcellos Motta, 9/22/45. The ‘broken pillar’ refers to the apostasy of Bishop Carlos Duarte Costa (1888-1961), former bishop of Maura and former bishop of Botucatu, who, after having been excommunicated by the Holy See through an official document of the Nunciature, on 7/2/45, founded the so-called Brazilian Catholic Apostolic Church (cf. *Ave Maria* magazine, São Paulo, 7/21/45).

My greatest afflictions were caused by this progressivist crisis in the Church, by the devastating process of self-destruction to which she was increasingly subjected, and by the dreadful and pestilential smoke of Satan that spread inside her.<sup>33</sup>

To see the Church betrayed was the most significant ordeal throughout my life.<sup>34</sup>

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According to conventional wisdom, a happy man succeeds in reaching a goal that satisfies all his wishes and finds stability in the place in life that he has conquered for himself.

However, another conception of happiness includes the fight and holocaust as elements. I found this in my struggles as a pupil, a student, and later as a professor at the university. I knew that by proudly proclaiming myself a Roman Catholic, I would make many enemies because I would have many against me. I still proclaimed myself to be just that.

A person who has fought like this all his life will be able, at the hour of his death, to paraphrase Saint Paul and say, "*Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi. In reliquo reposita est mihi corona justitiae, quam reddet mihi dominus in illa die justus judex*"—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day" (2 Tim 4:7). He who can say to the Lord, in the hour of his death, "give me oh Lord, oh righteous Judge, the crown of righteousness that Thou hast reserved for me," will indeed have lived a happy life.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Biographical notes dictated in 1972.

<sup>34</sup> Tea 1/26/93.

<sup>35</sup> MNF 5/24/95.

## Part I

# From Childhood Serenity to Confrontation in High School and College

## Chapter I

### Entering São Luis High School

#### 1. My First Clash with the Egalitarian Revolution

First, I must explain how I realized I would have to fight.

When I was only ten years old, I entered São Luis High School and experienced a huge shock when I came into contact with the modern world. This shock was due to my realization of the difference between the mentality of my family and the spirit that governed my schoolmates, most of whom came from families already further advanced along the path of the revolutionary process.<sup>36</sup>

I was a skinny boy with a white complexion. I was polite and well-disposed toward everyone, friendly and willing to treat everyone well, kind and with rather formal manners; in this respect, I have not changed because I still prefer to maintain a ceremonious tone even in my close personal relationships.<sup>37</sup>

Brought up in an incredibly loving and protective environment; knowing only tenderness and affectionate treatment; so to speak, wrapped in velvet all the time; accustomed to people who wished me well and for whom I, too, wanted only the best; I suddenly found myself, at São Luís High School, faced with the *homo animalis* of the twentieth century.<sup>38</sup>

I remember how stunned I was by my first contact with egalitarianism.<sup>39</sup> It was the start of the great battle of my life.<sup>40</sup>

#### 2. Early Ideas of Revolution and Counter-Revolution

Classes at São Luis High School generally ended at 4:30 P.M.

The students would leave, all except those whose families had paid extra for gym

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<sup>36</sup> Symposium with Argentines 10/12/65.

<sup>37</sup> Dinner EANS 11/21/90.

<sup>38</sup> SD 4/5/86.

<sup>39</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I), 8/6/54.

<sup>40</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 15/2/94.



lessons.

The whole city was still bathed in sunshine, and the playground, surrounded by colossal bamboo groves, appeared very interesting.

Looking at that bamboo grove, the splendid light coming down, and the school where only a few people were left, one could see priests in cassocks, with the biretta on their heads, walking through the playground area with their breviaries. It was a very peaceful environment that conveyed a sense of recollection and harmony.

I remember thinking, “How beautiful God has made the order of nature and the order of the Catholic Church. But no one here appreciates that. Among the students, no one or almost no one loves the Church; no one loves God as the creator of nature.”

And while I did my breathing and gymnastic exercises, I would think about the state of the world: how many sins, how many horrors! Somehow, I perceived, dimly, that this situation was not the result of a world of personal, separate sins dripping down like millions of individual drops of water but that the whole phenomenon was more like a river. There was a wholeness to all this, like one great, all-encompassing sin, which I only came to call the sin of Revolution. The idea that there should be a Counter-Revolution to fight against and overcome this sin took hold in my mind.<sup>42</sup>

In all these reflections, there were seeds of serious thought: seeds of resistance to this state of affairs, which helped me to overcome my indolence.<sup>43</sup> I was then about eleven or twelve years old. But this was when the first phrases of a book called *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* began to take shape in my mind while I was preparing myself for the great battle of the future, that of the Counter-Revolution.<sup>44</sup>

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Among my fellow students at São Luis High School, I searched for someone who would share at least some of my ideas.

I searched for a long time and kept hoping. But I did not manage to find even one friend.<sup>45</sup>

What I did encounter – immediately and without any effort at all – was disdain, marginalization, humiliation, and failure. I felt I had failed because I had tried many things but had no success and found no one.<sup>46</sup>

It was one of the most terrible periods of my life. I had to fight hard to resist the temptation of thinking that I would never find anyone who saw things the way I did and that I was pursuing an absurd goal. But there was always that little voice in the depth of my soul: “Do not give up! Persevere because someone will appear; seek it, and you will find.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> SD 5/12/90.

<sup>42</sup> SD 11/25/89.

<sup>43</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I), 8/6/54.

<sup>44</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/15/94.

<sup>45</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

<sup>46</sup> Tea 3/7/95.

<sup>47</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

### 3. The Problem of Purity

At that time, I found myself facing yet another problem.

From what I have heard, in France, at the time when I was young, the problem of purity would arise when boys reached the age of fifteen or sixteen. Here in Brazil, the problem arose when they were seven or eight years old – and I know of cases of even greater precocity.

One day, one of my cousins called me aside and said:

- Do you know where babies come from?
- The stork brings them.
- You really are an idiot!

Then he gave me the full explanation. I did not want to hear it. It seemed to me—to put it bluntly—that it involved rather disgusting aspects. And then I thought: This is what they are like; this is behind their thoughts and actions! And I felt like beating him up, saying he was insulting the older generation of my family.

I recount this episode in all its childishness to show how something so silly and trivial could germinate something good.

I realized that many of my fellow pupils at this age were already morally corrupt. Completely corrupt! I immediately made the connection between those realities that I saw in them and impurity, and I understood that Religion stood on the opposite side.

I figured that I could either accept to become like them, body and soul or would remain a pariah all my life, a man different from the others, persecuted, hated and despised.

### 4. A Great Resolution Taken at the Feet of Our Lady

Our Lady helped me a lot with this difficulty.

At age twelve, while facing circumstances that would take too long to explain, I received a very special grace of Our Lady while praying before a statue of Mary Help of Christians on a side altar of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in São Paulo and later before an image of Our Lady of Good Counsel in the chapel of São Luís High School. It was the grace to join the school's Marian Congregation for boys.<sup>48</sup> I made the following resolution:

Whatever happens to me, I will be against this world. This world and I are irreconcilable enemies. I will fight for purity, for the Church and the monarchy. I will honor hierarchy and promote decency and decorum even if I will be despised, pushed aside, stepped on, crushed and pulverized. These values are part of me; they are part of my life. No matter what others may do, this will be my life; this is the path I will follow.

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<sup>48</sup> *Marian Congregation* is the literal translation from Portuguese for what is commonly referred to in English as the *Sodality of Our Lady*.

Therefore, my future course was thoroughly mapped out and resolved at age twelve.<sup>49</sup>

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I spent my youth in sadness, indignation, a resolution to fight, and joyful anticipation of my future.

I looked forward to the future, believing the Revolution would one day crumble.<sup>50</sup>

I was leading a life in which I appeared much in society, but at the same time, I kept myself very withdrawn.<sup>51</sup>

So, I gradually moved toward the painful and downright “shameful” situation of a boy with no friends, something not tolerated in the little São Paulo of that time.<sup>52</sup> I seemed, inescapably, to be heading for a fall.<sup>53</sup>

In the milieu in which I lived, there were no authentically Catholic boys. Every boy who reached adolescence stopped frequenting the sacraments because of bad habits.<sup>54</sup>

As the young men in my social group were almost all heading downward on a slippery slope, I was led to believe that it was the same in the other social classes and that people there were equally without faith and behaved badly.<sup>55</sup>

## Chapter II

# Joining the Catholic Movement

### 1. The Catholic Youth Congress

My life continued until an evening in 1928 when I entered Patriarca Square on a streetcar and happened to look toward Santo Antonio Church. I saw a huge banner stretched across the entire façade of the church that read, “Congress of Catholic Youth - September 9 to 16.”<sup>56</sup>

I was so amazed to see a banner announcing a Catholic Youth Congress. I felt such huge horizons opening up to me, and it was, in short, such a colossal discovery that my

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<sup>49</sup> Lecture on Memoirs, (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>50</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/15/94.

<sup>51</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>52</sup> Surveys from the time show that in 1920, São Paulo had 579,033 inhabitants and 887,810 in 1930 (cf. Simone Luciana Cordeiro, article “Moradia Popular na cidade de São Paulo,” published on 4/1/2005 in *Histórica*, the online magazine of the Public Archives of the State of São Paulo).

<sup>53</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>54</sup> Quick word 5/7/92.

<sup>55</sup> Tea 2/10/95

<sup>56</sup> Dinner EANS 11/22/90.

first impulse was to get off the streetcar and register to participate in the congress.<sup>57</sup> But it was late evening, and their secretariat was closed, so I left it for the next day.

The next day, I signed up. I was attended by a man who appeared to be poor and very modest in bearing but upright and straightforward with a lot of character.

He gave me an amiable welcome.

The Catholic Youth Congress was scheduled to start two or three days later.

This man gave me a badge that all those attending the Congress were expected to wear. It was a little ribbon, sky-blue in color, with a beautiful little medal of Our Lady hanging from it. I cannot remember which invocation of the Virgin it was.

I was overjoyed and took great care not to lose it.

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On the night of the opening of the Congress, I had an early dinner by myself.<sup>58</sup> and took the streetcar to the church of São Bento, where the event was to be held.<sup>59</sup> I was so excited that while still in the streetcar, I took out the medal and pinned it to my chest. Youthful impatience...

I had expected that when I arrived there, there would be people outside, but there was no one.

I thought: "Will this be another disappointment?"

I opened the door and met roughly five hundred young voices raised in song. São Bento church was full of young men, crowding the three naves! Above was a gallery full of young people who had not found room below.

In the background, something I had never seen seemed very beautiful: a large cloth covering the altar, a symbol that the sacredness of the Church was temporarily veiled and that laypeople could now speak there.

With their back to this cloth sat all the bishops of the State of São Paulo, dressed as the prelates of that time used to dress: cassocks of a color between purple and lilac, gold chains, pectoral crosses adorned with precious stones, usually amethysts, with a tiny fragment of the Holy Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ embedded amongst them.

There were about ten of them. The hieratic figure of Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, the Archbishop of São Paulo, presided over the ceremony.

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Dom Duarte was an upright man, slim, trim,<sup>60</sup> slender, with a small head, small face, a glittering and authoritative look, and very discreet manners.<sup>61</sup> He had an air of well-deserved superiority that seemed based less on an awareness of his intelligence (which was considerable) or on his skills as a speaker (which were outstanding) but on the fact that he was vested in a sacred authority that gave him the responsibility, the right

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<sup>57</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/15/94.

<sup>58</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>59</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

<sup>60</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>61</sup> Tea 9/19/94

and the duty to command.<sup>62</sup>

They used to say about him that he was very authoritarian, unpopular, proud, a man who did not understand pastoral kindness, all the more so since he had adopted on his coat of arms the Latin motto *Ipse autoritas et firmitas mea* (Christ Himself is my authority and firmness). Throughout his life, he managed to exert his authority on numerous occasions and was, therefore, viewed with extraordinary respect.<sup>63</sup>

His hair was all white but abundant and very well-kept. He looked like a statue dressed up as a bishop and not really like a living being because the color of his skin resembled granite, and he hardly moved, merely following everything with his eyes. He seemed like a superior being with a majestic presence.<sup>64</sup>

Tristão de Athayde once remarked that whenever Dom Duarte entered a room, however modest, one had the impression that the whole room was filled with damask fabric. That was my impression, too. He tended to have that effect on people.<sup>65</sup>

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I arrived a bit late when the speeches were already underway, but I attended almost all of the program, which was excellent and well-organized.

I was startled to discover that in a part of São Paulo that was not my own, there was this massive movement of young men who were chaste, upright, truly apostolic Roman Catholics and fervent devotees of Our Lady!<sup>66</sup>

For years, I had waited and searched without meeting even one. And suddenly, just by turning a corner, I had found hundreds!<sup>67</sup> I could hardly believe what I was seeing.<sup>68</sup>

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I believe that the first to speak was Professor Alcebiádes Delamare Nogueira da Gama, a university professor from Rio de Janeiro who came from a very good family. He had a decoration from the Holy See on his chest.<sup>69</sup>

He spoke without a microphone, and his voice filled the room. He gave an impassioned speech, but it was not just sound and fury: it was the passion of an intelligent man who knew what he was saying and how to say it to ignite enthusiasm in his listeners – which is the very definition of eloquence. He spoke very well and was applauded enthusiastically.

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<sup>62</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>63</sup> Tea 19/9/94

<sup>64</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>65</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>66</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>67</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/15/94.

<sup>68</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

<sup>69</sup> Alcebiádes Delamare Nogueira da Gama (1888-1951) was a lawyer, journalist, politician, essayist, lecturer, biographer, critic, economist, and professor of administrative law at the Law School of the University of Brasil (RJ). He was a Cabinet Secretary in the Epitácio Pessoa Administration, a monarchist and one of the leaders of the Dom Vital Center, headed by Jackson de Figueiredo.

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The second speaker of the evening was a man who would later become a professor at the Law School of São Francisco Square: Professor Alexandre Correia.

He came from the region of Ribeirão Preto, a lean man with a reddish face and relatively small blue eyes that sparkled with vivacity and intelligence.

His family had sent him to study philosophy at one of the most renowned Catholic universities in the world, the University of Louvain in Belgium.

He was a man of ironclad logic but a rather aggressive sense of humor. As soon as he started speaking, he captivated his audience.

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When the event was over, the bishops rose and filed out in hierarchical order, first the more recently appointed ones, and finally Dom Duarte, the archbishop.

The choir and the audience then gave a rousing rendition of the hymn of the Catholic Youth Congress.<sup>70</sup> I found it beautiful and was thrilled by everything I had seen and heard.<sup>71</sup>

After that, they announced that Dom Duarte would celebrate Mass the following day in the inner courtyard of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I went to that Mass. The courtyard was complete, in an atmosphere of interest and genuine enthusiasm.<sup>72</sup> For egalitarian minds influenced by *Hollywood*, numbers are of fundamental importance: what many do, no one dares question.<sup>73</sup>

I left determined to join the Marian Congregation at the Church of Santa Cecilia because those boys all belonged to the Marian Congregations.

At that point, a boy who was also leaving the Congress came to me and said:

“We are just waiting for you in the car (a car for boys, known at the time as *baratinha*). We will drop you off at your house.”

I said, “Very well, let’s go. Where is the car?”

To make things less awkward, I pretended that we knew each other. The car went straight to my house, past five or six blocks. I realized they knew who I was because of the places and people I frequented and that we were from the same social background.

The discovery of the Marian Congregations opened up the possibility of working with this massive wave of people from other strata of society and establishing a bridgehead in my social circle.

I felt like I was walking on clouds, happier than ever imagined! The boys who had offered me a ride in the *baratinha* were members of a Marian Congregation, and I was sure I

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<sup>70</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>71</sup> Dinner EANS 11/22/90.

<sup>72</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

<sup>73</sup> Dinner EANS 11/22/90.

would naturally find friends among them. The important thing was that they did not play the part of the typical, soiled young men of the upper classes (and none of them did; they were all sensible and down-to-earth), although it was obvious that they were very well aware of who they were.<sup>74</sup>

## 2. The Leading Role of the Marian Congregations

The Marian Congregations were associations founded centuries ago by the Society of Jesus in Europe. The Jesuits set them up wherever they went, and so, of course, we also had them in Brazil.

Initially, there were only two Marian Congregations in São Paulo: one at the Church of São Gonçalo on João Mendes Square and one at the Church of Santa Ifigênia, which, at that time, was in use as the provisional cathedral of São Paulo, while the much larger cathedral on the Praça da Sé was under construction.

The two Marian Congregations had existed for a long time. However, they were held back and pushed aside in the social life of São Paulo by those afraid of what people might say and by the open opposition of those who considered that young people should not be Catholics or, if they were, should at least hide the fact that they were practicing their faith.

Those first members of the Marian Congregations were heroes; for a long time, they were alone in boldly practicing their religion in the positivist environment of São Paulo.

With the extraordinary success of the Catholic Youth Congress, many young Catholics realized they were more numerous than they imagined—something they had no idea before because they felt isolated in groups without contact with each other and because intense outside pressures had muted their voices. So they felt encouraged.

At the sound of the hymn of the Catholic Youth Congress, they decided to unite and join the Marian Congregations in droves; from this grew a vibrant movement of young Catholics who proudly wore the badges of the Marian Congregations, and who would gather and attend Sunday Mass in large groups.

There, they would receive Communion in orderly rows, providing a living example of the courage needed to openly profess the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Faith – an almost scandalous attitude in those days.

The intense desire for the faith that animated young people spread the movement like wildfire, and soon, congregations sprang up all over the State of São Paulo and throughout Brazil. They became a real power in our country.

The Hymn of the Catholic Youth contains words that express this very well:

Vibrant and wholesome youth,  
Arise and leave behind your indolence,  
Renounce sinful sloth,  
Arise! Arise!  
Heed the call of Pius XI,  
The brass bells are ringing,

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<sup>74</sup> Tea 2/10/95.

Their joyful voices proclaim their faith from above.

That was the spirit with which the hymn of the Catholic Youth stoked the Marian enthusiasm spreading throughout Brazil.<sup>75</sup>

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The bishops not only supported the Marian Congregations but also actively promoted them. It became almost embarrassing for a priest not to have a Marian Congregation in his parish.

Moreover, the thing to do for a leader of a Marian Congregation was to be very selective, only accepting the best applicants and excluding all those who did not measure up. It was *bon ton* to be a radical Catholic.

A characteristic phrase was, “The Marian Congregation has extremely narrow portals for those who wish to enter, but doors wide for those wishing to leave.”

They treated the subject of chastity with honesty and courage. They opposed dances and all kinds of worldly amusements. Retreats were promoted and held during the carnival, and the best people usually attended them.<sup>76</sup>

All Marian congregants attended Mass on Sundays together; they would sit together in reserved pews, wearing a large blue ribbon, singing Psalms of Mary in Latin, alternating with the choir. They stood out and openly countered all human respect.

A good member of a Marian Congregation would receive Communion every week, but elite members would do so every day.<sup>77</sup>

There was a large number of members who received Communion daily and who would also pray the Rosary every day. Many also meditated and did spiritual reading.

The elite members of these Marian Congregations knew each other and formed a uniform group in and outside of São Paulo, creating a mighty current of religious thought within the Marian movement.<sup>78</sup>

The enthusiasm mounted, and the Marian movement grew in quantity and quality throughout Brazil.<sup>79</sup>

This movement “broke the back” of the push toward secularism and impiety in São Paulo in a way that no one could have imagined; in a short time, it had spread all over Brazil.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>76</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>77</sup> This was made easier by the fact that before Vatican II, it was possible to receive Communion outside Mass, usually in the morning.

<sup>78</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>80</sup> SD 6/18/88.



## Chapter III

# Leader of the Marian Movement

### 1. The Marian Congregation of the Church of Santa Cecilia

I am unsure how many members the Marian Congregation of Santa Cecilia, which I had joined, eventually had. I believe that at its height, the number reached 120 or 130.

Unfortunately, many came, and many left. The Congregation maintained a core group of about 70 people, no more than that, and the rest were part of the turnover.

Most members were between sixteen and twenty-six years old – in other words, vigorous young men. There were also about ten older members between thirty and forty. I fell into the average range since I joined the Marian Congregation at twenty.

### 2. The Meetings on Imaculada Conceição Street: Germination of the First Ideas for R-CR

I sought out those I judged likely to have a Catholic spirit open to discussing significant contemporary problems; eventually, a small group formed.

This group began to gather in the Congregation of Saint Cecilia library at 59 Imaculada Conceição Street. It was very suitable for our purposes not only because it was the only adequately furnished room where people could sit for two hours but also because it was isolated on the third floor.<sup>81</sup>

Our group met there every night for about two or three years,<sup>82</sup> and we would sit down and talk.<sup>83</sup>

These conversations used to last two to two and a half hours, and we usually talked about subjects that I would later discuss in my book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*.<sup>84</sup> Sometimes, the conversation would also turn to matters of piety, spiritual reading, religion, Communism, the aristocracy, the French Revolution and others.<sup>85</sup>

### 3. Nightly Meetings. The TFP's First Seeds Begin to Germinate

Therefore, the period between 1928 and 1930 was one of the most beautiful of our lives. It sometimes felt a little like the afternoons of Adam in Paradise when God came

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<sup>81</sup> SD 8/18/73.

<sup>82</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

<sup>83</sup> Lecture on Memoirs, (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>84</sup> Dinner EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>85</sup> Lecture on Memoirs, (I) 8/6/54.

down and talked to him (Gen. 3:8).<sup>86</sup>

Since there were only a few of us, I insisted that we do similar studies to ensure we could pursue a common intellectual goal.

What was extraordinary about these conversations was that there was so much joy, such deep well-being of the soul, and such great sweeping insights. It was so strong that, as I said, we would go to the headquarters of the Marian Congregation every night to talk. The graces we received during these conversations were extraordinary.<sup>87</sup>

The Counter-Revolution, which had established itself in my mind as a goal to achieve, had been born and was beginning to walk.<sup>88</sup> The seed of our Group had been sown.<sup>89</sup>

In other words, within the movement of the Marian Congregations, those of us who were the toughest, most intransigent and energetic, with the most counter-revolutionary ideas, formed an inner core. This inner core has become the driving force behind this magnificent movement. This group later became the founding members of the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP).<sup>90</sup>

However, some of those who belonged to that first group of the Congregation of Santa Cecilia distanced themselves from us as time passed.<sup>91</sup>

#### 4. The Members of the Initial Group

That initial group, composed of Dr. Paulo Barros de Ulh a Cintra, Dr. Fernando Furquim de Almeida, Dr. Jos e de Azeredo Santos, Dr. Jos e Fernando de Camargo, Dr. Jos e Carlos Castilho de Andrade, Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg, Dr. Jos e Benedito Pacheco Sales, acquired a greater prestige when I was elected a congressman sometime later.<sup>92</sup>

I have never found public speaking difficult, so I was frequently invited to lecture.<sup>93</sup>

I began to speak<sup>94</sup> on controversial issues<sup>95</sup> I worked in various parishes in the city and the interior of S o Paulo and multiple parts of Brazil. I was constantly traveling, speaking to different groups here and there, and maintaining the best relations with archbishops, bishops, and priests.<sup>96</sup>

As a result of all this activity, I became well-known within the Marian movement of that time.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Dispatch with the French 7/25/94.

<sup>87</sup> Dinner EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>88</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

<sup>89</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>90</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/15/94.

<sup>91</sup> Dinner EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>92</sup> SD 8/25/73.

<sup>93</sup> Lunch EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>94</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I), 8/6/54.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with R dio S o Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>96</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

<sup>97</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I), 8/6/54.

It is necessary to clarify that what happened to this movement was the same thing that naturally occurs with all such movements: those who cared most deeply, those who were prepared to fight the hardest, came to the fore and assumed leadership positions.

As I joined the movement with all my heart and soul, the generosity of those who fought with me pushed me into positions of leadership that I had neither sought nor fought for.<sup>98</sup>

## 5. The Spirit of a Warrior; Support for the “Cristeros”

What did this Group do between 1928 and 1931?<sup>99</sup>

In Mexico, religious persecution was raging. The heroic movement of the Cristeros rose against the more or less communist dictatorship of Calles and Obregón. The Cristeros initiated a Catholic revolt, which later became a revolution and a civil war. Many of them died as martyrs, among them the Jesuit Father Pro [Miguel Agustín Pro], who was recently beatified.

I remember we drew up a protest against the atheistic government of Mexico, which we took to the Consulate of that country in São Paulo.

The protest was so outspoken and controversial that the Consulate, also imbued with the quarrelsome spirit of the time, refused to accept it, saying that it was too much of an insult to their country. This inspired us to further attacks.<sup>100</sup>

We also founded the University Catholic Action at that time. By 1931, our group led the Marian movement, the mightiest Catholic movement throughout Brazil.<sup>101</sup>

## Chapter IV

# At the Law School: Daniel in the Lions’ Den

## 1. The Revolution of 1924

Two years before I entered Law School, São Paulo was greatly shaken by General Isidoro Dias Lopes's revolution.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>99</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana, 6/21/90.

<sup>101</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>102</sup> Isidoro Dias Lopes (1865-1949) was a member of the armed forces from Rio Grande do Sul, who had

The Campos Elíseos Palace, the state government's headquarters, was bombarded, which forced then-governor Carlos de Campos to take refuge in the countryside.

That happened during the holidays when I was in Santos (one of my favorite places), staying with my Uncle Nestor.

I was coming back from the beach — at that time, the beaches were not yet a stomping ground for naked or semi-naked people, as they later became — when I saw someone up at the house call out to the people below that “A revolution was taking place in São Paulo.”

I stopped and asked:

“What did you say? A revolution has broken out in São Paulo?”

“Yes, haven’t you heard?”

“No.”<sup>103</sup>

I dressed and found a completely different situation when I came down. Rumors were flying thick and fast: all government members were caught, surrounded in the Palácio dos Campos Elíseos. General Isidoro Lopes had staged a revolt and was bombarding São Paulo from outside the city; a cannonball hit the Palácio dos Campos Elíseos, though fortunately, it failed to explode; and there was horrible news of bombs that had hit this, that and the other building.

Among these rumors, one was especially shocking to D. Lucilia and me: a bomb had brought down a tower of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (in the little São Paulo of those days, it was one of the tallest buildings). And the golden statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus had fallen to the ground and broken.

Soon after, another rumor: the people had invaded the palace, kidnapped the President, and cut the throats of the four Secretaries of State. Their heads had been stuck up on lances at the entrance gate.

One of those secretaries was my uncle.<sup>104</sup>

Naturally, there was terror and panic. Telephone contact to São Paulo was impossible because all the lines had been cut, and rumors kept flying.

Finally, late at night, I heard someone knocking on my bedroom door, “Plínio, wake up! wake up!”

I was fast asleep, and it took an effort to wake up. I said, “What?”

“The Secretaries of State are not dead; they managed to escape, and the governor has also fled to Guaraúna.”

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already participated in attempts to overthrow the monarchy, and in the Federalist Revolution in that state. He was the leader of what came to be called the Revolution of 1924, which began on July 5 and held the city of São Paulo for twenty-three days. The army (loyal to President Artur Bernardes) went into counter-attack and bombarded São Paulo with artillery and federal government aircraft.

<sup>103</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>104</sup> Dr. Gabriel Ribeiro dos Santos (3/8/1873-18/4/1938), brother of Dona Lucilia, was the first-born of the family. He was Secretary for Agriculture, Commerce and Public Works of the State of São Paulo between 1924 and 1927. .

Soon after the revolution, the State President, Carlos de Campos, returned to São Paulo. General Isidoro and his men had already fled in trains belonging to an English company, São Paulo Railways (there were few roads for vehicles in those days). He had embarked with his troops in trains that he had requisitioned and left for the interior of Brazil.<sup>105</sup>

By then, Isidoro was old and tired, so he fled to Argentina and left his men under the command of Luís Carlos Prestes. With the help of these troops, Prestes formed an army column that traveled all over Brazil in trains to spread the revolution.

This was the beginning of the *Prestes column*, the first and archaic symptom of the Communist revolution in Brazil.

## 2. 1930: The Lingering Influence of Saint Pius X

The 1924 coup eventually led to another revolution in 1930. That was when they overthrew the aristocratic Republic and Getúlio Vargas<sup>106</sup> seized power, ruling Brazil for fifteen long years.<sup>107</sup>

At the outbreak of the 1930 Revolution, Brazil's religious conditions were profoundly different from those of today.

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<sup>105</sup> The rebels retreated to Bauru, from where Isidoro Dias Lopes went to Três Lagoas, in what is now Mato Grosso do Sul; he clashed with federal troops quartered there and was defeated. His troops then marched on to Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, where they joined the Communist chieftain Luís Carlos Prestes.

<sup>106</sup> Getúlio Dornelles Vargas (1882-1954), Brazilian politician who led the Revolution of 1930 that overthrew the aristocratic order of the so-called Old Republic. He imposed a series of populist and vaguely socialist measures on Brazil that profoundly changed the face of the country. In a famous speech, Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, Archbishop of São Paulo, stated that “the poisonous weed of Communism was brought to São Paulo in the backpacks of certain leaders of 1930” (cf. *O Século*, 9/11/32). Vargas governed Brazil without interruption for 15 years, first as head of the “Provisional Government” (1930-1934), then as President of the Republic, through an indirect election by the Constituent Assembly (1934-1937); and finally, as the dictator of Brazil thanks to the coup that created the so-called *Estado Novo* (1937-1945). Deposed on October 29, 1945, he was again elected President in 1950. He governed from January 31, 1951 until August 24, 1954, when he committed suicide.

In an article in *Legionário* of 10/30/38, published during the era of Vargas’ *Estado Novo*, Dr. Plinio drew a brutally honest profile of Vargas in which he compared him to Napoleon Bonaparte:

“All this came to mind when we remembered Mr. Getúlio Vargas, to whom not even his best friends can attribute the military qualities of Napoleon; at the same time, however, his most inveterate enemies can hardly deny the brilliance of his strategy – fully comparable to that of the Corsican – in fights not fought fairly on an open field between warlike and gallant armies but doggedly and subtly, on the treacherous terrain of politics, slippery for all feet except for the wily steps of the President.

“It is undeniable that in the no-holds-barred gladiator-like combat, the trap-filled and ever-shifting arena of Brazilian politics, no one has been able to match the Napoleonic political skills of Getúlio Vargas. For him, there has been no Waterloo. Ulm, Jena, Marengo – for him, they are no more than insignificant anecdotes.

“Napoleon defeated his opponents by making them retreat before his conquering armies. Vargas is cleverer, more subtle, more ruthless, going all out in the art of destruction. He forces no one to retreat – on the contrary, like a magician, he embraces his enemies... and eliminates them. Elimination is much more than forcing the enemy to retreat. Those who retreat live on. Someone who has been eliminated disappears.”

<sup>107</sup> SD 10/19/83.

When I joined the Marian Congregations, I encountered a Brazil still imbued with the atmosphere of Saint Pius X's pontificate and enjoying its beneficial actions.<sup>108</sup>

In the best sense of the word, it was an extremely conservative religious atmosphere with great piety and purity of customs, a society of practicing Catholics.<sup>109</sup>

During his pontificate, Saint Pius X had to fight against a heresy that had appeared under the name of *modernism*.

This heresy intended to infiltrate the Church clandestinely, establish its adherents in positions of power within the hierarchy, and eventually undermine the Church, not from the outside, as Luther had done, but from the inside, in the name of the Church itself, to change its doctrine and replace it with heresy.

This heresy was not only theological (relativizing the entire Magisterium of the Church, attributing a false – and ultimately Gnostic – meaning to the Catholic Religion) but also had an impact on society at large.

If Saint Pius X had not reacted, the ideas of modernist heresy would have led the Church's social teachings into a frankly socialist position, tending toward Communism.

The Holy Pontiff recognized all these evils with a clear eye and entered vigorously into battle against them; he fired off several documents attacking this heresy, of which the most famous was the encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. This encyclical exposed the problem of modernism and warned all the faithful against it.

Once the conspiracy had been denounced, the sound and steadfast elements of the Church initiated a profound antimodernist movement that paralyzed the deceitful adversary seeking to infiltrate the Church (in South America, it did so for many decades).

As a result, a great inner peace reigned throughout the Church. She found the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ. Everyone gathered around the same Supreme Pastor, around their national episcopates, under the same canon law, and within the normalcy of Church life. The union between clergy and faithful was close and trouble-free, as was that of the clergy among themselves.

I first experienced the Church during this blessed period. As the son of an eminently Catholic lady whose influence on my religious formation was profound and lasting, I soon developed a deep and enthusiastic love for the Church.

The Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church was undoubtedly one of Brazil's great forces; Brazilian historians will never sufficiently emphasize its role.

### 3. Rejection of Religious Practice for Men

As for the world outside the Church, I found it divided into two camps.

A section of public opinion (and its members were particularly numerous in the higher strata of society) was reticent about the Church.

For them, practicing the faith was a matter for women. A real man, according to their thinking, should not have faith and should not be Catholic.

An official profession of faith by a man placed him among the *sissies*, the self-

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<sup>108</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana (recording), 6/21/90.

<sup>109</sup> Quick word with Canadians, 8/17/93.

righteous, those of inferior intellectual and human capacities; in a word, among idiots.

Frightened by this general judgment, men often lacked the courage to express their faith. A young Catholic who wanted to profess his faith would have isolated himself among his peers.

As a result, almost all the young men of my generation and the social environment I lived in were likely to disown the faith.

#### 4. The Law School: Into the Lions' Den

That was when, in early 1926, I enrolled as a student at the historic law school of São Francisco Square, in São Paulo, famous as a hotbed of secularism and legal positivism and strictly opposed to Catholic doctrine.<sup>110</sup>

To be a law student at this seat of learning was more or less synonymous with being an atheist and customer of brothels.<sup>111</sup> They warned me that students commenting on the French Revolution in a critical spirit might get into trouble, and if you proclaimed yourself a monarchist, you would be viewed as some weird fossil.

I was all these things. The burden I had to bear was that the others hated what I loved most.<sup>112</sup>

So, when I entered Law School, I felt like Daniel walking into the lions' den.<sup>113</sup>

I renewed my resolution to remain chaste and a militant Catholic until I obtained my degree. I also resolved to attempt to upend this situation at the school if an opportunity appeared.<sup>114</sup>

I remember that when I went to enroll, standing in line to submit my application, I felt such anxiety when thinking about the coming struggle that I could feel my heart beating in my throat for fear that this fight might be unsuccessful.<sup>115</sup>

Among the professors on the faculty, there had always been members of my family, and we had many ties to the Law School. Besides, I had cousins also studying there.

From this point of view, the environment was not strange to me. I hated it as much as I appreciated it from my first moment there.<sup>116</sup> I was seventeen years old.<sup>117</sup>

I did all my law studies there, graduating in 1930.<sup>118</sup> When I finished my course, I was twenty-two.<sup>119</sup>

#### 5. Initial Phase: Individual Action and Resistance (1926-1928)

In my early years at the school, my behavior was marked by overt manifestations of

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<sup>110</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana (recording), 6/21/90.

<sup>111</sup> Quick word 9/27/92

<sup>112</sup> CCEE 5/30/91.

<sup>113</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>114</sup> Quick word 2/24/86.

<sup>115</sup> Closing speech at the Conference for New Volunteers 7/24/94.

<sup>116</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>117</sup> SD 8/4/73.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>119</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

faith.

Whenever someone attacked Catholic doctrine in my presence, I would intervene and explain why I disagreed. Then I would add, “This is because Catholic doctrine prevents, forbids or condemns this.”

My colleagues would ask:

“Are you really this kind of Catholic?”

“Yes, I am this kind of Catholic.”

At that time, I was already quite fat. I gained even more weight later. Moreover, among my generation, I was also quite tall, with a strong voice that made me appear self-assured and produced quite an impact.

In the end, they no longer came to talk to me. If I joined a circle, no one would leave; if I did not enter, no one would call out to me. They would receive me neutrally when I approached, showing neither pleasure nor disdain. Later, this changed.<sup>120</sup>

## 6. My Arguments with ‘Pasha’

At the Law School, there was a student from a good family named Antonio Mendes de Almeida. He was a Communist, nicknamed the Pasha—I do not know why. I used to have long, heated arguments with him about Communism. Pasha would speak against the Catholic Religion, and I would defend it.

We would go to a café outside the school, and a big crowd would form around us to listen.<sup>121</sup> The audience liked these debates and gave me an opportunity for a Catholic apostolate among the students.

Many colleagues would go to the café to listen to a Catholic debating with a Communist. It was a novel kind of entertainment.<sup>122</sup>

## 7. Other Members of the Marian Congregations at the Faculty: a Counter-Offensive (1928-1930)

In my fourth year at the Law School (1929), many freshmen, like myself, were members of the Marian Congregations.<sup>123</sup>

I had not met them before because they belonged to some of the many congregations scattered all over São Paulo, but they wore the pin on their lapels.<sup>124</sup>

I thought, “It’s time for politics!”

I began to look for and organize them, and if I remember correctly, we established a group of four.<sup>125</sup> With me, we were five.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Lunch EANS 14/6/82 (report).

<sup>121</sup> SD 8/4/73.

<sup>122</sup> Normal Meeting 10/3/69.

<sup>123</sup> Lunch EANS 6/14/82; SD 8/13/88.

<sup>124</sup> SD 8/13/88.

<sup>125</sup> Report 6/14/82.

<sup>126</sup> SD 8/13/88. In fact, with Dr. Plinio they totaled nine.



The revolutionaries' confusion when they realized that I had followers was priceless. Our counter-offensive started there.

I got into the habit of meeting with the congregants.<sup>127</sup> during breaks and talking to them.

By then, I had a voluminous figure, and my voice was even more impressive than my figure. At the secularist Law School, for a colleague to walk up to a group of students and hear one of them ask, "When will the novena be prayed in your church, then?" made quite an impact!

Our opponents approached our group and tried to make fun of us. When they did so, I raised my voice and led the conversation to questions of doctrine.

They would say, "Tell me, Plinio, is that really like that?"

I would answer, with a loud voice: "Of course it is!"

These debates attracted people's attention; groups formed, and right at their heart, we would plant the banner of Our Lady in the middle of the Law School.<sup>128</sup>

That produced a change in the environment. Let me explain.

When I first entered the Law School, I noticed three groups of students who enjoyed special prestige. The '*intalactas*' (a derogatory term for intellectuals with a Cartesian mind) were the top students of the class and talked only among themselves, with an air of great superiority; the '*aristocrats*' isolated themselves within a closed circle; and the '*pândegos*' (clowns) told dirty jokes and looked at pornography.

I deliberately avoided those select and admired groups and stayed among the ordinary students. I had some contact with the *intalactas*, some with the aristocrats, and none with the dirty-minded (I did not seek them out, and they left me alone).

When they noticed my counter-offensive, what did the *intalactas*, the aristocrats and the *pândegos* do?

The aristocrats, curiously enough, became somewhat less frigid. For the rest, they pretended not to notice what was going on.

The *intalactas* were forced to discuss religious matters. In this way, the forbidden topic was suddenly a subject for conversation again.

What about the *pândegos*? They, who had taken center stage, now retired into the corners, and their audience declined because it was too embarrassing for many in our presence to associate with the filth they were spreading.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Translator's Note: Members of the Sodality of Our Lady are referred to as *sodalists* in the English-speaking world, but since we are using the term Marian Congregations rather than Sodality, as is the custom in Brazil, and as explained in footnote 48, we use the term *congregants* to refer to the members.

<sup>128</sup> Report 6/14/82.

<sup>129</sup> Lunch EANS 6/14/82.

## Chapter V

# University Catholic Action At the Law School

### 1. The Foundation of the “A.U.C.”

After we formed this small group of friends, I suggested that we launch a newspaper called *The A.U.C. (Ação Universitária Católica*, or University Catholic Action).<sup>130</sup> I wanted it to be a paper promoting Catholic Religion within the Law School.

My friends immediately reacted to the idea enthusiastically, which gave me great joy and enormous satisfaction.

With the approval of the director of my Marian Congregation, Msgr. Paulo Pedrosa,<sup>131</sup> We formed an organization named University Catholic Action, widely known by its (Portuguese) initials as the A.U.C.<sup>132</sup>

Once founded (June 1930), the University Catholic Action took the same uncompromising stance as the Marian Congregations.<sup>133</sup>

It was not yet Catholic Action, but a movement, a league of members of Marian Congregations at the University who spread Catholic propaganda inside the Law School and, as we shall see, in other university departments.<sup>134</sup>

### 2. The “A.U.C.” Journal at the University

We decided to distribute the *A.U.C.* at the Law School.<sup>135</sup> It was a newsletter that exclusively supported Catholic ideas.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Quick word 9/27/92.

<sup>131</sup> Paulo Marcondes Pedrosa (1881-1962), ordained priest in 1904, was auxiliary pastor and later (until 1932) the parish priest of Santa Cecília in São Paulo. He was made a Monsignor and Secret Chamberlain on April 21, 1920. On April 27, 1932, he entered the Benedictine Order at the monastery of São Bento, of which he became the Prior, known as Dom Pedrosa.

<sup>132</sup> SD 8/13/88

<sup>133</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>134</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>135</sup> SD 8/13/88.

<sup>136</sup> Lecture addressed to new volunteers on 11/18/90. The first issue appeared on October 1, 1930, and included the ‘*Manifesto Aucista*,’ proclaiming loud and clear “the inescapable conviction that it is no longer possible to separate religious consciousness and civic consciousness”; that “Catholic university youth fully

The Law School was a hotbed of atheism, so my colleagues were initially afraid to distribute the paper. So I told them:<sup>137</sup>

“This is what we will do: the School building has several doors. You handle such and such a door (these were side doors), and I will station myself at the front door.”

The front door was used by the sons of the leftist bourgeoisie, most of whom were acquaintances of mine; some were related to me, and others were more or less good friends.

I grabbed a pile of the papers and stationed myself at the main entrance.

Cars – many of them expensive luxury models – started to arrive, and the students got out and went in through the front door.

Whenever a colleague got out of a car, I would introduce myself and say, “Look here, this is a newspaper published by the organization of Catholic youth of the Law School.”<sup>138</sup>

I would say this seriously but in a friendly way, without provocation.<sup>139</sup>

I confess that I felt my heartbeat inside my throat. There was, after all, the risk that they might mock me, wrench the papers out of my hand, burn them then and there and make me look like a complete fool. It could have happened at any time. And it would have been useless for me to fight back because there would have been five hundred against one.

Our Lady protected me, and no one said an unpleasant word or threw the newspaper on the floor—nothing! They all took the paper courteously; some even thanked me and took it into the building with them.<sup>140</sup>

During class, everyone read the paper. When the bell rang and all the classroom doors opened, the students left and met outside in the courtyard.

I walked around to see if someone would say anything. No! Everything was normal, and there was no trouble.

I was amazed! I thought to myself, “Yes, sir. They have already realized that there is a thriving Marian movement out there, and they can no longer do certain things as they used to.”

When my younger companions saw that I was distributing the paper and nothing happened, they took courage and started distributing it themselves. In this way, the Catholic paper spread throughout the school.

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embraces the dogmas of Holy Mother the Church;” “we can be either entirely Catholic or the figureheads of a union between Catholicism and Bolshevism”; and “the agnostic State has been a laboratory for pernicious political and religious hypocrisy.” It called upon the “Catholic students at the University who had not yet decided to act to show their colors, and those who were ready for the fight, to join and declare their loyalty to the A.U.C.” (cf. <http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info>). This manifesto was launched simultaneously at the Law School, the Medical School, and the Polytechnic and was signed by twenty-seven Catholic students, nine from the Law School, ten from the Polytechnic and eight from the School of Medicine.

<sup>137</sup> SD 8/13/88 — see also [http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info/AUC\\_01\\_N%-C2%BA\\_01\\_1930\\_Manifesto.htm](http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info/AUC_01_N%-C2%BA_01_1930_Manifesto.htm).

<sup>138</sup> Quick word 9/27/92.

<sup>139</sup> Sup 5/30/91.

<sup>140</sup> Quick word 9/27/92.

We had taken the first decisive step.<sup>141</sup> The University Catholic Action had launched.<sup>142</sup> And the famous Law School, a bastion of atheism, had retreated.<sup>143</sup> If I remember correctly, the paper then started to appear monthly.<sup>144</sup>

### 3. The First Stab in the Back

A few more students approached us, and I was delighted. That was when, for the first time in my life, I took a stab in the back.

Two of those who had joined the A.U.C. began to make all kinds of defeatist suggestions and proposed that we should allow some socialist and other related opinions to be expressed in the paper.

I fumed:

“Socialist?! What is wrong with you? A Catholic cannot be socialist, much less a communist, etc., etc.”

“You are far too rigid and uncompromising. Look at the way you are trying to impose your opinions on everyone! We have different ideas.”

“It is not a question of my opinions: look at the writings of the popes.”

“There you are, you see? You immediately get angry. Be kind, accept that I’m wrong and show some tolerance for my error.”

“How can we be tolerant of error?”

In the end, I realized that they were not sincere. I must confess that this was one of the greatest disappointments of my life. I remember thinking: “If I have to fight an enemy, fine, it’s only to be expected. But fighting my friends simultaneously as facing my enemies, feeling the tip of the dagger of betrayal pressing against the back of my neck, this is no way to live, and it’s a horrible thing.”

Our Lady helped me, putting into my head the idea that she would send others, that this situation could be turned around, and that I had, after all, overcome other obstacles, too. That helped me to take heart once again.

### 4. Our Influence on the Academic Center Elections

The group of members of the Marian Congregations kept growing.

What was the impact of what we did at the Law School?<sup>145</sup>

In my fourth or fifth year at the Law School, there were elections to the Academic Center.<sup>146</sup>

These elections were significant because becoming president of the Academic Center was a way to launch a career as a state congressman or a public prosecutor or to become a

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<sup>141</sup> SD 8/13/88.

<sup>142</sup> Quick word 9/27/92.

<sup>143</sup> Sup 5/30/91.

<sup>144</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 11/18/90.

<sup>145</sup> SD 8/13/88.

<sup>146</sup> The August 11 Academic Center was the representative body of the students at Largo de São Francisco Law School. It was named for the date (August 11, 1903) on which the law establishing the first two Law Schools in Brazil – one in São Paulo and another in Olinda – was passed.

candidate for other high positions in public service.<sup>147</sup>

There were two candidates. I got on well with both.

One day, as I was leaving the School, one of them approached me. He greeted me more warmly than usual: "How are you, my illustrious friend?"

"Illustrious friend?" That was a strange greeting for a fellow student. I answered:

"Ah! Fine, and you?"

"Ah! Come here. There is something I would like to discuss with you."

He pulled me into a store and said:

"I'm running for president of the August 11 Academic Center and want you to make sure that I get the votes of the Marians. Can you do that?"

I suddenly realized that the members of the Marian Congregations were highly regarded among the other students and that if we decided to endorse a particular candidate, many others would vote with us.

I replied at once:

"Look here, so-and-so; you know I'm your friend. For the sake of our friendship, I would gladly ask my friends to vote for you. But it's not quite as simple as that. I cannot tell them to vote for you because you are my friend. I must prove to them that your candidacy would benefit the Catholic cause. If this were the case, they would back you. They will not do so just because you are my friend.

I would recommend that you take a stand on the following issues: 1) in the case of a campaign to establish divorce, you, as president of the Academic Center, must take a position that is unequivocally against it; 2) if a campaign is launched in favor of religious education in schools, you must support it; 3) and you must also pledge support for chaplains in the Armed Forces and state prisons."

He said:

"Draw up a document, and I will sign it."

But I said:

"Look, it isn't as simple as that because I must consult with the other candidate. I must back him if he is prepared to give more than you."

He gave me a politician's smile and said:

"Well, you go ahead and talk to the other candidate. You are entitled to do so, after all."

I went to find the other candidate.

"Come here, so-and-so."

"What do you want?"

"Look, so-and-so, I just talked to your opponent, and he promised me such and such. If you can offer me more, I will back your candidacy because there is such and such a point on which he is not prepared to give in. Can you do so?"

He answered immediately:

"Of course, without any doubt whatever! Go and draw up a manifesto for me to sign."

I went back to the first and said,

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<sup>147</sup> Report 6/14/82

“Look, the other candidate has topped your offer. He is willing to concede the point you are not prepared to give in, which is important to the Church. I am sorry that you have refused to give in.”

However, he refused to yield. We parted friends. We remained friends for life.

Because of all this, the candidate we supported won the election. And – while until then it had been considered shameful to be a Catholic – the little São Paulo of the time learned that both candidates had run on Catholic platforms.

Even more surprisingly, the more staunchly Catholic candidate had won.<sup>148</sup> It was almost a scandal since the August 11 Academic Center president was expected to be pro-divorce and a socialist. And now there was a president who spoke against divorce. It was something quite out of this world.<sup>149</sup>

In other words, it was a first-rate triumph for the Catholic Religion!

## 5. Graduation: Holy Mass in the Courtyard

I finished my course, and it was time for the graduation ceremony.

On graduation day (December 11, 1930), something happened in the Law School's courtyard that had never been seen there in its hundred years.

Until then, the graduation Mass had always been held at the church of São Francisco next to the Law School.

I thought, “I will ask for the Mass to be held within the Law School. And I will invite the archbishop (Dom Duarte) to celebrate it. But I will invite Dom Duarte first and then tell the Law School he is ready to celebrate Mass there.”

I visited Dom Duarte with a few others and asked him if he would be willing to celebrate at the School. He was delighted but hesitated, unsure whether or not to accept our invitation.

Finally, he said:

“I’m sorry, but I cannot do it because of previous clashes with the School. But I grant permission for the Mass to be celebrated there.”

I was acquainted with a famous Jesuit preacher of that time, Father Leonel Franca,<sup>150</sup> with whom I maintained regular correspondence. He was a genius, famous all over Brazil.<sup>151</sup>

I wrote him a letter saying, “Father Franca, this year’s graduating students of the Law

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<sup>148</sup> SD 8/13/88.

<sup>149</sup> Report 6/14/82.

<sup>150</sup> SD 8/13/88. Leonel Edgard da Silveira Franca (1893-1948) entered the Society of Jesus in 1908 and was ordained a priest in 1923. He obtained his doctorate in theology and philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome. After his return to Brazil, he became a Professor at the Colégio Santo Inácio (Rio de Janeiro). He taught history of philosophy, psychology and experimental chemistry in the Colégio Anchieta in Nova Friburgo. In 1931, he became a member of the National Education Council and vice-rector of the Colégio Santo Inácio (Rio de Janeiro). He played an important part in the founding of Rio’s Pontifical Catholic University, becoming its first president.

<sup>151</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 11/18/90.

School are inviting you, through me, to come and give us a sermon. Will you come?"

He sent me a very kind reply, accepting the invitation. Then I went to the office of the head of the Law School and said:

"A famous preacher, Father Leonel Franca, has declared himself willing to come and preach at the University. Dom Duarte has permitted the Mass to be held inside the campus by the Vicar General of São Paulo, Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto.<sup>152</sup> The graduating class agrees, and I would like to ask your permission."

"All right."

And the Mass was held.

On the day of the Mass, when I arrived at the Law School in the morning in my coattails, top hat, and tails, as required by the ceremony, I expected to find only the priest and the students.

To my great surprise, I found that a dais shaped like a "U" had been erected in the courtyard around the altar.

Upstairs, in large, high-backed armchairs covered with red velvet (because red is the color of lawyers), sat the entire teaching staff of the Law School, dressed in their gowns and some with rosaries in their hands.

I could hardly believe my eyes but refrained from expressing my astonishment and acted like this was the most natural thing in the world as I entered with Father Leonel Franca.

When Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto arrived; he put on the vestments and began the Mass.

At the time of Communion, many youths about to graduate approached the altar to receive. That was another thing that I could never have imagined.

It meant that atheism was declining as the Catholic Movement grew throughout Brazil.

Father Leonel Franca left immediately after Mass. The Secretary of the Law School, a highly esteemed man named Julio Maia, came to look for me and said:

"Coffee is ready upstairs."

"What coffee?"

"Monsignor has celebrated Mass, and the Law School would like to offer him some refreshment."

I told the Vicar General:

"Monsignor, there are some refreshments prepared for you upstairs."

We went up, and the Secretary sat down facing us. Turning to me, he said:

"Well, Plinio! It is the first time I have seen you arrive at the Law School ahead of time."

"What do you mean, Dr. Julio?"

"For class, you would arrive at the last minute or be late, dodging the beadle. I knew this, but I never said anything. You certainly never came early."

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<sup>152</sup> Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto (1884-1945) was vicar general of the Archdiocese of São Paulo, and later, from 1937-1945, Bishop of São Carlos.

He was right; I never had.

“Now, today, at the time of Communion, everything changed. You were the first to get up to go to Communion.”

“Yes, Dr. Julio, that is true.”

He went on grumbling a little more.<sup>153</sup> But even his bad mood had something friendly about it; he said what he did to let Monsignor know that I was not a shirker in matters of religion.<sup>154</sup>

## 6. What Happened to “AUC” After I Left the Law School

This was the end of my time as a student.

In those days, students did not return to the school after graduation. It was considered bad taste to come back to meet there with colleagues.

What would happen to the A.U.C.?<sup>155</sup>

I could no longer continue as president of the organization. So I resigned.<sup>156</sup> Unfortunately, this was the end of the A.U.C. The campaign we had started was discontinued.

About seven months later, I had to go to the university to get a stamp on my diploma or something. When I entered, many students who knew me started shouting “Pliniooooo, Pliniooooo” to welcome me warmly. One of them called out:<sup>157</sup>

“Watch out, everybody! Plinio is back! Plinio is back!”

He said that to please me, adding:

“And now the AUC will return to being a power, which it no longer is!”<sup>158</sup>

Unfortunately, the AUC was never revived. It dwindled and eventually disappeared altogether.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> SD 8/13/88

<sup>154</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 11/18/90

<sup>155</sup> Report 6/14/82.

<sup>156</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>157</sup> Report 6/14/82.

<sup>158</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>159</sup> Report 6/14/82. In 1938, by decision of the ecclesiastical authority, it was absorbed by the corresponding sector of Catholic Action, that is, University Catholic Youth (JUC). The latter adopted its own ideological itinerary and later became sadly notorious in the history of Brazilian Catholicism as a driving source of the most radical Catholic leftism (cf. *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga – Homage of the TFPs to Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*, Edições Brasil de Amanhã, Artpress, 1988).



## Part II

# The Catholic Electoral League And the Constituent Assembly of 1933-1934

## Chapter I

# Changes in the Political and Religious Landscape from 1930

### 1. Secularism Before 1930

After my graduation, I continued to devote myself to the Catholic Movement.

I felt that something should be done against the secularism that dominated our legislation and all official life of the State and which, with lofty disdain, ignored the basic fact that the population was predominantly and overwhelmingly Catholic. More than 90% of Brazilians were members of the Church at that time.<sup>160</sup>

During the Empire, the State recognized the Catholic Church as the only true religion. After the proclamation of the Republic, however, the spirit of the French Revolution was increasingly affirmed in public life. Hand-in-hand with the spirit of the French Revolution came the State's secularism that was inherent in that Revolution.

The separation of Church and State brought the Church enormous and incalculable disadvantages; however, it also brought considerable and very tangible advantages.

State interference in the Church declined considerably. On the other hand, a wave of secularism—a somewhat less aggressive form of atheism—swept throughout Brazil.

That was the situation from 1889 until 1930.

### 2. Promising Circumstances for a Turnaround

First came the 1930 Revolution of Getúlio Vargas. Two circumstances marked a

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<sup>160</sup> *A Man, A Life Work, An Epic Saga*, Edições Brasil de Amanhã, Artpress, São Paulo, 1988.

change in that order, although not everyone realized this then.

The first one, which had started to develop three or four years earlier, was the enormous expansion of the Catholic Movement, especially of the Marian Congregations, all over Brazil. That led to a situation where it was commonplace to see a man frequenting the sacraments, which only women had done before.

The second circumstance was Vargas's decree extending the vote to women (Decree no. 21076 of 24 February).

Until 1930, women had had no vote because politics, in general, was seen as being a male domain. At that time, practically none of the men frequented the sacraments, and almost all had a secular mindset. On the other hand, the women, who were fervently Catholic, had no right to vote. In this way, secularism was guaranteed in the electoral body and at all levels of the political hierarchy elected by men.

I considered these things and wondered whether it would not be possible to use these circumstances to change the atmosphere of secularism in Brazil.

The great problem was how to get started since the ecclesiastical authorities recoiled in horror at setting up a Catholic political party.<sup>161</sup>

The ecclesiastical hierarchy was walking on eggshells, choosing their words carefully when defining and disseminating Catholic doctrine, especially regarding moral and eternal life truths.

This doctrine spread mainly through explicit pulpit preaching and personal instruction in confessionals. Some Catholic establishments also helped: schools and other entities worked with the masses of the faithful.

These activities were indeed indispensable and legitimate. What this meant, though, was that many other fields of action were left to the Revolution's unchecked influence.

One example more than suffices to illustrate the imbalance thus created: the Industrial Revolution.

Everything that the Industrial Revolution brought to make the practice of the Commandments and the profession of the Faith at least uncomfortable in the new world being created was enormous.

The hierarchy was oblivious to all this and blithely continued along its accustomed paths.<sup>162</sup>

That was why the bishops were so reluctant to get involved in politics. They argued that a Catholic party would create several problems, the first being that priests would want to stand for election. They were also afraid of hypocrites who would declare themselves Catholics to jump on the political bandwagon. They claimed this would fill the ranks of religious associations with opportunists.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>162</sup> CSN 5/1/93.

<sup>163</sup> SD 6/22/73.

## Chapter II

# The Idea of the Catholic Electoral League (LEC) Is Born

### 1. General Castelneau's "Fédération Nationale Catholique"

In a French magazine called *La documentation catholique*,<sup>164</sup> I read about a French general, Viscount Castelneau.<sup>165</sup> He distinguished himself during World War I and was one of the great generals of the French resistance.<sup>166</sup>

I thought, "Castelneau looks like a man of character, a viscount of the old school: he must be a staunch counter-revolutionary. Let's see what he has to say."

I found out later that Viscount Castelneau was a liberal. But sometimes, Providence acts in unexpected ways.<sup>167</sup>

In *La documentation catholique*, I found the news of a *Fédération nationale catholique*, founded by General de Castelneau himself.<sup>168</sup>

I decided to write to this *Fédération nationale catholique* to ask for their statutes, which they sent me.<sup>169</sup>

I read the statutes and realized Castelneau had developed a fascinating political approach.

He influenced a particular Catholic sector. To ensure a positive influence on the Catholic electorate, he sent the candidates a little questionnaire:

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<sup>164</sup> SD 7/8/83.

<sup>165</sup> SD 8/27/88. Noël Marie Joseph Édouard, Viscount of Curières de Castelneau (1851-1944), born into a family of the old French nobility, was commander of the II French Army and head of staff of General Joffre during World War I. Considered a radical Catholic by many, he was known by the nickname of "the Capuchin in boots." Having led successful battles in Sedan, Soissons and Chaumont, he was seconded to the General Staff by Joffre and distinguished himself in the defense of Nancy and in the Champagne offensive of 1915, which earned him the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor. He was also responsible for the defence of Verdun. His ideas on religion and politics, although liberal, brought him into conflict with many politicians of the secular and atheistic Third French Republic, and were the reason why he never received a marshal's baton. He opposed Pétain in the Vichy government, and was president of the *Fédération nationale catholique* until his death.

<sup>166</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>167</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>168</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>169</sup> SD 6/22/73.

“What is your stance on this, that and the other point? If your thinking on these points is according to Catholic doctrine, I will recommend you to my readers. If it is not, I will tell them that you oppose Catholic doctrine. I will mention this in my newsletter if you do not answer me. You will lose votes if you do not answer me and may win if you answer me favorably.”<sup>170</sup>

In this way, he got many Catholics elected to Congress, the Senate and the City Halls, increasing the Church's influence in the political game without transforming it into a political party.

I found this idea very interesting, and it stuck in my mind.<sup>171</sup>

## 2. Getúlio Vargas Holds an Election: a Unique Opportunity for Catholics

At that time, the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 broke out in São Paulo.<sup>172</sup>

Getúlio Vargas had seized power by overthrowing the Washington Luís Administration. Instead of immediately implementing democracy—the stated goal of the revolution he led—he tried to perpetuate himself in the presidency.

The representative elements of São Paulo felt his actions as the head of government fundamentally opposed to São Paulo's interests. He showed himself extremely liberal and generous with other units of the Federation while imposing significant restrictions on São Paulo. He also did so in a way that was considered by many to be downright humiliating.

In São Paulo, for instance, it was perceived as an insult that he should have appointed a former leader of the revolutionary army, João Alberto Lins de Barros, to the high office of federal intervenor—all the more so as the latter began immediately to show a certain highhandedness in his treatment of the leaders of the two main political parties, the Paulista Republican Party (PRP) and the Democratic Party (PD).<sup>173</sup>

In addition to their leadership positions in the public life of the great Brazilian State, these political grandees had considerable personal prestige, both in the intellectual and socio-economic spheres of São Paulo life. They were shocked at the young intervenor's officiousness and arrogance and felt that João Alberto Lins de

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<sup>170</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>171</sup> SD 22/6/73

<sup>172</sup> This Constitutionalist Revolution, also known as the Revolution of 1932, was an armed conflict in the State of São Paulo between July and October 1932, which tried to overthrow the provisional government of Getúlio Vargas and to impose a new constitution on Brazil. It was a reaction of the people of São Paulo to the populist 1930 revolution of Getúlio Vargas that ended the autonomy enjoyed by the States under the Constitution of 1891.

<sup>173</sup> João Alberto Lins de Barros (1897-1955) was a “Lieutenant’s” Brazilian military and political figure, who acted as federal intervenor in São Paulo from November 25, 1930 to July 25, 1931. His term at the head of the state government was marked by despotic and revolutionary measures that immediately caused conflicts with the traditional policies of the state associations. The political school of “Lieutenantism,” of which he was a figurehead, was a movement of junior army officers who, from 1922 onward, organized a series of uprisings and attempted revolutions, including the 1924 Revolution, which gave rise to the Prestes Column to which João Alberto belonged. “Lieutenantism” became one of the support bases for Getúlio Varga’s 1930 Revolution and, after the victory of this revolution, almost all the governments of the Brazilian states were entrusted to “*tenentistas*.”

Barros would not have dared to act this way if he had not been able to count on the president's support.

The political leaders, the press and key state figures became increasingly convinced that President Getúlio Vargas' chief aim was to hold on to power permanently as a dictator. As a first step toward achieving this goal, he intended to break the political and economic power of São Paulo, which, as far as production was concerned, was the most substantial state of the Federation.

Many events brought about by the intervenor, João Alberto Lins de Barros, and by the federal government appeared to justify this assumption. The deep malaise this caused among the state's population was to have dire consequences.<sup>174</sup>

This situation gave rise to the Constitutionalist Revolution in São Paulo in 1932. Although this revolution was eventually defeated, it left an atmosphere throughout the country that made it impossible for the Federal Government to refuse to hold elections for a constituent assembly.<sup>175</sup>

So, Getúlio called an election in 1933.<sup>176</sup> In the run-up, he passed not only the law on women's suffrage but also an electoral law that permitted the voters of São Paulo to draw up a list of the representatives they wanted in the Assembly from the candidates of the various parties. Each voter was free to draw up a roster of the candidates that he or she considered most suitable. It occurred to me that if we applied the system invented by General de Castelnau, the Catholics would be able to crowd out the non-Catholics. It would also be a chance to get a more significant number of Catholics into the Constituent Assembly by making lists that included only the Catholics from all parties.<sup>177</sup>

### 3. Conversations with Heitor da Silva Costa and Tristão de Athayde

I was in Rio de Janeiro then, and one of my best friends was the engineer Heitor da Silva Costa.<sup>178</sup>

He was the son of one of Emperor Dom Pedro II's councilors, José da Silva Costa,<sup>179</sup> married to a lady from an outstanding family in Rio de Janeiro, Elisa Guimarães da Silva

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<sup>174</sup> João Cabanas, revolutionary leader of 1924 and 1930, himself a *tenentista*, whose impartiality there is no reason to doubt, had the following comments on the actions of his former comrade, João Alberto, in his book *Fariseus da Revolução* [Pharisees of the (1932) Revolution]: "Although he may deserve respect as a military leader, his actions as a politician do not deserve any praise whatsoever. Having managed to position himself, by inexplicable maneuvers and under circumstances not yet clarified, at the head of the most important state of Brazil, he revealed himself to be a man of extraordinary, almost wondrous, incompetence, creating, in no more than one year in office, one of the the most tragically confused situations in the memory of the political life of Brazil, while at the same time, for good measure, also bringing about a serious economic crisis (a deficit of 100,000 contos), and rendering the "October Revolution" deeply unpopular.

<sup>175</sup> Interview published in *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*, op. cit.

<sup>176</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>177</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>178</sup> Heitor da Silva Costa (1873-1947) was the Brazilian engineer responsible for the construction project of the statue of Christ the Redeemer, inaugurated in 1931.

<sup>179</sup> SD 8/27/88.

Costa. He had a brother-in-law who was a congressman I liked very much, Professor Leitão da Cunha.<sup>180</sup>

He was a distinguished, brilliant and pleasant man thirty or forty years older than me, but he always made time to talk to me.<sup>181</sup>

When I arrived in Rio, I would call him: “Dr. Heitor, I am in Rio de Janeiro.” He would immediately invite me to sit down and talk. He also frequently came to São Paulo to visit me. We were very good friends.

He was a very well-known man then, having been the architect commissioned by Cardinal Dom Sebastião Leme to build the statue of Christ the Redeemer, a very daring engineering work.

During our conversation, I told Silva Costa:

“Getúlio has proposed an election to set up a Constituent Assembly. I would like us to try something I have read in the magazine *La documentation catholique* about General Castelnau.”

Silva Costa had heard of Castelnau and liked the plan. He told me he had thought of something similar and suggested we talk to Tristão de Athayde,<sup>182</sup> recommending that he take the matter to Dom Leme, Cardinal-Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>183</sup>

#### 4. Archbishop Leme Recommends the Foundation of LEC to the Episcopate

Tristão was very close to the Cardinal.<sup>184</sup> He told him about the plan, and the Cardinal liked it.<sup>185</sup>

From this, correspondence grew between Tristão and Silva Costa on one side and

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<sup>180</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>181</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>182</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983), whose pen name was Tristão de Athayde, was a literary critic, professor, thinker, writer, and Brazilian Catholic leader. Having obtained a bachelor’s degree in Rio in 1913, he traveled to Europe, where he attended the Sorbonne and the Collège de France. An agnostic and liberal in his youth, he was converted to Catholicism by Jackson de Figueiredo, and upon the death of the latter (1928), succeeded him as director of the Centro Dom Vital and editor of the magazine *A Ordem*. However, as a close collaborator of Cardinal Dom Sebastião Leme, he was appointed by him to be secretary-general of the Catholic Electoral League (1932) and later to be the first president of the Brazilian Catholic Action (1935-1945). He was elected a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 1935. He was a friend of Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira until the moment when, in the early ‘40s, under the influence of the French philosopher Jacques Maritain, he returned to his old liberal positions, going on to support the progressive trend, both in the liturgical and in the politico-social spheres. He was also one of the promoters of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), having participated, in 1949, in the so-called Movement of Montevideo. In 1967, he was appointed a member of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace by Pope Paul VI (cf. Roberto De Mattei, *The Crusader of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century — Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*, Gracewing, Fowler Wright Books, Leominster, Herefordshire, England, 1995, 1997; and Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil — CPDOC (<http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc>, entry on Alceu Amoroso Lima).

<sup>183</sup> SD 8/27/88. Most Rev. Sebastião Leme da Silveira Cintra (1882-1942) was the second Brazilian Cardinal. Archbishop of Olinda and Recife between 1916 and 1921, in 1921, he was named auxiliary archbishop of Rio de Janeiro and finally archbishop of that same city in 1930, succeeding Joaquim Cardinal Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti, and created cardinal that same year.

<sup>184</sup> SD 7/8/83.

<sup>185</sup> SD 8/27/88.

myself on the other. I made two or three trips to Rio, and we agreed on the content of the statutes.<sup>186</sup>

They asked me to draw up the statutes. I did so, relying heavily on the text of General Castelnau, which I adapted to the law and circumstances of Brazil. Tristão and Silva Costa made some amendments and sent them to Cardinal Leme.

Dom Leme, a very decisive man, had the text printed as a circular, which was then sent to all the archbishops and bishops of Brazil. It recommended the establishment of this body, which I suggested we call the *Catholic Electoral League*.<sup>187</sup>

Of course, this would require setting up a colossal organization. And like any large organization, it would need representation: the president should be a distinguished man, a man of position who looked the part. The secretary-general, on the other hand, would need to be a man of action.<sup>188</sup>

## 5. Ups and Downs of the Project

After that, things started moving behind the scenes in the Church. I no longer received any news about our project.<sup>189</sup>

Meanwhile, I was witnessing how the tyranny of Getúlio Vargas was constantly at work to dismantle the São Paulo that I loved — traditional, rural, agricultural, hierarchical and unique — to construct a new São Paulo — the cosmopolitan, ambiguous, undefined, intemperate and super-industrialized city without character or specific traits, which was his legacy.

I have always thought that huge, industrialized metropolises were the sink of civilization, and I firmly believe that we did not want this type of city in Brazil.

I thought South America should produce food and agricultural products in huge quantities. Let Europe and the United States manufacture; we would buy their products. Let them have their factories. We should focus on agriculture and enjoy the riches, well-being, balance, and conditions for a flowering of Christianity that could be had from it.

At the same time, I became aware of the demonstrations in São Paulo against Vargas and the people's great dislike for him. And I thought:

“Whatever happened to the LEC? It is at the bottom of my drawer and of the drawers of Tristão and Silva Costa. São Paulo is going down the drain. That hope has gone. All I can do is think and study as hard as possible, hoping that Our Lady will intervene.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>187</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>188</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>189</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>190</sup> SD 7/8/83.

## Chapter III

# Foundation and Activities of the LEC

### 1. Dr. Plinio Is Elected Secretary-General of the LEC in São Paulo

However, at a certain point, things finally started moving.

Dom Duarte founded the Catholic Electoral League in São Paulo, and all the other bishops then set up Catholic Electoral Leagues in their dioceses.<sup>191</sup>

The Catholic Electoral League was not exactly a political party.<sup>192</sup> It was a highly representative organization in each of the dioceses of São Paulo. Each parish had a local LEC linked to the diocese to which the parish belonged. The LECs of all dioceses in the State of São Paulo were connected to the LEC of the City of São Paulo. Similar organizations existed in each state of Brazil.<sup>193</sup>

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One day, Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto, Dom Duarte's Vicar General, called me and said: "Look, the papers that we received in connection with the question of the LEC state that you were, together with Silva Costa, the author of the founding document."

"Yes, that is true."

"Good. Dom Duarte wants to know if you would accept an appointment as the secretary-general of the Catholic Electoral League for the State of São Paulo, given the forthcoming elections to the Constituent Assembly."

"Yes, of course."

"Good, but be aware of the responsibility you are taking on. Because there will be a directorate and the archbishop wants to appoint well-known men from good families, you will also want to include some Catholic leaders over fifty. But the one who will have to do all the work will be you. Will you do it?"

"As long as he pays for the expenses. I have plenty of goodwill but no money."

He laughed and said:

"No, no! The Curia pays all expenses, and you will be the beast of burden who will do most of the work."

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<sup>191</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 26/2/95. São Paulo's LEC was established at a meeting in that city's archdiocesan chancery on November 13, 1932 (cf. *Legionário*, No. 108, November 20, 1932, p. 1).

<sup>192</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>193</sup> SD 1/7/89.



“All right then, let's do it.”<sup>194</sup>

Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto then explained to me:

“Dom Duarte is expecting you, with the contacts you have within the Marian environment and with Catholics in general, to become a real driving force in this campaign and to organize the Catholics so they will register to vote. The LEC will set up an office to facilitate this registration. And we, the clergy, will work hard to ensure that the greatest possible number of Catholics, and especially Catholic women, do register to vote. The person responsible for this service to be provided by the LEC will be you.”<sup>195</sup>

## 2. Estêvão de Souza Rezende Is Appointed LEC President

Then he asked me to propose members for the board of directors of the Catholic Electoral League and told me:<sup>196</sup>

“We need a well-known man, a man with a great name, to be president.”<sup>197</sup>

I remember proposing two men from traditional São Paulo families and two Catholic leaders from less prominent and more modest families of practicing Catholics who rendered outstanding services to the Catholic Movement.<sup>198</sup>

For president, I suggested a man whose name he recognized immediately and whom I remember with great nostalgia: Estêvão Emmerich de Souza Rezende,<sup>199</sup> an aged nobleman of the old school,<sup>200</sup> a grandson of the Marquis of Valença and a perfect Marquis.<sup>201</sup> He was well known and much respected in São Paulo.<sup>202</sup>

Msgr. Gastão was jubilant:

“Estêvão Rezende! What a brilliant suggestion!”<sup>203</sup>

Estêvão Emmerich de Souza Rezende was a Third Order Carmelite and had a reputation as an honest and incorruptible man. He was not particularly rich but had enough to live decently and with dignity.

It took me a long time to understand what the name *Emmerich* meant. I had believed it to be the name of a German or Hungarian ancestor, but it was not. Emmerich was the son of Saint Stephen, King of Hungary. *Emmerich* in German is *Américo* in Portuguese.<sup>204</sup>

Even today, I remember going to Communion every morning at ten o'clock in the Church of Santa Cecilia. Whenever I was there, I would see another man who had come for Communion, of medium height, with a Portuguese-style mustache, blondish hair, blue eyes, very well groomed and elegant, with an aristocratic air. I did not know

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<sup>194</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>195</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>196</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>197</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>198</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>199</sup> SD 7/8/83.

<sup>200</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>201</sup> SD 7/8/83.

<sup>202</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>203</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>204</sup> SD 1/7/89.

him personally, but I used to watch him and think, “He looks very distinguished, quiet and placid man, like someone who would be easy and pleasant to deal with.”<sup>205</sup> I also admired the lack of human respect with which he received Communion at a time when no man of some prestige would do so.<sup>206</sup>

I have another memory of him that illustrates his character exceptionally well.<sup>207</sup> There was an elderly mulatto woman who used to go to Communion at the Church of Santa Cecilia at the same time as we did. She suffered from some problem with her leg – and at Santa Cecilia, the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament was two or three steps above ground level.

Each time she went to Communion, she had to climb the steps and then climb down again. She usually managed well enough on the way up, clinging to the open railing of the chapel, but she found it very difficult to come down again.

Dr. Estêvão Rezende would always kindly and politely lend her a hand.<sup>208</sup> He did it the same air as though he had been helping a marchioness. She would lean on him and totter down the stairs,<sup>209</sup> half-groaning and half-smiling at the exquisite politeness the gentleman showed her. She would thank him, and he would return to his prayers.<sup>210</sup> I thought this was an exquisite example of Christian charity, as you could wish to see, and it was very typical of him; he did this every day.<sup>211</sup>

There was no act of kindness I would not have been ready to perform for this man. And he never failed to reciprocate. Our relationship was as close to perfection as I have ever experienced. He became a great friend of mine.<sup>212</sup>

### 3. The Other LEC Directors

Msgr. Gastão asked me:

“Whom else would you suggest?”

At the ceremonies of the Third Carmelite Order of Ladeira, where I used to go to pray novenas, I had met the prior, who was also a man from a well-known São Paulo family called Mário Egídio de Souza Aranha. I said:

“Mário Egídio de Souza Aranha.”

“All right: Mário Egídio de Souza Aranha.”<sup>213</sup>

For the vice president position, I proposed a university professor, an economist known to be very knowledgeable in his field, very Catholic, the father of a large family and a very straightforward and circumspect man. He was one of

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<sup>205</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>206</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>207</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>208</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>209</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>210</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>211</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>212</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>213</sup> SD 6/22/73. Mário Egídio de Souza Aranha (1891-1977), grandson of the Viscountess of Campinas, physician, professor at the University of São Paulo and prior of the Third Carmelite Order of Ladeira.

the brightest minds of the Catholic Movement of São Paulo. His name might sound a bit strange: José Papaterra Limongi.<sup>214</sup>

Finally, I named Dr. Vicente Melillo, a lawyer, a very fervent Catholic and an excellent speaker.<sup>215</sup>

Msgr. Gastão said:

“I will nominate two.”

“Of course.”

“Dr. Adolfo Greff Borba and Dr. Esdras Pacheco Ferreira.”

I said:

“Perfect.”<sup>216</sup>

This completed the board of directors of the Catholic Electoral League.<sup>217</sup>

#### 4. LEC's Activities in Full Gear

With the help of several Marian congregants who came to work with me at the General Secretariat, a vast network of centers of the Catholic Electoral League was set up in the various dioceses of the Ecclesiastical Province of São Paulo.

The LEC was well organized and structured.<sup>218</sup> I realized that it might have a very bright future: if the bishops could be made to understand how to harness the League's power, it might be possible to establish a genuinely Catholic society in Brazil.<sup>219</sup>

We took three rooms in a building belonging to the archdiocesan chancery building,<sup>220</sup> on Venceslau Brás Street. I had a room of my own, and, by the orders of Dom Duarte, there was a table in the corner of this room, including all the necessary paraphernalia, for holding board meetings.

Another large room was prepared specifically for use during the electoral campaign. In the back, a photographic studio could be used to take pictures for voter registration. Having a photographer already there made things much easier for the voters.

We would then forward the voter ID cards to the Electoral Tribunal and monitor the process. If anything went wrong, we would object immediately.<sup>221</sup>

I invited Dr. Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra to direct this voter recruitment service.<sup>222</sup> He worked like a Trojan, then—there is no other way of putting it. He was still a law student when I graduated.<sup>223</sup>

The typist was a Catholic student of the Law School who later became a

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<sup>214</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>215</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>216</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>217</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>218</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>219</sup> SD 7/8/83.

<sup>220</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>221</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>222</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>223</sup> SD 1/7/89.

congressman for the State of Goiás: Benedito Vaz.<sup>224</sup>

We started advertising among Catholics, announcing to all Catholics who wished to register as voters that we would process their voter IDs. They should also commit to voting for the candidates the Catholic Electoral League recommended.

It was a massive campaign drive. People came and went continuously; the elevator never stood still. The movement grew and flourished.<sup>225</sup> We would come in the morning and only leave at night.<sup>226</sup>

Within a short time, the League had set in motion a colossal movement! Most of it was owed to the support of the clergy. But to some extent, it was also due to the popularity that I enjoyed with militant Catholics, where I was very well known indeed.<sup>227</sup>

## 5. A Single List for a United São Paulo

The election campaign was well underway when, one day, I was asked to call on Dom Gastão, who said, “I want to tell you some news – in strict confidence.”

He fixed on me with gimlets eye: “The LEC will not stand for election.”

We already had a vast electorate! I swallowed my disappointment as best as I could, and he said:

“The archbishop has been approached by politicians of São Paulo who decided to make a single list of all political currents in the state. There will be four candidates for the Paulista Republican Party, four for the Democratic Party, four for the trade association representing conservative classes, and four for the LEC representing the Church. There will also be two or three that third parties have designated.”

He added:

“Now, you must work for the candidates assigned to this list.”

“No problem! This is very good. If we get four representatives for the Church, that would be excellent. I could wish for nothing better.”

“Keep this to yourself for the time being, will you? When the time is right, you will be told the names of the candidates that the LEC will propose.”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>225</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>226</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>227</sup> Lunch EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>228</sup> SD 8/27/88.

# Chapter IV

## Nomination as Candidate

### 1. Msgr. Gastão Reveals the List of Candidates

Sometime after that, Msgr. Gastão called again: “The Archbishop has finalized the list of the four Catholic candidates.”

He was half-serious, half-joking. In his first conversation, he wanted to test me to see if I was hoping to be a candidate.

He told me: “The four candidates are Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, José de Alcântara Machado, Rafael de Abreu Sampaio Vidal, and Manuel Hipólito do Rego.”<sup>229</sup>

As the Vicar General of São Paulo, Dom Gastão was second only to Archbishop Duarte. He had significant influence and was very much in favor of Dom Duarte, including me as a candidate.

He also worked very hard to get me elected. I maintained an excellent relationship with him until his death.<sup>230</sup>

Well, I knew Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira.<sup>231</sup> It was apparent that behind the act of generosity and confidence by which the archbishop had entrusted that responsibility to me was the idea that the inclusion of my name in the list would ensure a great deal of enthusiasm among the members of all the Marian Congregations and that they would bring the entire Catholic laity with them.

That was why they thought the Catholic Electoral League's electoral weight would significantly increase with my presence among the candidates.<sup>232</sup>

Another candidate was José de Alcântara Machado.<sup>233</sup> He was very well known in São Paulo then, a wealthy man who owned a large expanse of agricultural land in the interior.<sup>234</sup> He had been my professor at the Law School.<sup>235</sup> He gave fascinating lectures on a subject that I had always found rather unpleasant: Forensic Medicine.<sup>236</sup>

He had great literary talent and had just been elected to the Brazilian Academy of Letters.

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<sup>229</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>230</sup> SD 8/6/88.

<sup>231</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>232</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>233</sup> José de Alcântara Machado de Oliveira (1875-1941), Brazilian jurist, writer, professor and politician, was the leader of the São Paulo state representatives in the Constituent National Assembly of 1933-34.

<sup>234</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>235</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>236</sup> SD 8/23/80.

The son of Baron Brasília Machado, having been named a baron by Pope Saint Pius X, he was an outstanding Catholic; he had also been a member – in a position, I believe, of average importance – in the old PRP (Republican Party of São Paulo). To a certain extent, his father's prestige as a Catholic is also reflected in the son.

He was a very strong-willed man with eyes between gray and light green and relatively light hair. When he became hostile, he could be pretty ferocious; usually, however, he was pleasant to deal with.

The third candidate, Rafael Sampaio Vidal, was a former Minister of Finance in the Administration of Artur Bernardes, who preceded Washington Luis as president of the Republic.<sup>237</sup>

I had gotten to know Rafael Sampaio Vidal reasonably well at my uncle's home, who was his friend. He used to come on Sundays to talk to my uncle, and I was part of the hubbub of children and nephews. On these occasions, we would pass by the members of the older generation, greet them and exchange a few words. As far as encounters of this kind were concerned, I had met Rafael Sampaio Vidal many times.

His appointment surprised me because I had never seen any evidence of a solid Catholic view in him.

Finally, the fourth candidate, Manuel Hipólito do Rego, was a distinguished lawyer at the Santos Courthouse and a close friend of the local bishop.<sup>238</sup> He was a good man and one of the Catholic movement leaders in Santos. The bishop of Santos recommended him as a candidate. We remained friends until the end of his life.<sup>239</sup> I found out later that he owned property there near São Sebastião.

These, then, were the candidates proposed by the LEC.

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I told Dom Gastão:

“I am very grateful to you and to the archbishop; I feel greatly honored by the trust that you have placed in me.”

“No, not everything is decided yet. We need you to convene a meeting of the Archdiocesan Board of the LEC because they must approve these appointments.”

“But, Msgr. Gastão, I cannot attend the meeting because it would constrain them.”

“Well, then, don't go.”

I made the telephone calls to convene the meeting, and I said,

“I have been instructed by the ecclesiastical authority to present this list of candidates to you, but being a candidate myself, I do not want to participate in the discussions because I want you all to feel free to veto me if you disagree with my appointment. So, I won't be attending.”

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<sup>237</sup> Rafael de Abreu Sampaio Vidal (1870-1941) was a lawyer, politician, farmer and great defender of coffee planting as the basis for the nation's economy.

<sup>238</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>239</sup> SD 8/27/88.

They said, “Certainly, you do not need to be present while we discuss the question.”<sup>240</sup>

So, I withdrew. They remained there for quite a while. I walked up and down the corridor, which was empty at this hour, saying my prayers for the day and asking Our Lady to do whatever she thought best regarding my candidature.<sup>241</sup>

After an hour of discussion – I do not know what happened during that hour – they called me. I went in, and they told me I could report to the archbishop that the list had been unanimously approved.<sup>242</sup>

It was an excellent opportunity to strike a blow for the Church.<sup>243</sup>

## 2. Catholic and Monarchist on a Republican Ticket: Difficulties

Later, I went to see Dom Duarte, thanked him for his kindness and explained to him that I found myself in such a difficulty:

“Dom Duarte, I am a monarchist. And I cannot accept for my name to be on a Republican ticket.”

“Oh! So you are a monarchist?”

“Yes.”

“Childish nonsense! Just drop it!”

“No, Dom Duarte. This is a very serious thing: I am a monarchist, and incidentally, I do not understand how it is possible to be anything else. And I will only agree to my name being put on that list if the president of the League writes me a letter clearly stating that it is at the request of the Church and in the interests of advancing the Catholic cause that I am putting my monarchical ideas aside, for the time being, to enter the political arena. Otherwise, I will not agree to be a candidate.”

“All right. You can write this letter, no problem.”

After that, I went to see Dr. Estêvão de Souza Rezende; reaching an agreement with him was not difficult.

A few days later, when I woke up in the morning and rang the bell for the maid to bring me the newspaper, she told me:

“Dr. Plinio, I received a call very early in the morning from the house of Dr. Estêvão de Souza Rezende (see how far the kindness of people of the old school went) warning me not to wake you up before your usual time, but to let you know, when you woke up, that Dr. Estêvão Rezende has died.”

“Dr. Estêvão de Souza Rezende has died?”

I did what I could to help with the funeral arrangements.<sup>244</sup> Who was going to be the

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<sup>240</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>241</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>242</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>243</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>244</sup> Dr. Estêvão Rezende died on July 14, 1933. Dr. Plinio made his funeral eulogy in an article in *Legionário*, No. 24, 7/16/33.

new President of the League? As it turned out, it was Vicente Melillo.<sup>245</sup>

I went and described my dilemma to Dr. Vicente Melillo, who told me:

“This seems to be a rather complicated problem, and I do not understand it. However, write the letter and give it to me and I will sign it. Explain your conscientious objection, and I will resolve it however you want me to.”

So I wrote the letter, and he returned it to me, written out in longhand in beautiful Vincentian-style calligraphy and signed with all the formalities.<sup>246</sup>

### 3. Scruples of Conscience

On the same day on which I visited Dom Duarte to thank him, he told me in a paternal but somewhat distant manner:

“You have been appointed a candidate because Dom Gastão Liberal Pinto said you will shoulder any responsibility.”

“Your Excellency, there is no doubt I will do whatever I can.”

“Well, now the question is: Will you mobilize all the Marian Congregations in this election?”

“I certainly will. Do not doubt it.”

“Because the propaganda should come from the ‘Marians.’”

He had a strange way of pronouncing the word. He would not say “Marians” but “Maríans” [accenting the ‘i’]. I do not know why.

“The ‘Maríans’ should do this. And it will be your job to ensure that these thousands of “Maríans” all fight for the same cause.”

“Your Excellency, I guarantee that they will do so.”

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But when I was back on the street, I started having scruples.

I thought, “Dom Duarte is only putting me up as a candidate because he wants me to mobilize the Marians.<sup>247</sup> He would like to nominate another if he appoints me only because of my prestige. Should I not, in all conscience, go to him and say: ‘Your Excellency, please do appoint another, and I will work for that other in the same way as I would be working on my account because then I would be fulfilling the wishes of my archbishop?’”<sup>248</sup>

Having spent two or three days without deciding, I consulted Father José Danti, a Jesuit at the São Luís High School.

I recall being in Father Danti’s room; he was sitting at his desk, in profile, looking forward, and I was in a chair. He looked like a head on a coin.

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<sup>245</sup> Vicente Melillo (1883-1969), an Italian immigrant, he became a lawyer, writer, received a Commander decoration, was a Vincentian, married and father of eleven children; he was ordained a priest at age eighty after becoming a widower.

<sup>246</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>247</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>248</sup> SD 6/23/73.



“So, Dr. Plinio, what can I do for you?”

I explained my dilemma.

“Father Danti, should I not go to see Dom Duarte and say this and that? Might he not be under the impression that I would not mobilize the Marian congregants if he did not give me this appointment? Does this not mean that I am, in some way, blackmailing him into giving me this position when it is his gift as an archbishop to dispose of as he sees fit? Am I not taking advantage in some way if I accept this position when it is not strictly necessary?”

I still remember Father Danti's attitude, with his gaze fixed on the horizon. When I finished speaking, he did not react. After a pause, he tilted his head slightly and then said:

“Did you ask for the position?”

“No.”

“Did you exercise any pressure to obtain the nomination?”

“No, not at all. It came as a complete surprise to me.”

“It may be that the archbishop has made this calculation. But it was not you who suggested it to him. It was his own decision, and he, not you, is accountable to God for his actions. You do not have to get inside his head to think what he thought, to see if any obligation to you arises from this.”

Then he added:

“It may be that he has given this position to you to carry the votes of all the Marians.<sup>249</sup> But you must present yourself as a candidate – you, personally. Seeing you so eager to obey the archbishop and so faithful to the Catholic Church proves that the Church could not have a better representative. If you withdraw and leave your position to someone else, your successor might easily be someone who is not as staunchly faithful as you are. So I think it would be better for you to remain a candidate.”<sup>250</sup>

I thought this was very well-argued. I thanked him and returned to deal with my application's formalities.<sup>251</sup>

#### 4. Surprise and Insecurity as My Family Learns about My Nomination

At home, I did not say a word.

I thought, “I will only say something at home, in the Marian Congregation, or anywhere else if something is published in the papers. Because it is, after all, an extraordinary thing for me to be nominated as a candidate to the Constituent Assembly at the age of twenty-three, and it may still come to nothing. I'd better keep quiet about it.”

Days later, all the newspaper headlines<sup>252</sup> announced “the candidates’ names, etc.,” and presented the single list for a united São Paulo. It was an anti-Getulista ticket. And there, among the names listed in alphabetical order, was the

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<sup>249</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>250</sup> SD 6/23/73.

<sup>251</sup> SD 8/27/88.

<sup>252</sup> See São Paulo newspapers of April 25, 1933, e.g. *Folha da Manhã*, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, etc.

name of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.

I read the newspapers and quietly took a streetcar home for dinner.<sup>253</sup>

When I got home, I said, “Did you know that the candidates for the list for a united São Paulo have been designated?”

Everyone asked curiously, “Who are the candidates?”

But no one there knew I was on the list, not even my mother.

I was the youngest and was, therefore, at the bottom end of the table. My mother, one of the most senior, was near the head of the table occupied by my grandmother, who always paid close attention during meals but without turning her head to see what I was saying. It was a way to listen and focus more.

I named the candidates of the other parties and added, “And myself.”

“Ah! So you are a candidate?”

“I am a candidate.”

I noticed a sort of amazement all around the table,<sup>254</sup> a kind of surprise that appeared to hover between satisfaction and anxiety. They had no idea of the strength of the LEC movement.

I also noticed that my mother seemed rather anxious, as though she was saying to herself, “How can he have jumped into this with both feet and accepted this candidacy?”<sup>255</sup>

I heard later that there was a lot of talk among family members that it was reckless of me to present myself as a candidate: a boy aged twenty-four who knew few people from a family without political ties that had long since given up its properties in the interior, without any basis among the electorate. How could I possibly hope to be elected? In their assessment, my candidature was very honorable but bound to be a dismal failure; they also asked themselves if it hadn't been a mistake.

My mother shared these opinions because she felt very insecure in all matters related to politics.<sup>256</sup>

However, at that time, they tried to encourage me:

“Oh! Very good. Now, it will only be a question of finding some voters, right?”

“We will see. I am not risking anything by standing in this election.”

At dinner, during dessert, my grandmother ordered champagne in honor of the future congressman. But I could see that everyone pitied my imminent and inevitable failure.<sup>257</sup>

After dinner, I overheard my mother making plans with an aunt and her sister to take measures to obtain some votes for me. They would call the Hotel Balneario Park in Santos, where my family would spend the winter months and ask the director, Mr. Fracarolli, to tell the waiters to vote for me. They estimated

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<sup>253</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>254</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>255</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>256</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>257</sup> SD 6/22/73.

that that would bring me about fifteen votes.

Then, some housemaids were employed elsewhere: they would tell them to vote for me, talk to their friends, and ask them to do the same.

There were several more plans of the same kind, which would not have amounted to a hundred names. But the list had been made, with phone numbers, to start the propaganda campaign. They wanted to ensure that my failure would not be too humiliating.<sup>258</sup>

I found all this funny, but I thought, “Let them ask. Five or ten votes out there might suddenly be decisive.”

When I went to say goodbye to my mother at night, I noticed she was somewhat reserved.<sup>259</sup>

So I asked her:

“Dear Mother, what do you think of this candidacy?”

“My son, I know nothing about elections. But your uncles tell me that you are unknown, that the only places where anyone has heard of you are a few sacristies. You have a traditional name, but it is traditional in Pernambuco, not here. No one in São Paulo knows the name of Corrêa de Oliveira, so it will not help you. And your uncles think you have no chance of being elected. Are you sure that you have acted wisely?”

“Look, Mother, it will be better to attempt and lose than never to give it a try. Because at least I will have passed through all this and gain experience from it. This way, I have decided to go ahead with this.”

“All right, may God help you.”

“Pray things go well; I could do much good for the Church.”

I continued my work. Dr. Paulo Barros de Ulhôa Cintra continued to work with me. We traveled and took various measures.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>259</sup> Lunch EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>260</sup> SD 6/22/73.

## Chapter V

# Early Difficulties

### 1. Alcântara Machado Summons the “Youngest”

A few days later, in the afternoon, I was holding a meeting in my office<sup>261</sup> with *Legionário* group members (I used my office to chat and do apostolate) when the phone rang.<sup>262</sup>

I answered it. I was so short of money that I had no office boy and had to answer the phone myself.<sup>263</sup>

“Hello.”

“Who is this?”

“This is the office of Dr. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira.”

From the other side, I heard, “This is Alcântara Machado.”

“Ah! Dr. Alcântara Machado, how are you? Everything all right?”<sup>264</sup>

“I wanted to let you know that there will be a meeting on 19 São Bento St. in a building belonging to the Bar Association at such and such time and on such a date to discuss the program of the single list. You, as our youngest colleague, are also invited.”

He did not even ask if I was free at that time. As the “Benjamin,” the novice, I was expected to come when called.

“All right. I will be there.”

### 2. Separation of Church and State, an Unacceptable Demand

When the time came, I presented myself at the Brazilian Bar Association building, which I had never entered. It was an old building in which Councilor Antonio Prado had once lived.<sup>265</sup>

The meeting was held in his former dining room. The wallpaper was beautiful, but the furniture was rather ugly. There was a huge table, and the whole environment before the start of the meeting was strongly “political,” with everyone talking simultaneously.

I went in and was met by Professor José Joaquim Cardoso de Melo Neto,<sup>266</sup> a great

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<sup>261</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>262</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>263</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>264</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>265</sup> At that time, the building had been known as the Elias Pacheco Chaves house. The location corresponded to what are now numbers 189, 195 and 197 of São Bento Street in the historic center of São Paulo (cfr. <http://www.oabsp.org.br/portaldamemoria/destaque/primeira-sede-da-oab-fica-na-sao-bento/>).

<sup>266</sup> José Joaquim Cardoso de Melo Neto (1883-1965); lawyer, teacher and politician; tenured Professor of Political Economy at the São Paulo Law School and director of that same Faculty between 1941 and 1942;

friend of Alcântara Machado and my former Professor of Political Economy.

Cardoso de Melo's family was very friendly with my own, so he spoke to me as he would have spoken to a nephew.

"Oh! How are you, Plinio? Come here. I want to introduce you to several people."

Among these people, there was José Carlos de Macedo Soares,<sup>267</sup> who, for reasons I will explain, was indignant and furious at my appointment.

The meeting started, and Alcântara Machado took the chair. I sat in the last seat because I was the youngest, but I had a good view of the chairman and leader.

"All right, we will now read the candidates' program for the single list for a united São Paulo. First point: separation of Church and State. Second point: this, that and the other."

He also listed other policies that are irrelevant in this context.

The LEC's claims covered overthrowing secularism in Brazil, forbidding divorce, implementing religious education in schools, and establishing chaplaincies in hospitals, state prisons, and the military.

After the reading, Alcântara Machado said:

"Are there any objections?"

"Yes, Dr. Alcântara Machado, I have an objection."

All heads turned toward me:<sup>268</sup> Was the kid of twenty-four going to get into an argument with the boss?<sup>269</sup>

"I have an objection concerning the first point: the separation of Church and State. I know it is not the desire of the episcopate to restore the union of Church and State. However, we cannot say that this is a good system. It is a lesser evil, but how it is presented here makes it look like an ideal system."

One of the candidates, Dr. João Sampaio – still relatively young at that time, though his

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acting mayor of São Paulo between October 24 and December 5, 1930; he was also governor of the State of São Paulo from January 5 to November 10, 1937, and federal intervenor in the same State, from November 11, 1937 to April 25, 1938.

<sup>267</sup> José Carlos de Macedo Soares (1883-1968) was a Brazilian lawyer, historian, and politician. He was the president of the August 11 Academic Center in 1905 and was a member of the organizing committee of Modern Art Week in 1922. During his term as president of the Commercial Association of São, he was accused of cooperating with the Revolution of 1924. He was indicted, jailed for two months, and then went into exile in Paris for three years. In 1930, he supported the candidacy of Getúlio Vargas. He had been named Secretary of Justice after the coup that ousted President Washington Luís, and Vargas left him in his post. During the year 1932, he led several diplomatic missions to Europe. Upon returning to Brazil, he was elected a federal congressman on the single list for a united São Paulo. Vargas made him Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1934, and he remained in office until January 1937, when he assumed the administration of Justice. One of his first acts was to order the release of 308 political prisoners accused of involvement in the Communist Uprising of 1935 (cf. Article 308, *Legionário*, no. 249, June 20, 1937), an episode that later became known as the "*Macedada*." In 1937, he became a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and was elected its president from 1942 to 1944. He was federal intervenor in the State of São Paulo from November 7, 1945 to March 14, 1947, then Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs under Getúlio Vargas and Juscelino Kubitschek (interim), and Minister of Foreign Affairs under Nereu Ramos (sources: CPDOC of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, etc.).

<sup>268</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>269</sup> SD 9/3/88.

beard was beginning to turn gray – did not even turn his head to look at me when I started speaking; he just scowled<sup>270</sup> and pushed back his chair as someone who would have liked to say, “See? They let this sanctimonious busybody in here, and he is already starting to cause trouble!”

I stuck to my guns.<sup>271</sup>

“Not that I want the single list for a united São Paulo to restore the Middle Ages...”

This hypothesis was already enough to knock them off their chairs...

“... but to declare that the separation of Church and State is a good thing is something I cannot do. I would withdraw from my candidature and the single list rather than see my name appear on such a program.<sup>272</sup> I have to say quite clearly that if this is approved, I will have to consult the Catholic Electoral League because we have never been consulted about this proposal. I therefore disagree and ask that you register my objection. The loyalty that there should be between all the political currents that make up the single list ought to have ensured that we were consulted first.”

There were several furious faces around that table.<sup>273</sup>

There was a moment of suspense—the single list was about to fall apart. They knew the Catholic electorate was huge, and they needed it.

While I spoke, Alcântara Machado (I remember him with a pencil and paper in hand) looked at me pensively.

### 3. Compromise and Detente

When I finished, he said:

“Well, let’s fix that. Let’s word the paragraph like this: “Should the State and the Church be separated, there should be concord between the two powers, civil and ecclesiastical.” It is conditional because it may be interpreted as saying that the Church and the State should be separated and in a completely different way. If separated, neither you nor we will be compromised.”<sup>274</sup>

I perceived the wisdom behind this and thought it was a very good solution. So I said:<sup>275</sup>

“Yes, I can agree with this.”

“Ahhh! And everyone relaxed.”

Shortly after, the meeting was over, and everyone sighed in relief.<sup>276</sup> João Sampaio was demobilized entirely.<sup>277</sup> The LEC had won that first point. The youngest participant's hand had pulled the emergency brake on the train, and the train had stopped.

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<sup>270</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>271</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>272</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>273</sup> SD 7/1/89.

<sup>274</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>275</sup> Lunch EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>276</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>277</sup> Lunch EANS 11/23/90.

Everyone understood that I would not interfere while they created their policies. But when safeguarding Catholic interests, I would stop at nothing.

#### 4. A Shock for Dom Duarte

A few days later, I visited Dom Duarte and told him about the meeting.<sup>278</sup>

He had extraordinary episcopal dignity. While I was talking, he listened to me with no change in expression—his face looked like marble (that statue in front of Santa Cecilia Church does not convey even a remote idea of what he was like).

He was skinny and used to cross one leg over the other so that the leg that had crossed over the other still touched the ground. He could close his face, but he could not control his foot. From how this foot moved, I could tell whether or not he liked what he was hearing. Whenever I talked to him and he crossed his legs, I would discreetly watch the foot act as a seismograph.

I gave him a detailed account of everything from the beginning of the meeting: who said this or that, who said they knew my family. He listened to it all, finding it all normal, tapping his foot.

When I had reached the point where I said, “and Alcântara Machado also had the following proposal,” he put his hands near his heart as though trying to grab the cross (he was old and would die a short while later of heart disease). I told him that I had refused to accept the point of the separation of Church and State.

He said:

“You said that?”

“Yes, I did. And then Alcântara Machado made this proposal, and I accepted it.”

He sighed with relief.

It was a brilliant victory for Religion.<sup>279</sup>

As it was the first time I was acting on behalf of the Chancery as a candidate, I was glad of the opportunity to demonstrate to him that I could stand firm if required but would not confuse firmness with stupid stubbornness. I also wanted him to know that I knew how to be conciliatory and that as soon as Alcântara Machado had—very adroitly—found a solution, I could see that it was good and accepted it.<sup>280</sup>

#### 5. New Difficulty: the Case of Macedo Soares

It was during this period that we ran into a highly complex situation.

Before Dr. Estêvão Rezende's death, I was canvassing when I learned that José Carlos de Macedo Soares had raised a complaint against me.

José Carlos de Macedo Soares was a very close and trusted friend of Dom Duarte,

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<sup>278</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>279</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>280</sup> SD 6/22/73.

one permitted to enter his house at any time. He was also very close to Getúlio Vargas and had a reputation for being a practicing Catholic.<sup>281</sup> He even had the Blessed Sacrament in his house.

He was in Europe when the single list was drawn up.<sup>282</sup>

Upon his return, he found that the Church had selected me as a candidate for congressman.<sup>283</sup> He considered it an outrage that he, a “great Catholic,” had not been nominated as a candidate by the Church but by the Trade Association.<sup>284</sup>

He went to Dom Duarte and said that he insisted on being made the president of the Catholic Electoral League and that he should direct it.

Dom Duarte called a meeting of the League's board of directors and said, “Well, gentlemen, I leave it to you to resolve this question.”

We had a meeting, and I told Dom Duarte that the League had decided that if he, Dom Duarte, wanted us to, we would obey and leave our leadership positions in the League. I said I did not mind what I did and would gladly work even as a typist for the League to ensure its victory. But I would not serve with a man like José Carlos de Macedo Soares on the board.

Dom Duarte passed this onto Macedo Soares. The latter was furious, ranted at Dom Duarte, said the worst things he could think of and cut all ties with his friend.

This even led Tristão de Athayde to travel from Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo to try and repair relations between Dom Duarte and Macedo Soares, but to no avail.

When Dom Duarte went to Itaipava to spend a few days with Dom Leme, Macedo Soares threatened to write an article against Dom Duarte.

I telegraphed Dom Duarte, warning him of the threat. Dom Duarte came back to São Paulo immediately. The conflict between the two was horrible to witness.<sup>285</sup>

But my candidacy had been announced and could not have been withdrawn.<sup>286</sup>

## 6. An Attempt to Prevent Me Standing as a Candidate

Another difficulty appeared. It was obvious that some were working behind the scenes to create problems.<sup>287</sup>

That resulted from my militant attitude at the first meeting of the single list when my

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<sup>281</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54. Despite his reputation as a devout Catholic, however, José Carlos de Macedo Soares took frankly reprehensible positions (later to be exposed by the *Legionário*), including the aforementioned release, during his term of office as Minister of Justice under Vargas, of 308 Communist prisoners who had been held in Rio for participating in the Communist Uprising of 1935. During that attempted coup, among other brutal acts of violence, officers and soldiers of the Armed Forces had been murdered in the dead of night by Communist elements who had infiltrated the barracks of Natal, Recife, and Rio. After their release in Rio, some of these prisoners started to shout, “Long live Luís Carlos Prestes!” and sang the anthem of the Third Communist International (cf. *Legionário*, June 13, 20 and 27, 1937).

<sup>282</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>283</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>284</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>285</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 7/8/54.

<sup>286</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>287</sup> Lunch EANS 11/23/90.



conscience obliged me to oppose a proposal supported by everyone else.

So, one day, the headlines of the daily newspapers read, “The candidacy of Mr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira has been called into question.” The subhead said, “Not old enough to be a congressman.”

The electoral law required that a congressman have passed his twenty-fourth birthday. I was still twenty-three when I was nominated as a candidate.

The problem was: is a man who is twenty-three years old when registering as a candidate for election but will be twenty-four when the election takes place eligible for election?<sup>288</sup> How should the law be interpreted?<sup>289</sup>

I wondered about this and became very angry, but what should I do?

I realized that what was needed was a well-reasoned argument, a legal opinion as to how to interpret the electoral law, from a jurist of unassailable reputation, to leave the Electoral Tribunal with its back to the wall, and, in this way, to oblige the court to declare that there could be no question that I was entitled to stand.<sup>290</sup>

At that point, I received a phone call from one of the candidates, who offered to arrange for an expert opinion by a great legal expert in my favor.

I said, “Yes, of course, gladly.”

He said: “Come to my house at such a time so we can discuss this matter.”

I went to his house, we talked a little, and I asked:

“Well, but who is this legal adviser?”

“It is Professor Sampaio Dória of the Law School (I knew him; he had been my professor of Constitutional Law): do you want his opinion?”

“Yes, I do!”

He called Sampaio Dória<sup>291</sup> and arranged a meeting for the next day, a holiday, at a café on November 15 Street, across the street from the Department of Education, near Pátio do Colégio.

If I remember correctly, the café was *Café Guarany*. He would meet me there and explain the case to me.

I presented myself at Café Guarany at the hour named. We greeted each other and sat down. It appeared that Sampaio Dória remembered me.

We started to discuss the problem right away, and he said:

“I think you are absolutely right. I will write an opinion for you.”

Then he added,

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<sup>288</sup> SD 8/23/80. Dr. Plinio was nominated for inclusion in the single list for a united São Paulo at the age of 23. His twenty-fourth birthday was on December 13, 1932. The election was held on May 3, 1933, and the Constituent Assembly was installed in November of the same year. The work went on until July 16, 1934, when the New Constitution was passed.

<sup>289</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>290</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>291</sup> Antonio Sampaio Dória (1883-1964) was a Brazilian politician, lawyer and educator. He was the Director-General of Public Education (1920-1924), responsible for various educational reforms. He later became professor of Constitutional Public Law and Private International Law at the Law School of São Paulo. He was appointed Minister of Justice by interim President José Linhares in 1945.

“I am opposed to the participation of the Church in politics. But in this case, in the situation in which Brazil is now, I think it’s a good thing. That is why I am offering to give an opinion in your favor. Come tomorrow at such and such a time and get the opinion.”

I sent someone to fetch what turned out to be an excellent opinion entirely in my favor.

I then had to send the opinion to the Electoral Tribunal in Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital at the time. Dr. Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra, a year and a half younger than I was but very astute, went there on my behalf.

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One night, I was at home having dinner with a friend, the head of the Congregation of St. Cecilia, from a wealthy Danish family in São Paulo. His name was Svend Kok. Other people were present as well.

Suddenly, there was a telephone call from Rio:

“Mr. Paulo wants to speak to Dr. Plinio.”

I said, “This must be about the Electoral Tribunal. Let’s go.”

I cannot remember who in Rio de Janeiro opposed my candidacy. I shouted down the phone, telling Paulo to respond in such a way.

Paulo told me the arguments raised by that person. All those who listened to the conversation and heard my replies would have understood what arguments my opponents in Rio were raising.

My mother, close to the phone, was listening very attentively. So was Svend Kok. Svend Kok had a curious reaction.

When it became apparent during the telephone conversation what they were saying against me, Svend rubbed his hands. Since I was giving all my attention to the all-important phone call, I paid no attention to what Svend was doing. But I noticed that my mother had said something to him. I also noticed that he returned a polite answer.

Later in the evening, my mother told me:

“You saw what Svend did while you were talking on the phone?”

“No, I wasn’t paying attention.”

“When he heard the arguments used to attack you, he rubbed his hands as though pleased to hear something against you. So I told him, “Svend, I thought you were a friend of Plinio’s. Was I wrong?” He replied, “No, Dona Lucilia, I do this because I cannot wait to hear what answer Plinio will give.”

This attitude was a sad omen of what he was to do to me later, during the controversy surrounding my book about the errors of Catholic Action.

A few days later, the papers reported: “The Electoral Tribunal of Rio de Janeiro rules in favor of Mr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.”<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> SD 1/7/89.

## Chapter VI

# The Election Campaign

### 1. First Impressions

The elections were being prepared, and I had no idea how many votes I could muster.

I realized that the Catholic movement was massive. But I had no way of knowing whether or not those voters would follow the guidance of the Catholic Electoral League when the time came to vote.<sup>293</sup>

I had no idea of the real numbers of the electorate of the Catholic Electoral League, either.<sup>294</sup> Moreover, I did not know how many of these people would give me their vote.<sup>295</sup> or how many followers the other three candidates nominated by the LEC had among them.<sup>296</sup>

It was true that I had never participated in the politics of men. But I had already been fighting the good fight for God for some time as a member of the Marian Congregations and the founder of the University Catholic Action; I also had been publishing articles in Catholic papers for a long time.

Above all, I had the conviction that my candidacy was not the candidacy of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira but that of the whole Catholic laity, which “*non aestimator meriti, sed veniae*,”<sup>297</sup> I was representing at that time.<sup>298</sup>

My only political move was to draw up and send a circular explaining to our directors in the countryside that the Catholic Electoral League had entered the single list and why it had done so.

All this should be in the archives of the Catholic Electoral League at the Metropolitan

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<sup>293</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>294</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>295</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>296</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>297</sup> Latin phrase from the Roman Canon usually translated as “not according to our merits but according to Thy mercy.”

<sup>298</sup> Letter of 4/29/33 to LEC’s local secretaries in the State of São Paulo.

Chancery because when the League was disbanded, I handed all its documents to the Chancery.<sup>299</sup>

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None of the candidates nominated by the LEC for the single list had come to me for support. And I, fighting my first elections, believed myself to be a very weak candidate, only twenty-three years old and with hardly any time to establish contacts outside the Catholic environment.

So, I thought: I will do my canvassing and let them do theirs.<sup>300</sup>

I developed some speaking skills because I had been giving speeches everywhere for two years.<sup>301</sup> So, I gave lectures showing that Catholics should take the advice of the Catholic Electoral League, explaining the benefits that its claims would bring to Catholics. I always concluded that Catholics should vote for the candidates the League recommended.<sup>302</sup>

## 2. The Bishops' Support

The bishops, afraid of defeat, supported my candidacy to such a point that the meetings of the Catholic Electoral League were held inside churches. A cloth would be strung before the altar to separate the Blessed Sacrament from the people, turning the church into a hall where lay people could speak. I often spoke from the pulpit or a table in the center aisle.

The priests did not attend the meeting to demonstrate the non-intervention of the clergy, but we did electoral propaganda in churches. Once again, the good nature of Brazilians was given full rein; the churches were always full of people.

I campaigned in several neighborhoods of São Paulo and spoke in the churches. However, most of my campaigning was done in the interior, and the area where I established the most contacts was the region around Aparecida, which then belonged to the Diocese of Taubaté.

The bishop, Dom Epaminondas Nunes de Ávila e Silva,<sup>303</sup> a man with a reputation for holiness, sagacious in the best sense of the word, was indeed my friend. I knew I could expect practical and dedicated support from Bishop Epaminondas, so I focused my campaign on that area.

Moreover, Aparecida was far more important in those days than it is today. It was the capital of that area because communications with São Paulo were complicated.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> SD 8/23/80. This circular is from April 29, 1933.

<sup>300</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>301</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>302</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>303</sup> Most Rev. Epaminondas Nunes de Ávila e Silva (1869-1935) was born in the city of Serro (Minas Gerais). Ordained a priest on July 17, 1892, he was the first bishop of Taubaté, his episcopal consecration having taken place on September 8, 1909, during the pontificate of Saint Pius X.

<sup>304</sup> SD 8/23/80.

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I hated to travel — still, I wouldn't say I like it today — and I hated going by train most. While canvassing for the LEC, I traveled extensively in all directions. Dr. Paulo Barros accompanied me on some of these trips.<sup>305</sup>

I usually stayed at the rectory, made my speech, and then moved on, but I gave all my speeches in churches.

I never spoke in the public square, but my speeches were like public speeches, and my speaking style was full of the popular figures at the time. It was much more formal and much less “chatty” than today because that was what people liked and were used to.

After my speech, the people would clap, as they would have for anyone else.<sup>306</sup>

How were my speeches?

I came and spoke, never very well prepared. Considering the time, place, and audience, this was the best and most appropriate choice.<sup>307</sup>

## Chapter VII

# During the Elections

### 1. A Quiet Day

On Election Day, I went to vote early. It was easy because, as a candidate, I was entitled to walk straight into the voting booth without having to queue up with other voters.

After that, I went to see my staff at the office to make sure they were

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<sup>305</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>306</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>307</sup> SD 9/10/88.

available in case I needed them. I spent the whole day there until the polls closed.

It was a holiday, a comparatively quiet day for the League.

At one point, the phone rang, and when I answered it, I heard a hollow voice saying:

“Who is this?”

I told myself I knew that voice but couldn’t quite place it.

I said:

“This is the Catholic Electoral League.”

“Is Dr. Plinio there?”

“Speaking.”

“This is the archbishop.”

I thought it was a prank by some young Marian congregant and said:

“Stop messing around and just tell me what you want.”

He said:

“I am the archbishop!”

That was when I recognized his voice. I said:

“Ah, Your Excellency, I am sorry.”

He ignored my mistake and said:

“I have just received the news they are missing ballots in Campinas [someone was trying to incite intrigue] and that voters are looking for ballots to vote but cannot find them. I am very worried about that.”

“No, Your Excellency, the shipment to Campinas was made normally, as it was for all the diocesan sees in the interior. The ballots were distributed from the diocesan chanceries to other municipalities. All has been done according to plan.”

“Well, I have it from a very reliable source that you failed to supply the Campinas region, that there are no ballots, and that the LEC has failed in Campinas.<sup>308</sup> What is the truth?”

“Your Excellency, I will find out immediately and call you back with the information.”

I called Campinas, and they told me that everything was normal. As I had guessed, this was an attempt at intrigue.<sup>309</sup>

I called the archbishop and said,

“Your Excellency, I have just spoken to so-and-so in Campinas (it was someone he knew very well and trusted completely), and he has confirmed that everything is going on as it should.”

He said, “Oh, all right, there is no problem in that case.”

That was the only incident of the day.

The elections were over, the polls had closed without incident, and I attended the May devotions. There was still time.

Afterward, I went to the Congregation's headquarters and finally home. It was quite an

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<sup>308</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>309</sup> SD 6/22/73.

ordinary day.<sup>310</sup>

## 2. The First Results

A few days later, I met a candidate, Azevedo Marques,<sup>311</sup> before the vote count began. An elderly gentleman he said upon seeing me:

“Oh! Here is the one who got more votes than any of us, the candidate already elected.”

“Oh! Dr. Azevedo Marques, you will be elected, a man of such reputation, not a novice like me.”

“No, I have inside information. All the Daughters of Mary of the state have voted for you.”<sup>312</sup>

Then, a cousin of mine who had worked in a polling station appeared at my house. All polling stations were designated by a letter of the alphabet: the letter N in this building, the letter such-and-such in another, and so on. His station had been that of the letter M.

He came to my house and said:

“I was at the polling station, and everyone called Maria voted there.<sup>313</sup> Maria Lourdes, Maria Aparecida, and Maria Salete all voted there. And they all voted for Plinio! When we ran out of Plinio ballots, they refused to vote for another; they stayed inside the booth until I had brought down more of Plinio’s ballots from the storage room on the second floor (note where he kept them!), and it was only then that we could go on. As far as my station is concerned, Plinio has won by a landslide.”<sup>314</sup>

## 3. The Vote Counting: Complaints from other LEC Candidates

They started opening the ballot boxes, and it was the same story over and over again: “Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, at all the polling stations, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, here, there and everywhere.”<sup>315</sup> And reports came in from all over the state: “Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira is leading in the polls.”<sup>316</sup> And the vote grew and grew.

The three other candidates complained to the Chancery, “The LEC did not campaign for us.”

Monsignor Gastão Liberal Pinto called me and said:

“Look, Rafael Sampaio Vidal will be defeated. Alcântara Machado has about half the number of votes that you have. A distinguished man, Hipólito do Rego, has barely

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<sup>310</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>311</sup> José Manuel de Azevedo Marques (1865-1943) was a lawyer, professor at the Law School of the University of São Paulo, federal congressman and Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Epitácio Pessoa Administration. He was also the first elected president of the São Paulo Bar Association.

<sup>312</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>313</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>314</sup> Lunch EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>315</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>316</sup> SD 8/23/80.

managed to carry Santos. How did you distribute the ballots?”

“Monsignor Gastão, I’ll be perfectly frank. What I thought was this: no one approached me, no one asked me for a vote, not even you asked me to work for anyone. I thought that the others were very sure of their voters. I, a new candidate, was not. If the work has paid off, here I am at your service.”

“All right. And Rafael Sampaio Vidal?”

He did nothing! A Roman adage says about those who do not exert themselves: “*Tarde venientibus ossa*” — “For those who arrive late, only the bones will be left.”<sup>317</sup>

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There was one thing I did not say to Monsignor Gastão, although it was perfectly valid. Of the four candidates, I was the only true militant Catholic. The other three were politicians who, in private, might or might not be Catholics. I did not know any of the others, except one whom I had met at the house of one of my relatives, and he was one of those Catholics who lived in a kind of dream world.

When it came to defending the interests of the Church against the encroachments of the State, I was the only one willing to lay down my life in the fight for the Catholic cause.

The result is that the entire Catholic vote focused on my person. If I took the whole Catholic vote, it was because I was a Catholic and a representative of the Catholic Electoral League and because I had done all that could be expected of me at my age. That was how I had come out on top.

#### 4. The First News of Victory

I did not get the first news of the official recognition of my election from my mother. She followed all that was happening with her usual serenity, obviously very happy and cheerful but discreetly, and above all, with a certain detachment.

I realized she wanted to teach me that we should not cling to positions and similar things but listen to our consciences and serve God. She received the news well without any exaggerated excitement or delight.

As usual, I remained calm and peaceful, never getting up early to buy the papers and see my vote tally. I slept until I woke naturally, then got up to go to Communion (at that time, it was only possible to go to Communion in the morning, and I was obliged to fast from midnight); after Communion, I would return home for breakfast.

Before going to Communion, if I had time (because there was no more Communion after ten o’clock), I would take a quick look at the papers; if not,

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<sup>317</sup> SD 6/22/73.



the documents would have to wait until after I returned from Communion.

That day, I was leaving to go to Communion when my sister, who was in the room where the newspapers used to be laid out, smiled, simulated a kind of reverence and said: "Congratulations, congressman."

I did not understand the joke and asked, "What do you mean?"

She, who was always very lively, much more quick-witted than I ever was, said:

"Haven't you seen it? You have passed the number of votes required to become a congressman. You already are a congressman."

I said, "I do not want to miss Communion; it's time," and ran to the church. That is how I learned that I had been elected.<sup>318</sup>

### 5. The Youngest and Most-Voted-for Candidate

I was already elected, yet the various polling stations reported more and more votes daily; eventually, the total reached twenty-four thousand, a vast amount in those days.<sup>319</sup>

That represented a massive result given São Paulo's population at the time.<sup>320</sup> It was twice as high as the votes obtained by the second-most-voted candidate. It was proof of the prestige of our movement, a fantastic thing. A Catholic Electoral League organized two years earlier had reached an unprecedented result.<sup>321</sup> I was Brazil's youngest candidate and the one with the most votes.

The papers reported this result without praise, limiting themselves to stating the fact. However, the fact was highly prestigious for the Catholic forces, and how the newspapers reported it made no difference.

I went into the street and met candidates whose names were on the single list but whom the LEC had not appointed; they told me, "Oh! Plinio, how are you? Congratulations. What a brilliant victory! No one ever thought you would be so successful. Do you know? X, Y, and Z, defeated candidates, feel quite resentful toward you. They feel that you should have shared the votes of the Catholic Electoral League with them so they could also have been elected. They lost because you took all the votes for the League."<sup>322</sup>

José Carlos de Macedo Soares was not elected. He was the candidate put forward by the Commercial Association on the single list but failed to win because the electoral system did not allow the party vote to favor other congressmen.<sup>323</sup>

There was also a case of some voided ballots, which led to the convening of a second election.

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<sup>318</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>319</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>320</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>321</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>322</sup> SD 1/7/89.

<sup>323</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

José Carlos de Macedo Soares was foaming at the mouth with rage:

“The Catholics elected this little child, this youngster... and I, a famous man, have been defeated. I demand that the LEC work for me in this second election.”

Dom Duarte called me:

“Look, I understand if you feel a certain grievance with Soares; he is running you down everywhere, but I wanted to ask you to work for him.”

“I will do my best, Your Excellency. I will mobilize all the forces at my disposal to elect José Carlos.”

I did so, and thank God, I could give this proof of discipline: José Carlos was elected, which made him view me with considerably less hostility.<sup>324</sup>

## 6. Invitation to Become the Director of *Legionário* Magazine

*Legionário* was founded in 1927, long before I became its director,<sup>325</sup> but I had already been a contributor since 1929.<sup>326</sup> In its early days, it was just a monthly parish newsletter. When it was founded, we were still in a period of open conflict, in which the enemies of the Church declared themselves as such, as did the Catholics on the other side; the relations between these warring camps were openly controversial.<sup>327</sup>

After I had become a congressman, they invited me to become the editor of the magazine.<sup>328</sup> Nothing was unusual since the *Legionário* was a paper of the Marian Congregations, and I was one of their best-known leaders.<sup>329</sup>

I agreed and said, “You can put my name on it now. But I will only take up this post when my mandate as a congressman expires; it would be impossible to do it all at once. But I will take on this position when I am no longer a congressman.”<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>325</sup> SD 3/18/89.

<sup>326</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>327</sup> The first issue of *Legionário* was published on May 29, 1927. Its director was Msgr. Paulo Marcondes Pedrosa; its chief editor was Paulo Sawaya, and the secretary was Ruy Calazans. It was a four-page monthly publication, a simple newsletter of the Marian Congregation of São Pedro (in the Parish of Santa Cecilia). Its headquarters were in the building at 59 Immaculate Conception St., which in the future would also be the office of the *Legionário* Group.

<sup>328</sup> SD 2/18/89.

<sup>329</sup> Interview with Professor Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>330</sup> SD 2/18/89.

## Chapter VIII

# Preparations for the Constituent Assembly

### 1. Dom Chautard Book's Providential Role

It was some months before the Constituent Assembly first met because things were done slowly then.<sup>331</sup>

The book that influenced me the most during that time, besides that by St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort (on holy slavery to Our Lady), was Dom Chautard's work on *The Soul of the Apostolate*. Dom Chautard served as a bulwark against the vast, overwhelming temptation to which I might have been exposed at that time, that of pride.<sup>332</sup> Put yourself in my situation: I was twenty-four years old, the youngest congressman in Brazil, and the one who had obtained the highest percentage of votes. I was almost a kind of celebrity with everything written about me. My future career looked bright, indeed.

There was a chorus of adulation all around me, constantly telling me what a brilliant speaker I was and how I was a wonderful this, that and the other.<sup>333</sup>

Human instinct leads the individual to conceit, to thoughts of "What a colossus I am! A young man like me already voted for by so many thousands!"<sup>334</sup>

And soon after, the devil came with an offer:<sup>335</sup>

"Maybe you will find a way to carve out a political career? See the advantage of being a deputy: official honors heaped on you everywhere.<sup>336</sup> I am not asking you to do anything evil. No, there would be just one thing you would need to do – leave the Marian environment in which you are living and move over into the environment where the other politicians live. Of course, you can maintain your clean vocabulary, virtuous way of life, and whatever else you wish to keep, but come and live among

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<sup>331</sup> The National Constituent Assembly members' election was held on May 3, 1933. The Assembly's first session occurred on November 15 of that year, more than six months later. After more than eight months of deliberations, the new Constitution was passed on July 16, 1934. The last session was held on July 17, when Getúlio Vargas was elected President of the Republic by an indirect vote.

<sup>332</sup> Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard (1858-1935), Cistercian priest and monk in Aiguebelle Abbey, and later the abbot of the Trappist Monastery of Sept-Fons (France). His work on *The Soul of the Apostolate* is based on the premise that apostolic activity comes from the overflow of intense inner life, without which any work of apostolate must be sterile and may even be counter-productive.

<sup>333</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>334</sup> SD 4/15/89.

<sup>335</sup> Tea 9/19/94.

<sup>336</sup> SD 1/28/89.

them; be one of them!”<sup>337</sup>

On the occasions when I was in danger of starting to believe all the messages reminding me of how important I now was, I would remember Dom Chautard. It was my guardian angel who reminded me of him. And I would say, “No, I have to do the opposite. If I must sacrifice my life and political career, I will happily do so at any time. I want to live exclusively for the Catholic Church!”<sup>338</sup>

Unless I did this, I knew my newfound fame and importance would go to my head. And the moment when I would face the alternative: apostatize or accept that I would not be re-elected, I would have opted for apostasy. It was Dom Chautard’s book that helped me.<sup>339</sup>

Dom Chautard dotted all the *i*’s and crossed all the *t*’s: unless an apostle is entirely detached from coveting a career and honors unless he is exclusively at the service of the Church without thought of self, he will do more harm than good to the cause he intends to serve.

It was clear to me that the Church’s victory in the elections to the Constituent Assembly could end the atmosphere of secularism that had taken hold of Brazil and lead to a splendid reaffirmation of the Church’s strength forty years after the separation of Church and State.

But as far as I was concerned, this victory consisted of not giving in to any impulse toward vanity, no matter how small. I knew I had to be ready to give up my position and my whole career at any time, to give up everything and return to zero whenever the Catholic cause demanded it.

I could see a huge apostolate ahead of me, but I was fully aware that this mission carried within it the seeds of both a blessing and a curse—a blessing if I could manage to remain completely detached and a curse if I could not.

That was when the struggle against pride and self-love began. Everyone conceived in original sin has these impulses, and it is evident that I had them, too.<sup>340</sup>

## 2. Preparing for the Struggle: Readings

The capital of Brazil in those days was Rio de Janeiro, and the Constituent Assembly would meet there.

I was sure that, arriving in Rio, I should be prepared for discussions and polemics about the points raised by the Catholic Electoral League.

So, during the months between the election and the date on which I was to take my seat, I read piles of Catholic books about divorce and other issues to ensure that I had my arguments ready when I needed them. The effectiveness of the mandate entrusted to me required such preparation.

As I shall recount later, I could not have known that, precisely on these

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<sup>337</sup> Tea 9/19/94.

<sup>338</sup> SD 3/9/88.

<sup>339</sup> SD 4/15/89.

<sup>340</sup> SD 6/22/73.

questions, I would be hamstrung and prevented from expressing myself.<sup>341</sup>

### 3. Support for Armando Sales at Dom Duarte's Request

But politics here in São Paulo went on.

There was a military governor who had not been born in São Paulo, the aforementioned João Alberto Lins de Barros, and it was necessary to replace him with a civilian governor, to be appointed by Getúlio Vargas.

From this arose several problems concerning the designation of the State government.

Getúlio wanted a proposal naming a citizen of São Paulo signed by all the congressmen for São Paulo to ensure that this governor represented the interests of São Paulo.

But the document had to be ultra-confidential because São Paulo was still officially against Getúlio Vargas, and the first step toward reconciliation was to be the appointment, by Getúlio, of a citizen of São Paulo as the civil governor.

The politicians of São Paulo appointed Armando Sales de Oliveira, who later became a presidential candidate and was subsequently expelled by Getúlio.<sup>342</sup>

Since Dom Duarte wanted Armando Sales, I signed the list as well.

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Soon after his appointment, Armando Sales gave a banquet for the São Paulo congressmen in a big club in Sao Paulo.

There were remnants of the aristocratic Republic. Incidentally, he was a man of great style. Guests were asked to attend wearing tuxedos.

There were reasons for me to attend and reasons to stay away. I sent a telegram politely thanking him for the invitation and saying that I fully endorsed my distinguished colleagues' support of him.

I later learned that, at the start of the banquet, a speaker rose and said: "Congressman Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, who has been unable to attend for health reasons, has sent the federal intervenor the following telegram..."

The telegram was read and later reprinted in several newspapers.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> SD 3/9/88.

<sup>342</sup> Armando Sales de Oliveira (1887-1945) was a Brazilian engineer and politician, federal intervenor in São Paulo between August 21, 1933, and April 11, 1935, and Governor (elected by the Constituent Assembly) between April 11, 1935 and December 29, 1936. He had, in his day, supported the Revolution of 1930, along with the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, of which he was a part-owner. Under his government, the University of São Paulo was founded (in 1934). In 1937, he left the governorship to run for President of the Republic in the elections scheduled for January 1938, which never took place because of the coup d'état of Getúlio Vargas, who implemented the New State on November 10, 1937. He spent about a year under house arrest before going into exile in 1938, first to France, then to the United States, and finally to Argentina. He only returned to Brazil in 1945 and died shortly after.

<sup>343</sup> SD 8/23/80.

#### 4. Departure for Rio; a Large Crowd at the Station

In the days before the opening of the Constituent Assembly, they announced that all congressmen elected to represent São Paulo would travel to Rio de Janeiro together in a luxury train that went from São Paulo to Rio and was known as the *Southern Cross*.<sup>344</sup>

It turned out that I would not be able to go on that day because a group of the most prominent members of the Marian congregations had organized a dinner party in my honor<sup>345</sup> two or three days after the departure date.<sup>346</sup> It was dinner only for Marian congregants in one of the best confectioner's shops in São Paulo. The owner was an older Italian man who was very happy to let us use the place.

The guests at that dinner party were so numerous that they filled the confectioner's shop.<sup>347</sup>

The papers reported on it with photographs of the speakers and other details. The same news item announced that I would leave for Rio from the Estação do Norte train station on such and such a date at such and such a time.

On the appointed day (13 November 1933), I went to Estação do Norte, and when I got there, the station was full of people cheering and applauding.

My mother, father, sister, and I boarded the train. The other family members settled down in our compartment, but I remained at the entrance of the carriage, waving my hat to thank the people there as the train pulled away. Soon after, I, too, went to bed.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>345</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>346</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>347</sup> This dinner, held at the Elite Restaurant on November 10, 1933, had been organized by student members of the Marian Congregations who were also members of the A.U.C. (cf. *Legionário* No. 132, 11/12/33, p. 3). On November 12, the evening before Dr. Plinio's departure for Rio de Janeiro, the Metropolitan Diocesan Chancery also organized an event in his honor, in the presence of the Metropolitan Archbishop Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, with a speech by Father Cursino de Moura, the director of the Federation of Marian Congregations (ibid, p. 4).

<sup>348</sup> SD 8/23/80.

## Chapter IX

# The Constituent Assembly's Inauguration

### 1. Arrival in Rio

We arrived in Rio in the morning. Tristão de Athayde was very kindly waiting to welcome us. He was always the perfect gentleman.

When we got off the train, he quickly introduced himself, offered his arm to my mother as though they had been in a ballroom, and walked off with her.

I looked around to see if that little scene had made people stare, as it would have done in São Paulo. In Rio de Janeiro, however, no one found it strange. Tristão did these things with tremendous elegance.

To maintain my representative status, I went with my parents and Rosée (my sister) to the Hotel Glória, one of the top luxury hotels.<sup>349</sup>

To give my mother the best stay possible, I arranged for her to have a room with a magnificent view of Flamengo Beach. At that time, the seawater almost reached the hotel's walls.

There were lovely evenings, and she loved panoramas. She would dine with us downstairs and then go to her room to watch the silvery moonlight hit the beach and the palm trees.<sup>350</sup>

I also wanted to make her stay as comfortable as possible, all the more so since it would be so short because her mother (Dona Gabriela) was in feeble health. She died shortly after. And my mother was an extraordinarily loving and dutiful daughter.<sup>351</sup>

My parents and my sister stayed in Rio with me for two or three days and then went back. I stayed back to start my work in the Constituent Assembly.<sup>352</sup>

### 2. The Episode with Heitor da Silva Costa

I remember my meeting with Heitor da Silva Costa soon after my arrival. I called him, saying I was already in Rio, and invited him to visit me at the Hotel Glória.

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<sup>349</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>350</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>351</sup> Tea 11/12/92.

<sup>352</sup> SD 1/14/89.

It was an oppressively hot night, and he proposed that we converse on benches in a little garden between the Hotel Glória and the sea.

I remember how he sat down and told me:

“Well, Plinio! What a privileged creature Alceu is! And how much I would like to be in his shoes!”<sup>353</sup>

I wanted to be as amicable as possible, so I said:

“But Dr. Silva Costa, you have so many reasons to be glad that you are who you are!”

He said:

“Not that many. Alceu and I have a young friend, Plinio, and Alceu is such a privileged creature that young Plinio calls to tell him that he is coming to Rio but does not call me.”

I forgot to warn Silva Costa and thought: “Oh my goodness! How will I get out of this?”

I felt very embarrassed. I stammered out the kind of excuses that one usually falls back upon in an emergency like this, and that means nothing.

I could see affectionate mockery in his eyes, but he took pity on me because I was obviously uncomfortable. He said:

“Let's not talk about it anymore; let's talk about something else,” and changed the subject.<sup>354</sup>

### 3. The Opening Session

On the opening day of the Constituent Assembly, we were all there.<sup>355</sup>

As we arrived at Tiradentes Palace (now housing the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro), there were two different entrances. One was for the congressmen, and one was for their families, who had been permitted to watch the ceremonies from a box on the highest tier of the tribunes of honor, along with the diplomatic corps and other prominent personalities.

I introduced myself to the President of the Constituent Assembly, Antonio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrada.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>353</sup>Alceu de Amoroso Lima, who used the pen name Tristão de Athayde, was a man of confidence of Cardinal Leme and Brazil's top Catholic leader at the time.

<sup>354</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>355</sup> The opening session was held on November 15, 1933.

<sup>356</sup> Antônio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrada (1870-1946) was the great-grandson of José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, the Patriarch of Independence, grandson of Councilor Martim Francisco Ribeiro de Andrada and the nephew of José Bonifácio the Younger. He belonged to the third generation of Andradas and was the fourth politician of that name. His father, Antônio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrada, a general representative and state senator for Minas Gerais, had moved from São Paulo to the city of Barbacena (State of Minas Gerais) in the second half of the nineteenth century, thus establishing the “Mineiro” branch of the Andradas. A graduate of the São Paulo Law School (1891), mayor of Belo Horizonte in 1905, State Finance Secretary of Minas Gerais under Governor Francisco Sales (1902-1906), president of the Chamber of Deputies (1917-1918) under the Venceslau Brás Administration and senator of the Republic in 1925, he became president of the State of Minas Gerais between 1926-1930.

A negative aspect of his brilliant political career was the fact that he contributed decisively to the overthrow of the remaining aristocratic order of the First Brazilian Republic, of which he was a distinguished representative. By allying



I went to the Paulista bench and was soon able to form an idea of the situation which, in some respects, was awaiting me there.<sup>357</sup>

In those days, people from São Paulo tended to be very ceremonious and strict with protocol, emphasizing good manners and correct behavior (this is no longer the case today). And since it was the wealthiest state in Brazil, they were better dressed than everyone else, had the most beautiful cars, stayed at the most expensive hotels, and led a great life.

I received a message from our leaders—that is, from Alcântara Machado—that I should present myself in a top hat and tails.<sup>358</sup> That was quite a problem for me.

I never paid any attention to how I dressed. I had always been inattentive and had no idea about fashion or what clothes I should wear. I could never tell which clothes fit me well or which did not.

So my sister took over and started to choose my clothes, the quality of my shirts and other accessories. From the comments I heard, she did a brilliant job because she was a genius at this kind of thing, which is very specifically the domain of the ladies.<sup>359</sup>

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At the opening ceremony, all the congressmen from São Paulo wore black tails, gold cufflinks, and silver ties, as was the custom then. They also wore grey and black striped English cashmere trousers.

The representatives from other states were wearing more ordinary clothes, suits,<sup>360</sup> and felt hats (in those days, everyone wore a hat). The Paulistas were the only ones who were in top hats.<sup>361</sup>

The congressmen from São Paulo, elegant but rigid in their top hats and tails, symbolized the old order. The group consisted almost exclusively of members of old São Paulo families and was—at least officially—opposed to Getúlio Vargas. I, at any rate, was ‘antigetulista’ to the bottom of my soul.

The remainder of the Constituent Assembly consisted, more or less, of supporters of Getúlio Vargas.<sup>362</sup>

They assigned the first two rows to the congressmen from São Paulo. These were the positions of maximum visibility to the right of the president of the

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himself with Getúlio Vargas, he paved the way for the vulgar populism of the Vargas era, which caused so much harm to Brazil. Having played this disagreeable role, he must accept responsibility before God and History for being the main coordinator and organizer of the Liberal Alliance and one of the leaders of the Revolution of 1930.

Having served as president of the National Constituent Assembly of 1933-1934, and then as speaker of the House of Representatives until 1937, he withdrew from politics at the time of the *Estado Novo* coup of Getúlio Vargas.

<sup>357</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>358</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>359</sup> SD 8/23/80.

<sup>360</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>361</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>362</sup> SD 6/23/73.

Assembly.<sup>363</sup>

The rest of the benches were on the other side. On the far right was the Rio de Janeiro bench, which included famous, very cultured men: Fernando Magalhães and Leitão da Cunha, all wearing ordinary street clothes.

The São Paulo bench had a certain air of importance, but we did not look very likable. We all know what happens when there are people in formal dress on the one side and people in street clothes on the other: those in formal attire will be more impressive, but when it comes to likeability, it is another question.<sup>364</sup>

I understood all this could bring: prestige, of course – but also a certain resentment.

However, following the guidance of our group's leader, I put on a top hat and tails.

With tails, it was the custom to wear decorations. I did not have any, of course – no government had yet honored me in any way. But I was not at a loss: I took the badge of the Marian congregations and pinned it on my chest!

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I had brought my certificate of appointment as a congressman, provided by the Electoral Court of São Paulo.

Everything at that time was more beautiful. This certificate was an elegant parchment with a solemn formula written in beautiful calligraphy and a wax seal. Nowadays, it would be a scrap of paper with an ugly, minimalist stamp.<sup>365</sup>

#### **4. Spotlights, Photographs, and the Appearance of Getúlio**

The auditorium, where the sessions were to be held, was beautifully furnished and decorated, with plenty of flowers everywhere.

The lights went out suddenly, and spotlights were placed to photograph the session with Antonio Carlos presiding.

Finally, there came the appearance of Getúlio Vargas.

We all had to rise. The Head of State had arrived, and so, of course, I, too, got up.

He pronounced a meaningless little speech, to which I did not listen, with his hand placed on his vest (as was his custom) in a colorless voice, giving a convincing impression of someone who could not have cared less about the event at which he was assisting. Then he left.

The lights switched on again, and the Assembly's President, Antonio Carlos,

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<sup>363</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>364</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>365</sup> SD 1/14/89.

said a few words before closing the session.<sup>366</sup>

## Chapter X

# The Constituent Assembly: The Noose Tightens

### 1. The Hopes of a Good Fight that I Brought to Rio

I noticed very early on that the LEC elected representatives from all over Brazil and that it would be possible to form a bloc of thirty and fifty Catholic congressmen in a Constituent Assembly of two or three hundred parliamentarians.<sup>367</sup>

It also seemed to me that my election – at such an early age – had been decreed by Providence. And if Providence had wanted me to be elected, it would now be my duty to work hard to discern and implement what God wanted me to do.

I was determined to wade into the fight, even if that meant I would have to pass through some difficult moments. They would only be difficult on the

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<sup>366</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>367</sup> SD 6/22/73.

surface because deep down in my heart, I would be sure I was fighting for the right cause.<sup>368</sup>

This hope of a valiant fight seemed a splendid prospect to me.

That was why, as I said, I used the interval between my election and the inauguration to prepare my arguments; if I remember correctly, I did this for about six months. And I went into the fray hoping for battle on an open and fair battlefield. Finally, my hopes were going to be realized!

## 2. A Cold Shower: Forbidden to Speak on Catholic Claims in the Plenary

To my disappointment, I soon realized that the battle would take place under conditions that I had not expected.<sup>369</sup>

Alceu de Amoroso Lima, who used the pseudonym of Tristão de Athayde, was the close confidant of Cardinal Leme. At the same time, he was also a very good friend. I had already been to his house more than once, and he had visited me at mine. We got along very well. He was the absolute leader of the Catholic movement in Brazil at that time.

In turn, Dom Leme had a leadership position within the National Episcopate because, at that time, he was the only Brazilian Cardinal. He exercised his authority entirely as he saw fit.

When I arrived in Rio,<sup>370</sup> Tristão de Athayde invited me to a meeting of the Catholic congressmen at the headquarters of the Centro Dom Vital, which housed the Rio offices of the LEC, in a building near the Chamber of Deputies<sup>371</sup> that belonged to the Chancery of the Archdiocese.<sup>372</sup>

I went there and saw many congressmen whom I did not know. There were greetings, introductions and so on, and we finally sat down.

Alceu said:

“Cardinal Leme has decided that, first of all, there will not be a Catholic block of congressmen. All of you must sit scattered around the stands of the respective States. That also means that there will be no leader of the Catholic congressmen. The Catholic leader of the congressmen will be myself, from outside the Chamber; you have all been invited here to hear the instructions of Cardinal Leme, which I have been asked to pass on to you.”<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> SD 9/14/91.

<sup>369</sup> SD 6/11/83.

<sup>370</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>371</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>372</sup> SD 1/14/89. This building was located on the November 15 Square, next to the docks. It was an old mansion from the times of the Empire. In the second floor, several rooms connected by a long and wide corridor that Emperor Pedro used to enter the Palace housed the various associations that made up the Brazilian Catholic Coalition. One of these rooms was assigned to LEC (cf. *Legionário* No. 124, 7/16/33, column “Notes from a Reporter in Rio”).

<sup>373</sup> SD 6/22/73.

He went on to inform us of the following order given by the Cardinal:<sup>374</sup>

“No Catholic congressman should say anything about the Catholic claims.”<sup>375</sup>

Cardinal Leme demands that you make no such speeches because everything has already been agreed on behind the scenes with the President (Getúlio Vargas), who has the majority of votes on his side. He has promised that if there is no debate, he will order all his congressmen to vote in favor of every claim raised by the Catholic Electoral League. Therefore, if you Catholic congressmen want to make speeches, make them about other things having nothing to do with the Catholic claims. These claims must never be mentioned. Dom Leme expects you to obey him on this point.”<sup>376</sup>

Finally, he added:

“Ah! Another thing: You are forbidden to mention that you have been forbidden to speak.”<sup>377</sup>

This was a terrible blow. It also put me into an insoluble difficulty—my voters had voted for me for religious reasons, and I could not publicly state that Dom Leme had forbidden me to speak.

So I was left unable to justify the incomprehensible: a congressman elected to ensure that Catholic interests were protected but did not make a single speech about any of these points.<sup>378</sup>

I felt like a warrior who enters the battlefield with his sword at the ready, waiting for his opponent, and suddenly receives an order from above: “Sheathe your sword and remain standing there, armor and all, enjoying the sun on the battlefield, until you receive orders to the contrary. For now, do not move.”<sup>379</sup>

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In this way, my role was limited to fighting behind the scenes to ensure that the bench would unanimously support the Catholic amendments.<sup>380</sup>

In the mornings, I would attend the meetings of the congressmen from São Paulo to discuss the issues to be addressed in the House in the afternoon.<sup>381</sup>

In the afternoon, I would attend the plenary sessions of the House.

In the evenings, the Catholic congressmen would meet at the Rio offices of the LEC in the building of the Catholic Coalition.<sup>382</sup> At these meetings, we had to come to an understanding with Tristão de Athayde and receive the guidelines passed down from Dom Leme. The next day, all we could do was execute his

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<sup>374</sup> SD 6/11/83.

<sup>375</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>376</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>377</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>378</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>379</sup> SD 6/11/73.

<sup>380</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>381</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>382</sup> SD 6/22/73.

order. It was impossible to contact Dom Leme directly because he had given us an understanding that we were not to bother him since he had a representative there anyway.<sup>383</sup>

I soon realized that things in Rio de Janeiro would not happen as expected and hoped for in São Paulo because I was not allowed to speak.<sup>384</sup>

I felt like someone buried alive,<sup>385</sup> unable to move.<sup>386</sup>

### 3. Gossip and Slander: A Stutterer, Afraid of Making Speeches, a Coward

A short time later, I began to hear rumors within the Catholic movement that I was not speaking in the Constituent Assembly because I was afraid; I was very young and had let myself be intimidated. They even said that I was a stutterer<sup>387</sup> and hardly ever presented myself at the speaker's rostrum because I was afraid of speaking in public. I was very shy!

Now, many imperfections could have been laid to my charge – but shyness is certainly not one of them! I had always been very talkative and never had a problem giving my opinion. Maybe my northeastern blood helped with this. I have always said whatever I have to say without any hesitation.<sup>388</sup>

Moreover, although I have, without any doubt, a great many defects, that of being a stutterer was certainly not among them.<sup>389</sup>

This accusation was a measure of the bad faith of whoever spread these rumors because I had spoken in public in almost all the major churches of São Paulo during the election campaign. And I certainly did not give any evidence of a stutter during those speeches.

I had also spoken in several other cities in the interior and was well-known as a speaker. How could anyone have spread such a story?!

However, there was no way out. I could not tell the public that Dom Leme had forbidden the Catholic congressmen to speak. It would have led to attacks on Dom Leme, and I would have gone down with him.

Furthermore, I could not openly oppose Dom Leme.<sup>390</sup> He would have rightly seen such behavior as a betrayal because he had requested confidentiality, which meant that I could not say anything at all.<sup>391</sup>

In other words, there was no way out of this noose. It had effectively closed around my neck. All I could do was pretend I did not understand that I had not

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<sup>383</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>384</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>385</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>386</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>387</sup> Lunch 5/8/87.

<sup>388</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>389</sup> Lunch 5/8/87.

<sup>390</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>391</sup> SD 1/14/89.

noticed anything. I would have to say nothing and ride out the storm.

It was the first time in my life that I experienced an organized campaign of slander and rumors against me. Those who spread these rumors tended to be sympathizers of Nazism and Fascism, who were politically connected. Since I had written articles for the *Legionário* against Nazism and Fascism, I realized that this was a vendetta.<sup>392</sup>

#### 4. The Core of the Problem: The Internal Struggle between the Fighting Spirit and an Accommodating Mentality

I encountered no hostility in Catholic circles, but I began to notice a strange emptiness that seemed to be created around me in their higher echelons.

Of course, I realized they were isolating me because they wanted the opposite of what I wanted. I was ready to fight and dedicate myself to the Church, but I also expected them to join the fight with me.

Deep down, they did not want to fight but to remain comfortably ensconced within their historical period, which invited no exceptional or heroic deeds. They wanted to go on with their comfortable everyday lives and deal with their banal little problems. They did not want to engage in battles, take up the cross, and heroically fight the good fight as I did—a fight that would lead us into unexpected and sometimes difficult situations—but this, after all, is what life is all about!<sup>393</sup>

Taking stock of the situation developing around me in Rio, I realized that the state of mind and its circumstances were radically opposed to what might have been called *the spirit of the Congregation of St. Cecilia* or *the spirit of the Legionário*.

It is evident that even if I started attending the meetings of some Marian Congregation in Rio, it would hardly be possible to form a combative group comparable to what we had in São Paulo.

Such a group would have had no possibility of expansion or radiating outwards because things in Rio were heading in the opposite direction compared to what was happening in São Paulo. That was also why I never stopped going back to São Paulo because I felt that if I failed to do so, I would have been sacrificing everything we had built up there.

If I stayed in Rio de Janeiro for a few consecutive weekends, I would lose the thread of what was going on in São Paulo.

How could I sacrifice a promising thing that was developing rapidly for something that was not promising and had not begun to develop?

So I was forced, at that time, to give up any plans to expand a group in Rio even though I had so fervently desired to have a group there.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>393</sup> SD 5/13/89.

<sup>394</sup> SD 10/11/80.

Consequently, since there were no sessions in the House on Saturdays, I would take the train to São Paulo every Friday night.<sup>395</sup>

I would arrive early on Saturday morning, spend Saturday, Sunday, and sometimes Monday in São Paulo, and then take the night train back to Rio de Janeiro.

When I was in São Paulo, I would visit the seat of the Marian Congregation of Santa Cecilia every night without fail.<sup>396</sup>

## 5. The Noose Pulls Even Tighter: Nonsensical Accusations

Another episode provided an excellent illustration of the environment of silent hostility being created around me.

One day, when I arrived at the Assembly, several congressmen came running to talk to me, “Did you see the article of Ary Pavão?”

I asked, “Who is Ary Pavão?”

“He is a journalist who often writes about the Constituent Assembly in such and such a daily, and he has published an article making fun of you in every possible way. Haven’t you seen it?”<sup>397</sup>

It was a newspaper owned by José Eduardo de Macedo Soares, a congressman for the State of Rio de Janeiro and the brother of José Carlos de Macedo Soares, who, as we know, was a congressman for São Paulo.<sup>398</sup>

I replied, “No, I haven’t seen it.”

The reporter was standing nearby, and they pointed him out to me: “Look, there is Ary Pavão,” as if to say, “If you have anything to say to him, now is your chance.”

I thought, “I will not pay any attention to him. He could say nothing terrible about me, and if all he has to report are just more silly jokes or stupid rumors, it would be better to behave as though he did not exist. If I pay attention to this, I will only be playing into his hands.”

I put the paper away and only read it after I had returned home that night: the whole article was nothing but a collection of scurrilous accusations and slander.

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So what were the accusations, and what was the theme of the joke?

It was the custom for congressmen to shorten their names. Since my name was Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, I should have adopted a parliamentary name: *Plínio de Oliveira*, or *Plínio Corrêa* or just *Corrêa de Oliveira*. But I had never

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<sup>395</sup> At the time, travelers on the Rio-São Paulo route usually took the train. Aviation was still in its early stages and air travel was rare and expensive.

<sup>396</sup> SD 8/25/73.

<sup>397</sup> SD 1/28/89.

<sup>398</sup> SD 8/6/88. The paper was *Diário Carioca*, founded in Rio de Janeiro on July 17, 1928. Ary Pavão wrote the *Panorama* column in that paper.



chosen a parliamentary name.

So this Ary Pavão joked that only two members had kept their full names: myself and a man he referred to as a boatman from the state of Rio de Janeiro (he was probably a Labor congressman) – and this was supposedly very ridiculous.

He also made fun of me for being too fat, which was true – I eventually came to weigh two hundred and sixty-four pounds—for having a huge appetite – which I never lost – and for losing my hair prematurely.

One night, when I was going to Rio on the train (or on my way back), I happened to hit a post with the back of my hand, with full force. I paid no attention to this then, but a big ugly bruise appeared some days later.

It served Ary Pavão for a joke, saying that I was the only congressman who had got his hands dirty.<sup>399</sup>

There were also passages like this: “Once again Mr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira arrived too late at the Constituent Assembly, giving all the signs of suffering from the heat – rubbing his forehead with his handkerchief and trying to reach his place as quickly and unobtrusively as possible. Had he hoped they would not realize that his voluminous person was entering?”

It was summer in Rio, and everyone was feeling hot. It was apparent that this Ary Pavão was scraping the bottom of the barrel to find something to say against me; for me, it was further proof that the noose was being pulled tighter around my neck.

## 6. More Accusations

There was more along the same lines.

A São Paulo congressman with whom I had always been very friendly and who lived in the same hotel called me to ask if he could come to my room to talk to me. My room was at the back of the hotel.

I said, “Yes, of course, come over.”

When he arrived, I offered him a seat, and he started talking to me about some banal little piece of business that needed to be dealt with. However, I noticed that he was constantly looking around my room to study it in as much detail as possible.

Then he said: “What a splendid room you have here! It is much better and cheaper than mine.”

I thought this was just small talk and said,

“Yes, indeed, it is quieter and enjoyable back here.”

“Next time I come here with my wife, I will ask for a room in this part of the hotel.”

And then he added:

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<sup>399</sup> SD 1/28/89.

“You have no idea what I’ve been hearing about you: that you lived in a real pigsty, a cheap, dirty and untidy room with an unmade bed.”

Now, who could have spread such rumors?

It was the same story all over again: they had nothing against me, so they tried to slander me, but even that was too hard for them, so they fell back on spreading ridiculous stories about my habits.

Who could have been interested in spreading these stories – that I stuttered, that I lived in a filthy room, that I had hurt my hand, and other nonsense of that nature, most of it foolish lies?

## 7. A Strange Interrogation

One Sunday afternoon, something happened to give me even further proof of how tight the noose around my neck had been pulled. The hotel's concierge called my room to inform me that Mr. “W” wanted to talk to me.

Who was this Mr. “W”?<sup>400</sup>

He was a man in his late thirties or early forties whom Tristão had found begging at the door of a church. He had immediately engaged him as his secretary without knowing anything about him.<sup>401</sup>

From people close to Tristão, I had heard that he had initially placed such confidence in this man that he gave him access even to the most confidential records.<sup>402</sup> The man called himself a Catholic, and I had no specific reasons to doubt his word.<sup>403</sup>

When he came to see me, I thought he was coming with a message from Tristão. I received him in one of the hotel's public rooms.<sup>404</sup>

“Oh hello, ‘W,’ how are you?”

“Fine, thank you, and how are you?”

We started talking about trifles. As time passed, it became evident that he had nothing to tell me.

I thought, “Someone has sent him here to find out something about me, and he lacks the courage to do so.”

It was terribly hot that day, one of those typical Rio summer days. After much talk, he said:

“Well, Plinio, the time has come for me to tell you why I have come to see you.”

“Certainly, ‘W.’”

“What will you do with your life in the future? What are your plans? Do you want to be a congressman, or don’t you? If you don’t, what job would you like

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<sup>400</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>401</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>402</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>403</sup> SD 6/23/73.

<sup>404</sup> SD 9/10/88.

in São Paulo? What are your plans for a career? What do you want to do with your life? Would you like to tell me about it?”<sup>405</sup>

Now, these were the kinds of questions that one asks among friends. But they were bizarre questions from someone I knew more or less only by sight.<sup>406</sup> No one asks this kind of question of a casual acquaintance.

I said:

“You know, ‘W,’ there are so many unknown quantities in all this that I hardly know myself. Do you have any advice for me?”

“Absolutely none.”

“Well, you know, since there is no one to advise me, I have no answer to any of these questions for you.”

“Well, Plinio, I’m sorry to have taken so much of your time!”

“Not at all!”

I accompanied him part of the way, took my leave, and we never saw each other again. Years later, he died. But this strange scene strengthened my impression that something was happening around me.<sup>407</sup>

## **8. Strong Support for Progressivism Suffocates My Soul**

While I felt increasingly pressed from all sides, I also noticed the signs of progressivism beginning to permeate all areas. It was a terrible offensive that contradicted everything I desired, the opposite of what I wanted to fight for.

It was then that I realized that all the slander, intrigues and fighting against me were due to my opposition to the so-called modernization of the Church, which I saw as a tidal wave that would destroy all that I had hoped to restore.

I could only conceive of a Church as Our Lord Jesus Christ had founded her, as She will be until the time when the Church militant will be able to cease her fight because Our Lord will have returned, accompanied by legions of angels and the righteous, to declare the end of history and commence the final judgment. Until then, the Church will remain the same.

I had the resolve to fight all these changes, which would unspeakably disfigure the Church.

So I found myself hard-pressed from all sides, in a position where I had almost no room to move. For a young man of twenty-four, it was a tragic situation.<sup>408</sup> It would be hard to describe my affliction and the confusion in my soul when I contemplated my position.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>406</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>407</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>408</sup> SD 4/25/92.

<sup>409</sup> SD 5/13/89.

## 9. A Few Speeches on Unforbidden Topics

I would sometimes speak in the Assembly but never on the matters that Cardinal Leme had banned.

To celebrate the fourth centenary of José de Anchieta, I was appointed the official speaker in the Constituent Assembly.<sup>410</sup>

I gave a speech, and the media in São Paulo covered it well. I gave three or four other speeches of this type, but there were not enough to convince the people who had expected a brilliant parliamentary performance from me.<sup>411</sup>

## 10. A Vehement Reply to Zoroastro de Gouveia

I would also sometimes intervene in the debates.

There were some Communist congressmen in the Assembly.<sup>412</sup> One of these had been elected by the Socialist Party instead of the single list for a united São Paulo. His name was Zoroastro de Gouveia.<sup>413</sup>

He was a man of dark complexion with short white hair.<sup>414</sup>

One day, he took the podium in an atmosphere of general boredom. Everyone was tired, and we were down to the last speeches of the day.<sup>415</sup>

Suddenly, he started a virulent attack on the honor of the Catholic congressmen, saying that we were not true patriots, that we were sold out to the Vatican and that, therefore, Brazil could not count on us to defend its interests. Only the Communists would do that.<sup>416</sup>

When I heard this,<sup>417</sup> I jumped on him like a tiger.<sup>418</sup> I rose, and from the first row, which was two steps from the platform, I thundered at him at the top of my voice:<sup>419</sup>

“Mr. Congressman, I protest! This is going too far, indeed! And I protest not only in my name but in the name of 95% of the population, whom you are insulting, in the vilest possible way, by your attack on the representatives

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<sup>410</sup> That much-applauded speech was given on behalf of the São Paulo delegation on March 17, 1934.

<sup>411</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>412</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>413</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>414</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95. Dr. Plinio described this congressman in the following way: Your Excellency seems determined to establish a constituency in São Paulo and appears to wish to serve your friends and voters some special treats in the style of 1789 or 1918. For this purpose, you seem intent on creating major parliamentary incidents by hurling coarse insults at your opponents, using your raw and powerful voice to assail the eardrums of those who seek to maintain order in the Assembly. For Your Excellency, there is no parliamentary exchange that does not serve as a pretext for such a “bullfight” to attack the congressman of the Single List, either through Mr. Cardoso de Mello or through Mr. Andrade de Moraes” (“The Catholic Amendments,” *Legionário*, No. 135, 12/24/33).

<sup>415</sup> SD 8/5/94.

<sup>416</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>417</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>418</sup> SD 8/5/94.

<sup>419</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

elected by them! etc., etc.”

Such was my outburst and unexpected fury that Zoroastro grew quite pale and looked at me as if to say, “How can I get out of this?!” I went on ranting at him for quite a while.<sup>420</sup>

When the dozing congressmen heard all that noise, they raised their heads to ask, “What on earth is going on here?!”<sup>421</sup>

He tried to interrupt me, but my voice quickly drowned out his. He realized he could say nothing, so he stopped talking and let me finish.

In the end, he escaped, and I left it at that.<sup>422</sup>

After that, there was no more talk about my having a stutter. That form of backbiting was over.

If I had not intervened, they would have vilified me, “When Zoroastro said these things about the Catholics, Plinio was there but did not say a word. He is not defending religion.”<sup>423</sup>

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That was in 1934.<sup>424</sup> Thirty years later, in 1963, I went to the House of Representatives, which had already been moved to Brasilia, to deliver a petition of farmers against agrarian reform.<sup>425</sup>

I was there with Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer and several TFP members.<sup>426</sup>

We called on the chief of staff and explained our aims to him.

Sitting at a desk, he would stop now and then, look at me, and continue. At one

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<sup>420</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>421</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

<sup>422</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>423</sup> SD 8/5/94.

<sup>424</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>425</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90. This petition started in Bagé (RS) and was signed by 27,000 farmers from many Brazilian states.

<sup>426</sup> Archbishop Geraldo de Proença Sigaud (1909-1999) belonged to the Congregation of the Divine Word. He met Dr. Plinio and openly supported his apostolate when he was still a parish priest. Afterward, he became bishop of Jacarezinho (PR) and co-authored the famous book by Dr. Plinio, *Agrarian Reform—A Question of Conscience* (1960). Following the publication of this book, he was appointed Archbishop of Diamantina (MG). His collaboration with Dr. Plinio and the TFP continued until the military government, installed in Brazil in 1964, published a truculent agrarian reform project for the country. Dom Sigaud viewed this project favorably, while Dr. Plinio and the TFP remained faithful to the principles set out in *Agrarian Reform—A Question of Conscience*.

As for Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer (1904-1991), his collaboration with Dr. Plinio, dating from when he was only a simple priest, was even closer. Appointed Bishop of Campos (RJ), he was not only co-author of the aforementioned work but also took up the defense of Dr. Plinio and the TFP on numerous occasions against the attacks of the progressive clergy. When he was already Bishop Emeritus, several differences of opinion led him to sever his ties with the TFP. He participated in the episcopal consecrations of Ecône (1988) along with Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. Until the end of his life, Dr. Plinio remembered with gratitude when Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer supported his work.

point, he asked:<sup>427</sup>

“You are...”

I thought: “Something is up,” and kept quiet.

“... Are you the congressman who had that fight with Zoroastro de Gouveia?”

I laughed and said:

“Do you still remember that?”

“Oh! I remember it very well. It was like a thunderbolt in the Assembly!”

## 11. Contacts with Other Delegations

My colleagues from São Paulo, because of their naturally ceremonious and reserved attitude, maintained little contact with the groups from the other states.

On the other hand, I was more outgoing and expansive, talked to many people, and, in this way, established very good relations with many of the congressmen from other states.<sup>428</sup>

I would greet them all, talk to them, and have coffee with them. We often had long discussions, and I spent a lot of time with my colleagues.

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To this day, I remember the first person with whom I became acquainted in the Constituent Assembly.

Behind the bench in the Assembly assigned to the congressmen from São Paulo was another group – I did not even know who they were. We had swivel chairs, and I absentmindedly put my arm onto the representative's desk behind me.

Suddenly, I could feel a hand on mine and heard a singsong voice: “My flower!”<sup>429</sup>

I turned around, ready to be angry. Who would dare to call me “my flower”?

But I saw the face of a man approaching sixty, who looked cultured and intelligent but also rather malicious, obviously looking forward to the little scene he was creating. He was a congressman for Bahia.

I realized that it would be stupid of me to show annoyance, so I turned to him and said:

“Do you want me to remove my arm?”

“No, my flower, no need to be so uptight.”

I left my arm there, and he began to chat with me.

He made small talk with such brilliance that I thought:

“So this is the famous charm and wit of Bahia!”<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> SD 8/5/94.

<sup>428</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>429</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>430</sup> SD 1/14/89.

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In this way, I got to know many congressmen from the other delegations. I would talk about Pernambuco with the group from Pernambuco; they knew some of my relatives. Eventually, I got to know the entire Constituent Assembly.<sup>431</sup>

## 12. Reacting to a Crisis

I remember one night at the hotel when the telephone woke me up.<sup>432</sup> I answered and heard the voice of Mr. Alcântara Machado, usually so firm and serious but now small and rather subdued.<sup>433</sup>

“Dr. Plinio, this is Alcântara Machado.”

“Certainly, Dr. Alcântara, what can I do for you?”

“I wanted to ask you to please come to my house. It is urgent because the political situation has become very serious, and I will need you.”

I was amazed because the São Paulo delegation did not care about my relationships with the other delegations.

I went to his house. He was the leader of my group and, as such, entitled to call me; he was also much older than I was. I immediately took a taxi, went to his house and found him very nervous.<sup>434</sup>

He told me:

“Dr. Plinio, I must tell you what happened in the Constituent Assembly this evening. You will not have heard about this yet, but I fought in such and such committee.<sup>435</sup> There was something I wanted, but the congressmen from the Northeast did not. As the discussion got more and more heated, I lost patience.<sup>436</sup> The northeastern congressman, João Alberto Lins de Barros, said<sup>437</sup> that was not acceptable<sup>438</sup> and that he was going to drag Antonio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrada out of the president’s chair by his ears and close down the Constituent Assembly by force with the help of several northeastern officials whose support he could count on.”<sup>439</sup>

After explaining this, he asked me:

“Since you and Dr. Macedo Soares are the two best-connected congressmen of the São Paulo delegation, I wanted to ask each of you tonight to visit the greatest

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<sup>431</sup> SD 3/9/88.

<sup>432</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>433</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>434</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>435</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>436</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>437</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>438</sup> SD 1/14/89.

<sup>439</sup> SD 9/10/88.

possible number of congressmen from the other states to see if you cannot get them to take the side of the São Paulo delegation. This is the only way to create strong pressure tomorrow to prevent the Assembly from being dissolved.”

I immediately took a car and went on a tour of the homes of the Catholic congressmen I knew best to tell them what had happened.

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The next day, in the Assembly, there was a great feeling of excitement and anticipation. Antonio Carlos was as pale as an ivory cane knob.<sup>440</sup> His big eyes kept moving from one side to another, constantly looking for signs of trouble.

He had an electric fan right before his face because it was one of those days of intense heat in Rio de Janeiro, enough to knock out anyone not used to it. He also had some gadget from which he would now and then inhale some medicine, probably for his heart.<sup>441</sup>

João Alberto walked through the Constituent Assembly trying hard to look like a soldier, and everyone was apprehensive – until the crisis finally subsided.<sup>442</sup>

Antonio Carlos rose and stood there, trembling. His day of peril had just ended. He came down, leaning heavily on his supporters, disappeared inside the Assembly, took a car and left. His "D"-day had passed.<sup>443</sup>

I asked Alcântara Machado about the situation.

He said: “Thanks to your help and that of the others, we have succeeded in calming down the situation. I am very grateful to you.”<sup>444</sup>

Maybe that is why, when he later wrote a book about the work of the Constituent Assembly, Alcântara Machado sent me a copy with a dedication that went something like: “To Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, whose performance in the Constituent Assembly may have appeared cautious but was quite outstanding. Alcântara Machado.”<sup>445</sup>

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This networking was so intense that several congressmen (Cardoso de Melo, Barros Penteadó and others), when talking to priests close to the archdiocesan Chancery of São Paulo, said, “You know, you have sent an excellent representative there, and he really fights for the Catholic cause!”

One day, Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto himself visited the Assembly, I believe, to observe my work. I did not know he was there, as he was seated in a special tribune.

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<sup>440</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>441</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>442</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>443</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>444</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>445</sup> CSN 8/7/93.



When the session ended, he came to me and said:

“Congratulations. I saw you work all day, talking to people here, there and everywhere, and I am very pleased with the congressman we sent here.”

### 13. A Victory for the Catholic Amendments

The Catholic amendments were voted on one by one, and they were all incorporated into the Constitution. Two others that were not part of our program were also approved.<sup>446</sup>

While the Constitution of 1891 did not mention God's name, the Constitution of 1934 started with the words: “We, the representatives of the Brazilian people, putting our trust in God, etc ...”<sup>447</sup>

It was a huge Catholic victory!<sup>448</sup>

The Catholic panorama in the country had undergone a dramatic change: the Church was once again a power in Brazil.

Brazilian law had lost, not all, but a good part of the ugly secularist aspect that had characterized it before.

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It would be an exaggeration to say that all this was due to the most-voted-for congressman in the Constituent Assembly.

Our Lady used me as a tool to launch the idea of the Catholic Electoral League and ensure that it was established so it could do its work. She also availed herself of my services as one of the drivers of the Marian movement that was at the root of the LEC's victory.

But there were also many other dedicated Catholic congressmen.<sup>449</sup>

I particularly remember my friend Barreto Campelo, a congressman for Pernambuco and a fervent Catholic professor at the Recife Law School. I also recall another friend, Adroaldo Mesquita da Costa, from Rio Grande do Sul, who later became Minister of Justice and fearlessly maintained Catholic positions throughout his life. There were quite a few others: Luís Sucupira of Ceará, Furtado de Menezes, and Polycarpo Viotti from Minas Gerais, among many others from various states.<sup>450</sup>

One Catholic congressman alone could not have achieved those results.

Thank God, I had the joy of knowing that I had worked hard for this result and achieved a wide network of relationships that would be of untold value to the

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<sup>446</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>447</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>448</sup> 168 congressmen voted for the inclusion of God's name, while 57 voted against it (cf. *Legionário*, No. 145, May 13, 1934).

<sup>449</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>450</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

Catholic cause.<sup>451</sup>

One of those who worked closely with me all the time, in a very discreet but always effective manner, was a congressman who, I think, deserves to be called a Catholic in the most profound sense of the word.

He was an old professor of mine named Moraes de Andrade. He remained a congressman for many years afterward and attended the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He was one of the organizers of the nightly prayer vigils.

An old man with white hair and a beard, he was elected because he had a considerable following in the Perdizes neighborhood, due to his political prestige and maybe also thanks to the votes of the parish, which he well deserved because he was an exemplary parishioner.

Since I was the congressman elected by the Catholics, he always considered me his leader in religious matters, although I had been his student. He never took any initiative unless I had asked him to, and he took all the steps I wished him to.<sup>452</sup>

#### 14. Closing of the Constituent Assembly

The Constituent Assembly had the power to decide whether to continue for another four years as a legislative body or immediately dissolve. An order from Getúlio instructed all Getulist congressmen to vote in favor of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. Since they had a majority, they won, and the Assembly closed after no more than six months of work.

The day of the closing ceremony of the Constituent Assembly finally arrived.<sup>453</sup>

The closing session was like the opening: the room was all decked with roses, with music playing, the singing of the National Anthem,<sup>454</sup> the presence of the diplomatic corps and many senior officials, etc.<sup>455</sup>

Then Getúlio appeared and delivered a speech, with floodlights lighting up all the corners of the Chamber because later his speech would be shown in cinemas across Brazil for propaganda purposes (this was the era before television).

Once again, the São Paulo congressmen were the only ones who appeared in top hats, tails, and all the other paraphernalia.<sup>456</sup>

Getúlio, a small man, kept his hand on his vest as he always did. Along with all the other deputies on the single list, I voted against him, but the Constituent

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<sup>451</sup> SD 6/22/73.

<sup>452</sup> SD 6/23/73.

<sup>453</sup> The official closing took place on July 16, 1934, the date on which the Constitution was promulgated. The next day, there was also a session during which the indirect presidential election was held. Getúlio Vargas won (with 173 votes), and Borges de Medeiros was defeated (he obtained 59 votes). The latter had been opposing Getúlio Vargas since 1931. The São Paulo state representatives voted for Borges de Medeiros, against the instructions of the federal intervenor, Armando Sales de Oliveira.

<sup>454</sup> SD 1/28/89.

<sup>455</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>456</sup> SD 1/28/89.

Assembly elected him president.

On the day the Constitution was promulgated, I received telegrams from Dom Duarte and all the other Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of São Paulo, thanking me in glowing terms for the services rendered.

## Chapter XI

# After the Constituent Assembly, Offers to Enter a Political Career

### 1. The Need to Continue the Parliamentary Fight; LEC is Closed Down

Even before the session ended, I put away my top hat and tails, and the next night, I took the train to São Paulo.<sup>457</sup> I was 25 years old.<sup>458</sup>

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A week before leaving Rio, I wrote a letter to Dom Duarte summarizing the Catholic Electoral League's activities and prospects.<sup>459</sup>

In another letter, I reported something that I found rather strange: I had

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<sup>457</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>458</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

Dr. Plínio took the night train in Rio on the night of July 17, 1934, arriving in São Paulo in the morning of July 18, as reported in the newspaper *Diário da Noite* (7/18/34), to which he gave an interview on the afternoon of that same day. In the interview, he criticized Getúlio Vargas's attempts to stay in power, stating that "Mr. Getúlio Vargas ought to remove himself from the political scene" to bring some peace and stability back to Brazil. He said the opposition deeply resented his clinging to power.

<sup>459</sup> This letter, dated July 9, 1934, said, in part: "I think it only right ... that I render an account to Your Excellency regarding the situation the League will face in the second stage, which will be that of consolidating the results that we have achieved by ordinary legislation and by reshaping the State according to the Constitution.... The total number of voter registrations obtained by the League, both in the capital and in the interior of the archdiocese, is 16,296. All these 16,296 applicants signed a commitment to electoral discipline with the League. Everyone is registered at our office, with their name, age, place of birth, residence, marital status, etc. ... As you can see, this is a perfectly documented constituency where all the necessary details have been recorded.

noticed, quite frequently even among the clergy, the idea that the victory of the Catholic claims in the Constituent Assembly had completed the League's activities and that, given its success, it would be difficult to justify the continuation of its activities.<sup>460</sup>

However, all the principles we introduced into the Constitution depended on good or bad implementing legislation.<sup>461</sup>

What I had not expected was that Dom Duarte himself intended to paralyze the activities of the League. And yet, shortly after, I received a call from him, during which he told me:

“There are two things that I want to tell you. The Catholic Electoral League has lost its purpose because it has achieved everything it set out to achieve. Under these circumstances, we no longer need the League. You may even disband it. If there is no league, you cannot be its candidate. Now, of the two parties in São Paulo, the Partido Republicano Paulista and the Partido Constitucionalista, which one do you prefer?”<sup>462</sup>

He knew very well that I had no ties to either of these two parties. Therefore, which one I prefer should be understood as “Which party do you dislike less?”

The Paulista Republican Party was the party of the old military families and of the farmers of the interior, which meant that it had a certain aristocratic note;<sup>463</sup> the Constitutionalist Party was instead center-left leaning.<sup>464</sup>

Somewhat startled by the question, I replied that I liked neither, but if I were obliged to choose one, I would prefer the PRP, the Paulista Republican Party.<sup>465</sup>

He insisted:

“Do you want to be a federal congressman with the Paulista Republican Party or with the Constitutionalist Party? If you want me to, I will tell either of them to invite you to stand as a candidate.”

I told him:

“Your Excellency, I thank you for taking an interest in my future, but I must tell you that I would rather not join any political party.”<sup>466</sup>

Dom Duarte asked me to think it over. I said:

“I won't change my opinion.”<sup>467</sup>

He said:

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<sup>460</sup> Letter to Archbishop Duarte, probably written in early July 1934.

<sup>461</sup> Letter to Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto, 8/1/34.

<sup>462</sup> SD 1/28/89.

<sup>463</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>464</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>465</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>466</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>467</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

“Fine, just do not say I lost interest in you.”

“I am very grateful for the interest that Your Excellency is showing in me.”  
And that was the end of it.<sup>468</sup>

## 2. Pressure and Invitations from Political Parties. My Reasons for Refusing These Invitations

After this conversation with Dom Duarte, I was pressured to pursue a political career outside the strictly Catholic environment. I responded clearly and resoundingly “no” to all these suggestions.<sup>469</sup>

These pressures were brought because, according to the mechanism of the democratic and representative federal organization in Brazil, the next step after the closing of the Constituent Assembly would be to summon the electorate to elect a Federal House of Representatives and a Senate. The politicians worked hard for this.<sup>470</sup>

PRP and Constitutionalist Party members insisted I accept a nomination on their lists.<sup>471</sup>

One day, I received a phone call: “The Paulista Republican Party wants to talk to you.”

I went to the phone, and a congressman whose name I cannot recall told me: “Dr. Plinio, we want to invite you to become a state congressman for us; please tell us when it would be convenient for you to meet.”

I asked him to come to my house. He did, and we had a very cordial conversation. He kept insisting that I should become a congressman for the PRP.

I thanked him very much and, to be polite, promised to think about it.

I allowed a few days to pass, then called him and said, “So-and-so, I am very grateful, but it would not be right for me to join the party.” I refused the invitation.

Some days later, I was approached by Dr. Antonio Cintra Gordinho, the president of the Commercial Association of São Paulo, a wealthy and influential man with charming manners, who said that he wanted to talk to me.<sup>472</sup>

I still remember him in the drawing room of my house, which, at the time, was in Marques de Itu Street, No. 124, telling me.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> SD 10/11/80. In a letter to Dom Epaminondas, Bishop of Taubaté, he confided, “I kept hoping until the last minute that the archbishop [Dom Duarte] would change his decision, as I thought the circumstances required. However, having had to accept that this will not happen, I will now try my luck with an individual initiative of my own” (Letter to Dom Rev. Epaminondas, undated, probably from September or October 1934).

<sup>469</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement, 6/8/86.

<sup>470</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>471</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>472</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>473</sup> SD 10/11/80.

“Plinio, on behalf of the Constitutionalist Party, I urge you to accept a place on our list to become a federal congressman.”

I answered:

“Dr. Gordinho, thank you very much. It is very kind of you, but I cannot accept this invitation.”

He took quite some time trying hard to persuade me. In the end, he said:

“Look, the convention is meeting as we sit here. And they are just waiting for your ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to finalize the list. They are all there making speeches to entertain the participants,<sup>474</sup> killing time while waiting for your response.<sup>475</sup> If you accept, I will phone them to say so. You can accompany me to the convention and be confirmed as a candidate. If you do not accept, it will be really sad.”

Again, I said, “Dr. Gordinho, I am very grateful to you and very much honored by your invitation, but it is not my intention to accept.”

He finally said goodbye and went to tell his party’s convention that I had not accepted their offer.<sup>476</sup>

Strangely enough, the party I would have preferred only offered me a position as a state congressman, a lesser position than a federal congressman. The center-left Constitutionalist Party insisted on my candidacy as a federal congressman, a higher position from a political point of view, even if it was not wanted. I found this somewhat paradoxical.<sup>477</sup>

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I refused the positions offered by both the Paulista Republicans and the Constitutionalist Party because of compelling reasons.

The most compelling of these reasons could be summed up as follows: If Catholic Action were to remain independent of any political party, a Catholic directly linked to any party would be in a poor position to serve it, particularly if – as in my case – such a Catholic were destined, for lack of better elements, to occupy positions of responsibility among the Catholic laity.<sup>478</sup>

As long as I avoided party disputes, I could afford to be on good terms with both groups representing São Paulo State in the House of Representatives. On the other hand, as soon as I assumed a partisan attitude, I would turn the faction opposed to my goals against me. In such a case, the most significant damage would be done to the Catholic cause since the group I had crossed would do its best to oppose any implementation of the principles I personified.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>475</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>476</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>477</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>478</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Most Rev. Epaminondas, Bishop of Taubaté, unknown date, certainly from the second half of 1934.

<sup>479</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to the Vicar General of Rio Preto, 10/6/34.

### 3. An Independent Candidate without a Party

Therefore, I rejected the two parties and launched my candidacy as an independent congressman for the state.<sup>480</sup>

I rented an office consisting of only one room (room 211), reasonably good-sized, on the second floor of Libero Badaró Street No. 10, near the corner of the Avenida São João. That was where I set up my electoral committee.

I printed posters and strategically placed them at various locations in São Paulo. I also sent a lot of correspondence into the state's interior: letters to priests, Marian congregations, friends and other persons who figured on the many lists of names that I had. I sent out large quantities of such documents.<sup>481</sup>

I also sent a circular letter to all the clergy of the State of São Paulo<sup>482</sup> and published a manifesto announcing my candidacy.<sup>483</sup> The elite Marian Catholic youth of São Paulo supported me by signing the manifesto.

At the same time, I asked Tristão to write a letter of recommendation about my work in the Constituent Assembly, to inform the public about who I was and to give some weight to my candidacy. He sent the coldest and most sabotaging letter imaginable.<sup>484</sup>

I organized caravans of about twenty young Marian congregants and some *Legionário* group members to visit the parishes, advertise my candidacy, and ask for votes. I distributed hundreds of thousands of ballots.<sup>485</sup> The demand for ballots was fantastic.

Everything appeared to indicate that the election campaign was going well.<sup>486</sup> Then, some circumstances arose that hindered my vote.<sup>487</sup>

### 4. An Unexpected Circular Hurts Dr. Plinio's Candidacy

During my conversation with Dom Duarte, he subtly gave me the understanding that he would neither oppose nor support my campaign.

Other churchmen on whose support I had counted also showed themselves completely indifferent. Among the bishops, the only exception was Dom Epaminondas Nunes D'Ávila e Silva, Bishop of Taubaté.<sup>488</sup>

One day, a priest from the church of Santa Cecília appeared at my house. He was Father Paulo de Tarso Campos, subsequently named Bishop of Santos and then

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<sup>480</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>481</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>482</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>483</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>484</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>485</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>486</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>487</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>488</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

Archbishop of Campinas.<sup>489</sup>

I knew him well since he was the assistant parish priest at Santa Cecilia, and I was a congregant there.

He was fuming as he came to my house, saying he had been in contact with a group of priests and that he was simply furious at what was going on.

He told me that Msgr. Pereira Barros had sent a circular letter to all the priests in São Paulo, saying the Paulista Republican Party had named the physician Tarcisio Leopoldo e Silva, Dom Duarte's brother, as a candidate for state congressman. And – said the letter – it would be terrible for the prestige of the archbishop if his brother were not elected, so he was requesting all priests to vote for Dom Duarte's brother.

Father Paulo de Tarso Campos then showed me the letter and told me, shaking with indignation:

“If you like, we will set up a committee of priests and protest to Dom Duarte. And we will go with you to present this protest.”

I had great personal respect for Dom Duarte and did not want to do anything that would put any pressure on him.

So I told Father Paulo de Tarso that I was very grateful. I would be thankful if they wanted to draw up a letter of protest, but I could not be part of this protest.

And so this initiative fizzled out. But the circular of Monsignor Pereira Barros went on circulating.<sup>490</sup>

## 5. Attacked in a Religious Column

Then, another strange thing happened along the same lines.

The daily *O Estado de S. Paulo* had a section called *Religious Movement*, which was very well-read among the Catholic public and written by an old militant Catholic named Júlio Rodrigues.

Just before the elections, Júlio Rodrigues wrote an article that violently attacked independent candidates.<sup>491</sup>

The Catholic public widely read this section.

I read the article in the morning, and since I knew that a private individual wrote this section and did not represent the opinion of the archdiocesan Chancery, I ignored it and went out to work on my electoral campaign. All this happened before the elections.<sup>492</sup>

But the fact was that that article hurt my chances, and it hurt them quite severely.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Dom Paulo de Tarso Campos (1895-1970) was made pastor of the Parish of St. Cecilia in São Paulo in 1932, Bishop of the Diocese of Santos in 1935 and Archbishop of Campinas in 1941.

<sup>490</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>491</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>492</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>493</sup> SD 9/17/88.



## 6. The Marian Sodality Members' Selfless Work

The Marian Sodality members who worked with me were even poorer than I was. Several of them had asked for a holiday to work for my election. That is the kind of thing that money cannot pay. Not that I had any money to pay them – I didn't – or that they would have wanted me to pay them. It was a selfless work, the kind good Marian congregants did.

I tried to repay them by praying for them and giving them all my friendship. That was all I had.

When the election campaign was closed late at night on the appointed day, the Marian congregants gathered at the campaign office to discuss the voters' attitudes.<sup>494</sup>

I said to them:

“Thank you, everyone, thank you very much. It has been a fight we fought for the Catholic cause, and there is a good chance that we may win. If we do, we will have won for the cause of Our Lady. If we don't, my political career is over. It's an all-or-nothing situation. If I am re-elected, it will be by a small margin. If I am defeated, it will also be quite close. So, this was not a rash or unrealistic attempt; I did not make you go to work to support a forlorn hope. It was a completely reasonable bid. The numbers will tell. Now, only Providence knows whether it will be successful or not. Time will tell.”

We parted amicably and waited for the vote count to begin.

## 7. Suspicious Vote Count: A Ballot Box Opened with a Cardboard Key

Strangely enough, some time passed before the vote count began. In plain sight, the ballots were stacked up in some building on Park Dom Pedro II; everyone could see them through a grill.<sup>495</sup>

I began to find this worrying: “What's going on here? What are they going to do with these ballots?”<sup>496</sup>

When the count began, the results were completely different from what everyone had expected. The Paulista Republican Party had been expected to win, but it had received far fewer votes in places it had been heavily favored.

Almost immediately, rumors began to spread that the ballots had been messed with<sup>497</sup> and the elections had been rigged.

During a radio broadcast, a wealthy and prominent member of the opposition and a leading enemy of the government from Limeira, Major José Levy,<sup>498</sup> stated that the ballot boxes' padlocks could be picked so easily that he would open any of them in a public demonstration using a cardboard key that he would cut himself. A time was set for this

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<sup>494</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>495</sup> SD 10/11/80.

<sup>496</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>497</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>498</sup> Major José Levy Sobrinho (1884-1957), a native of Limeira (SP), was a Brazilian businessman, industrialist, politician, Colonel of the National Guard, and president of the board of directors of the Paulista Republican Party. He also pioneered sericulture and established the citrus industry in São Paulo.

demonstration.

When the time came, to people's amazement, Major Levy cut a cardboard key, put it into the lock, and sprang open.

He said, "Now bring me some more boxes; I will open them all." And he did, right before the eyes of the authorities' representatives and other witnesses.

They immediately telephoned the *Gazeta*, which at that time was the most sensationalist paper in São Paulo, and had a siren whose sound reached most of the main parts of the city of São Paulo, which was still relatively small at that time.

This siren was usually heard only at noon and at six o'clock. This time, the siren was heard at ten in the morning.

It rang out again and again, and the whole city was in an uproar, "the ballots have been opened; the elections were rigged."

The elections should have been declared invalid; however, they were not.<sup>499</sup>

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Before this scandal broke, when the count had only just started, I had to deal with a little matter concerning my voter ID; I went to see the president of the Electoral Court of São Paulo.

I entered a room full of people and noticed that his face showed some anxiety when he saw me. I did not give any importance to that then, but I noticed it.

Afterward, I had every reason to suspect that my votes had been removed from the ballot boxes in enormous numbers because of an indisputable fact that I came to know later: Bishop Mayer, whom I had not yet met at the time and who then was only a simple priest, had voted for me, but not a single vote had been recorded on my behalf in his section.<sup>500</sup>

## 8. Prestige Intact and Even Growing

During this period, after my mandate as a congressman had ended, I constantly spent evenings with my friends at the Marian Congregation, taking pains to cultivate my relationship with the Marian movement.

I was constantly invited to give speeches and lectures within the Catholic Movement. Almost every month, I would give two or even three lectures.

I always made great efforts to prepare these lectures very carefully. This naturally multiplied invitations on other occasions.

I went and spoke, saying what I thought I should say. They could think of me whatever they liked.

In this sense, my influence as a Catholic leader grew even more after I had ceased to be a congressman. Of course, I was also a little older, so I was taken more seriously than a twenty-five-year-old man.

Catholic meetings were often held in theaters filled to capacity. The room would rise

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<sup>499</sup> SD 6/23/73.

<sup>500</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

and clap when I entered (although I no longer had any position).

There was no way I could attend such a meeting without being invited to make a speech at the end. No one even contemplated such a thing.

This had already been the case before I became a congressman. During my time as a member of the Constituent Assembly, this sometimes happened and sometimes did not. It happened far more often after I was no longer a congressman, by unknown dispositions of Providence.<sup>501</sup>

This personal prestige, humanly speaking, was worth very little to me, given the aristocratic structure of São Paulo at the time. However, as a tool for my apostolate, it was excellent, and I valued it highly; for this reason, I always sought ways to cultivate it and increase my influence with the Catholic public to achieve the goals I had in mind.<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> SD 2/18/89.

<sup>502</sup> SD 6/23/73.

# Part III

## University Professor and Attorney

### The Role of *Legionário*

#### Chapter I

### Three Professorial Chairs

#### 1. The Teaching Profession: a Fertile Ground for My Apostolate

In 1935, I definitively left the political arena.

I returned to private life and eventually took up, at different times, three professorships.<sup>503</sup> First, in 1935, the chair of the History of Civilization at University College, a department attached to the Law School of the University of São Paulo; then the chair of Modern and Contemporary History at the Sedes Sapientiae College, in 1937; and finally, the chair of Modern and Contemporary History at the College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of São Bento.<sup>504</sup>

If I remember correctly, I taught for about twenty years. I founded the TFP much later, in 1960.

When the TFP was founded, I had already stopped teaching. Setting up this association required so much preparatory work that it was incompatible with a teaching post's schedules and other requirements.<sup>505</sup>

Even as a student in Law School, I felt a particular vocation for the teaching profession; I liked to explain, develop and expound ideas. My desire was always to be a professor of history. It seemed to be the most important and exciting subject concerning general culture.

I did not want to be the kind of history teacher who enters a class and says,

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<sup>503</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira, 6/13/90.

<sup>504</sup> Biographical notes dictated in 1972.

<sup>505</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira, 6/13/90.

“Meroveus I, son of Chlodion: what are the dates of his reign? When did he die? Was he killed? Did he die of a disease?” And so on. I thought that this kind of meaningless collecting of data was utterly useless. I was not attracted to this kind of teaching of history. However, I felt that I could do good work commenting on history, analyzing it, and seeking to show its profound meaning.<sup>506</sup> I always had papers with me on which the dates were written down, and I would read them out during lessons, quite openly consulting my notes in front of the students whenever I needed a reference.<sup>507</sup>

I longed for a life where worries about making money would occupy as little as possible of my time and attention, leaving me free to devote myself to the apostolate. The ideal profession would offer opportunities for the apostolate, where I could do some good. And being a professor of history seemed the best way to achieve this purpose,<sup>508</sup> since it would open up opportunities to teach a counter-revolutionary view of history and possibly gain adherents.<sup>509</sup>

Those professorships allowed me to exercise a public apostolate with a markedly doctrinal bent. Even with objectivity that comes close to absolute neutrality, teaching history will inevitably profoundly impact students' doctrinal formation and mentality.<sup>510</sup>

## 2. Alcântara Machado's Remark

How did I become a professor of history?

As a congressman, I faced the question of what to do when my mandate expired.

What would I do with my life? I worried about this a lot.

One day, during a meeting of the São Paulo delegation, at which I confess I was not paying much attention, the leader, Alcântara Machado, looked around at those present, at a certain point, and asked:

“Do you all agree to this?”

Silence in the room.

“You agree?”

Silence in the room.

“Fine, so this has been approved!”

And turning to me, he added:

“The one who won with this was you.”

“Why did I win?”

He knew I had not been paying attention, but I wanted to know why I had won.

“Because this new constitution allows the Church to found Catholic universities,<sup>511</sup> and it is inconceivable that a Catholic University in São Paulo

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<sup>506</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>507</sup> Conversation 1/20/93.

<sup>508</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>509</sup> SD 2/18/89.

<sup>510</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>511</sup> SD 6/10/89.

would not have you as a professor.<sup>512</sup> You will have all that is required to start your career in a place where others only end up after working for it all their lives.”<sup>513</sup>

Until then, in Brazil, all university education had been in the hands of the state. That provision of the Constitution of 1934 opened up the possibility for large private organizations, including the Catholic Church, to set up colleges and universities, although these would, of course, be subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Education.<sup>514</sup>

When Alcântara Machado made that remark, I immediately woke up. I was delighted but did not show it because I did not want it to be too apparent that I had not paid attention to the discussion.

### 3. An Invitation from São Bento College

Shortly after, in São Paulo (and still a congressman), I received a phone call from the Benedictine priests. They wanted to talk to me.

I suggested a meeting, and they added:

“We are founding a college, the São Bento College of Philosophy, Science, and Letters.<sup>515</sup> There will be a history department with three or four professorships: ancient history, medieval history, modern history, and contemporary history. We need to present names that will impress the Ministry of Education. These will be tenured professorships immediately. Would you accept two of these chairs? Your name will impress people because you are a congressman.”

And they kindly added, “And you are known as a good orator.”

“Yes, I can do this. If you need me, I can do it.”<sup>516</sup>

“You are aware that you will not earn much? The state pays a university professor around fifteen hundred a month. The Church has even less money than the State because it cannot raise taxes. All we can pay you will be two hundred and fifty.”

I thought to myself: “Well, that is better than nothing.” and said:

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<sup>512</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>513</sup> SD 2/18/89.

<sup>514</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>515</sup> The Free São Bento College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters already existed and was maintained by Benedictine monks. On the faculty were first-rate professors such as Alexandre Correia and Leonardo Van Hacker, both with distinguished intellectual formation and graduates from the University of Louvain in Belgium (cf. Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90). São Bento College provided a high-grade education but was not officially recognized. Those interested in learning the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas would study there (cf. Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90). With the new Constitution the school was officially recognized and was called the São Bento College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters (cf. interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana, cit.).

<sup>516</sup> SD 6/10/89.

“No problem. That is fine; I’ll take it.”<sup>517</sup>

And so I became a full-fledged professor at São Bento College.

I told them I could not start teaching since I was still a congressman.

While working in the legislative assembly, I kept receiving invitations to attend meetings to discuss this, that and the other. I could not participate in these, but it is evident that they remembered that I was registered with the Ministry of Education as a professor.

#### **4. An Invitation from Sedes Sapientiae College**

Sometime later, I received another invitation: “The sisters of Saint Augustine College (on Marquês de Paranaguá Street) invite you to be a professor at a college that they intend to establish, which will be known as Sedes Sapientiae College, and at which the most renowned intellectuals of the country will be invited to teach. They would like for you as a congressman to accept four chairs.” Of course, I accepted this offer and was very glad to do so.<sup>518</sup>

Shortly after that, the Canonesses Regular of St. Augustine opened in São Paulo the Sedes Sapientiae College of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters, a college for girls recognized by the Ministry of Education.<sup>519</sup>

I heard that the great driving force behind the foundation of this college was a Belgian, a great personality, from a wealthy and distinguished family, Mère Saint-Ambroise. I soon came to know her personally. She was intelligent, cultured, extremely efficient, and capable. She knew exactly what she wanted, and her Superiors left her an unusual amount of freedom in the direction of the school.<sup>520</sup>

#### **5. Appointment to the University School**

The story of my appointment to the University School was a real epic.<sup>521</sup>

I was still a congressman. One day, at the Marian Congregation of Santa Cecilia, a Marian congregant told me about something that he had heard from a friend who worked in a division of a certain Secretariat of the government of São Paulo: they would create teaching posts for the University School of the Law School of São Paulo.<sup>522</sup>

This University School was planned as a kind of secondary education facility located in the same building as the university, raising the high school to the higher education level.<sup>523</sup> In other words, it was to be an introductory course for law school.

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<sup>517</sup> SD 2/18/89.

<sup>518</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>519</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>520</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>521</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>522</sup> SD 9/14/91.

<sup>523</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

Being a teacher there was a great honor—almost equivalent to being a professor at the Law School itself.<sup>524</sup> Classes would take place in the same building, meetings would be held in the same room used by the Law School professors, and breaks would be spent in the same rooms.

So everything was done together, and there was continuous contact with the Law School. The two entities had the same director, the same secretary, the same clerk,<sup>525</sup> everyone was addressed as *Your Excellency* in class, and the salaries were almost the same.<sup>526</sup>

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A few days later, armed with this information, I went to see the Governor, Dr. Armando Sales de Oliveira

As a congressman, I had the privilege of being received at once. I went in and said:

“I want to talk to the Governor.”

“Ah! Of course.”<sup>527</sup>

I entered:

“Dr. Armando, how are you?”

I was unaccustomed to how they do things in government offices; I knew nothing about it. If you address the Governor, you must call him “*Governor*,” not “*Dr. Such-and-Such*.” Above all, you must never address him by his first name but always by his last name: “*Dr. Sales de Oliveira*” or whatever it may be.

“Dr. Armando, how are you?”

“How are you, Dr. Plinio?”<sup>528</sup>

I thought the Governor seemed rather intrigued with what I could want. He received me very kindly, and one of the first things he told me was:

“This Constituent Assembly is taking too long, and it should go much faster; you must make an effort to ensure this ends soon.”

I thought, “It is high time to put pressure on this man to give me that job; otherwise, I will be left out in the rain.”

I said:

“Dr. Armando, I quite agree with what you say, but I came here to talk to you about something else. I supported you when your name came up for the job of Federal intervenor in São Paulo, and I have come to ask you a favor.”

“Certainly, Dr. Plinio.”<sup>529</sup>

He was sitting sideways but looking forward, very quiet, with his hands on the desk.

I said:

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<sup>524</sup> SD 9/14/91.

<sup>525</sup> SD 2/11/89

<sup>526</sup> Dinner EANS 6/15/82.

<sup>527</sup> SD 9/14/91.

<sup>528</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>529</sup> SD 9/14/91.



“I understand they are considering founding a section attached to the São Paulo Law School.”

“I have heard that there are plans to found a department to be attached to the Law School of São Paulo.

“Ah! Have you, Dr. Plinio?”

He did not deny it.

“I have come to ask you to be appointed a professor of the History of Civilization.”

“History of Civilization! What a fascinating subject, isn’t it?”

“Very interesting, and I very much want to do this.”

We talked a little more, and then he said:<sup>530</sup>

“Well, I’ll take a note, and we’ll see what can be done.”

“Well then, Dr. Armando, I will not take up any more of your time. Here is my application; I leave it in your hands.”<sup>531</sup>

We both rose, exchanged greetings, and I left.

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A few days passed, I went to Rio and came back again, and my friend came to tell me that my request had caused an uproar: “In the circles of the Secretariat,<sup>488</sup> they think you will bring clericalism into the University, that you will enter your classes with an aspersion in your hands, and things like that.<sup>489</sup> But the governor said he could not oppose you because of political commitments with the Catholic Electoral League. All the congressmen were constantly bombarding the government with all kinds of requests. But you had never asked for anything; this was your only request. That was why he had ordered a decree to appoint you.”<sup>532</sup>

A few days later, I was in Rio again,<sup>533</sup> and when I arrived at the Constituent Assembly, several representatives from São Paulo came to greet, embrace, and congratulate me.

I said:

“But what has happened?”

“Haven’t you seen it? The *Official Gazette* has published a governor’s decree signed by Sales de Oliveira, appointing you a professor at the University School of the São Paulo Law School for the chair of History of Civilization, a lifetime appointment.”

I immediately sent a telegram to São Paulo to thank him and thought, “Well, that problem is solved.”<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>531</sup> SD 9/14/91.

<sup>532</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>533</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>534</sup> SD 9/14/91.

Later, I also visited Armando Sales to thank him in person.<sup>535</sup>

## 6. Inauguration into the Law School

There were still a few months before classes began at the Law School, and I still had doubts about whether they would welcome me as a professor.<sup>536</sup> It was, therefore, with some anxiety that I presented myself there.

The School was a construction site. The director's office was a small room you could only enter from the back, and the whole thing was a mess.

I introduced myself and asked to speak to the director, Dr. Rafael Correia de Sampaio, who, if I remember correctly, had been my professor of procedural law.

When I entered the room, he was reading something and sitting in a chair. I did not want to interrupt him, so I addressed the secretary, whom I did not know.

I said:

"I would like to speak to the secretary."

"I am the secretary."

"I am Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira,<sup>537</sup> and here is the decree of Governor Armando Sales appointing me as a professor of the University School.<sup>538</sup> Classes are about to begin, and I came to let you know I am ready to take up my position."

I spoke loudly, and the director heard me. He lowered the newspaper and said:

"Plinio, how are you?"

"Oh! Dr. Rafael Sampaio, and how are you?"

"Come here."<sup>539</sup> And he embraced me.<sup>540</sup> "So you have come to take up your position? Great, let's get the formalities done."

He then started to execute the official inauguration form.<sup>541</sup>

I had to provide the usual information, such as my age, etc. Once all the formalities had been completed, I realized it would not be appropriate to chat with them since I had come to see them during their working hours. So, I made my farewells. There were more embraces and a "Nice to meet you" to the secretary.

And so I waited for the first day of classes. At least here, there was no longer any

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<sup>535</sup> SD 9/10/88.

<sup>536</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>537</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>538</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>539</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>540</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>541</sup> SD 9/17/88.

doubt. As far as this was concerned, at least I could stop worrying.<sup>542</sup>

## 7. Inauguration at Sedes Sapientiae

After the canonesses of St. Augustine College invited me to be a professor at *Sedes Sapientiae* College, I accepted but did not hear from them again. I left the formalities with the Ministry of Education to them, relying on them to register me as a tenured professor with a lifetime appointment.

After a while, I presented myself and said,

“Mother, I am Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.”

“Ah! Yes, I know.”

“I wanted to know if my name has been registered.”

“It has been registered.”

“I came to say that I am ready to start teaching.”

“Oh! Excellent, professor.”

And so I began to teach there.<sup>543</sup>

*Sedes Sapientiae* College was located on Caio Prado Street, much closer to my house than São Bento.

## 8. My Days as a Professor and Lawyer

If I remember correctly, I gave classes at the Law School four days a week, two classes per day. At *Sedes Sapientiae*, I think there were three classes per week.

In all, therefore, I taught eleven hours per week.

On the recommendation of Father Leonel Franca, the star of the Catholic intelligentsia of that time, I bought a *Universal History* in ten or twelve volumes, the most recent and the most famous I could find whose author was Johann Baptist Weiss, an Austrian with a sound Catholic orientation.

In the mornings, I would go to Communion, return home and prepare my lessons. In the afternoons, I would teach. I always took the streetcar from the Law School to *Sedes Sapientiae* because I never learned to drive a car, and there were no buses. That used to take almost the entire afternoon.

I worked in my little law firm in the afternoons when free or after school.<sup>544</sup> My office was near the universities, so I could meet my clients when I finished my classes.

Afterward, I would go home early to read before dinner and prepare my lessons for the next day.

In the evenings, after dinner, I was usually free. I dedicated these evenings to my apostolate. I would hold meetings with the *Legionário* group more or less

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<sup>542</sup> SD 2/11/89.

<sup>543</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>544</sup> SD 6/10/89.

until midnight<sup>545</sup> and return home. The next day, I would go through the same routine.

## 9. Different Classes for Different Audiences

### a) At *Sedes Sapientiae*

*Sedes Sapientiae* was a college for girls,<sup>546</sup> but the teaching staff included both men and women.<sup>547</sup>

It was not difficult to maintain discipline in the classroom there. The problem was keeping their attention and making them concentrate.

To that end, the classes needed substance (I would not give lessons without proper content; anyway, that was a matter of honesty; if I was being paid, it was my obligation to provide well-prepared and substantial lessons). I also needed to present the subject matter in a more or less conversational tone and clearly present the facts.

I tried to make my classes as attractive as possible, including some references to the literature for the girls. Sometimes, I emphasize the details of the most significant historical events to add color to the bare bones of historical facts.

These classes went without any difficulty. They went very well. I had almost no problems during all my time as a teacher there.<sup>548</sup>

### b) At the Law School

My lectures at the Law School required very different teaching methods because the student body was also completely different.<sup>549</sup>

I was twenty-five years old at the time. Five years before, I was a student at the same law school. My students were, therefore, very close to me in age.

Of course, they thought that because of this, they would have much more freedom than they would have had with an older teacher.<sup>550</sup> I thought it was somewhat likely that they would think they owed me less respect and discipline.

I was well aware that there was a strongly anti-Catholic current there, very open and generally accepted. And everyone knew I was a Catholic<sup>551</sup> categorically opposed to leftism in all its forms.<sup>552</sup>

I immediately realized they might try to demoralize me, starting by booing my classes. As the Law School at that time was predominantly atheistic, no one would stop them from calling me a holy-holy, singing little church hymns during class,

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<sup>545</sup> Dinner EANS 11/9/90.

<sup>546</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>547</sup> SD 2/18/89.

<sup>548</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>549</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>550</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>551</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>552</sup> Quick word with Bolivians 2/1/91.

distributing caricatures of me praying the rosary and other things of that nature.<sup>553</sup>

I had two options for enforcing discipline in the classroom: to get them to like me or to gain their respect. What would be the best solution?

I was not sure I could win their approval. If I did, they would lose respect for me, so I decided to be very strict.

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I remember going to the chair on the first day of class without looking at the students. I walked up, looking forward.

I sat down. The students had just entered the room but were still messing around. I sat still, looking at them with an expression that was none too friendly. They saw that this would not go quite as they had expected.<sup>554</sup>

The way I entered the class was the key to what would happen next. If I had gone in cheerfully and jovially, with a smile on my face: “Good afternoon, my dear students, good afternoon,” I would have been lost; any respect would have been destroyed. If I had gone in with an indifferent expression, as though nothing of any importance was going on – it would have been the same. So I went in, not with an angry face, but with a severe expression of someone thinking of things of much greater importance than the class. This had to be done in all classes, from the first to the last.<sup>555</sup>

During that first lesson, I told them, “The first point of my program is this. I am going to talk about this and that issue.”

And I began to talk.

After the first surprise, I could see *pst, pst* from one pupil to another.

I banged my hand on the table – tok-tok-tok – and said sharply, “Silence!”

After a while, the whispering broke out again. And I, again, tok-tok-tok: “Silence!”

And they stayed quiet, the kind of silence where no one moves.<sup>556</sup> They understood they had better stop because<sup>557</sup> they realized I would not let them get away with anything.<sup>558</sup>

When the bell rang (the bell of the church of São Francisco always regulated the hours), I interrupted the lecture, saying, “We will go on with this tomorrow.” I walked out, and the class was over.

I could see that they realized that the thing would not be easy.

On the other hand, they noted that the lesson was clear and well-structured, and they were particularly interested in it.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>554</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>555</sup> Tea 2/7/95.

<sup>556</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>557</sup> Quick word 6/11/92.

<sup>558</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>559</sup> SD 6/10/89.

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In the following days, I would go in with the same stern face, walk up to the chair without looking at them, and sit down.

Some of them had sat down before I did.

I said: "Get up!" banging my hand on the table. "I have not given you permission to sit!"

I did this looking so fierce and speaking so aggressively that the student would get up with a half-stunned expression.

I would then run my eyes around the room to check that everyone was standing, sit down, and say, "*You may sit down.*" All this was quite a shock to them.<sup>560</sup>

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In my history classes, I also discussed religious matters and political and social issues that touched on aspects of religion.<sup>561</sup>

Right from the start, I immediately introduced Catholic concepts, especially those that would stun my audience.<sup>562</sup> I would present the most reactionary, most Catholic ideas imaginable. And from time to time, I would tell them:

"If you want to ask me something or object to what I'm saying, you may do so."

But I did not say this with the affability I would have had toward a more friendly audience. It was always said with severity.<sup>563</sup>

Despite the severity, however, I was always polite to my students. I prepared my classes carefully to ensure they were clear and well-structured, and I strove for specific standards of language and expression that conveyed respectability and beauty.

I also always spoke loudly, showing I was unafraid of them. This permitted me to dominate the classroom.<sup>564</sup>

Overall, my relationship with my students became very friendly over time. I always permitted them to raise objections.

I had students who would stand up, ask for leave to object and make a speech in class.<sup>565</sup>

I would listen calmly and return a calm answer; I always made it clear that it was all right to argue but that lack of respect would not be tolerated. I would argue back, and the class would go on.<sup>566</sup>

My relationships with the other faculty members, on the other hand, were

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<sup>560</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>561</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>562</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>563</sup> SD 6/10/89.

<sup>564</sup> Lunch EANS 4/2/92.

<sup>565</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>566</sup> Quick word with Curitiba 3/11/91.

always enjoyable.<sup>567</sup>

## 10. Unexpected Consequences, Thirty Years Later

Thirty—or maybe more—years later, I was having dinner at a very good restaurant here in São Paulo, the *Ca d'Oro*, when a former student saw me there.<sup>568</sup>

He was sitting at a table, having dinner with a young woman, apparently his wife.

When he finished his dinner, he rose, and as his wife was leaving, he came over to my table and told me:

“Professor, would you permit me to tell you something?”

I said politely:

“Certainly, with pleasure.”

“My name is such-and-such, and I wanted to tell you that my friends and I opposed you quite heavily when you were our teacher at the Law School. But the other day, we were talking, and we all agreed that we owe more to you than to many other teachers because, from you, we learned notions of discipline that no one else had ever given us.”

I thanked him, shook his hand, and said goodbye.<sup>569</sup>

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I also learned of another curious thing.

A party was held in a house belonging to a family of São Paulo society to celebrate the owner's birthday. A group formed, and the housewife went out to attend to some housewifely duty.

After she left, she lost track of the conversation.

Suddenly, from the pantry or kitchen where she had gone, she heard raised voices in the drawing room that sounded like a real quarrel: shouts of “yes” from one, “no” from another, and so on.

She became a little worried and returned to see what was happening. She said:

“What is going on here? What are you fighting about?”

It turned out that they had started talking about me and that two parties had formed, one for and one against me. The lady intervened:

“But what is this? On a birthday or at a celebration, you are quarreling about Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, of all people? For heaven's sake, let's talk about something else.”

Everyone laughed, took it as a joke, and the subject was changed. Several of those present there were former students of mine.<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>568</sup> Tea 2/7/95.

<sup>569</sup> Quick word 2/1/91.

<sup>570</sup> Tea 2/7/95.

## 11. PUC's Founding

As I said earlier, I was still a congressman when the College of São Bento invited me to teach history there. I had accepted the chair but was unable to start teaching immediately. The College was founded and took up its work. I just held the title of professor.

In this way, the Catholic University of São Paulo was founded in the 1940s.

Since it would be more beneficial for the Church, the Archbishop at the time, Cardinal Carlos Carmelo Vasconcellos Motta, saw that some officially recognized higher education institutions existed in São Paulo and decided to combine them and form a university.

The Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo—currently known as PUC—included two kinds of colleges: one was directly dependent on the university Rector, and the other consisted of aggregated colleges, which enjoyed some autonomy. The College of São Bento depended directly on the university Rector, and *Sedes Sapientiae* was an aggregate college.<sup>571</sup>

I was not involved in the foundation of the Catholic University. When the Cardinal decided to found it, I was just a titular professor at the College of São Bento and joined it in that capacity. When he decided to add *Sedes Sapientiae*, I was also aggregated as a faculty member.

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There was another underlying problem.

In the 1940s, I took a very definite right-wing position of open opposition to Communism; that position of mine would have embarrassed Dom Carmelo if I had participated as one of the mentors of the Catholic University. That is why I did not play an active part when the University was founded.

I only learned about the university's founding from what I read in the papers and the teachers were told during the staff meetings at *Sedes Sapientiae*. For the reasons I have mentioned, I was entirely kept away.<sup>572</sup>

## 12. Request to Take the Chair at São Bento College: The Cardinal's Misgivings

Only when I read in the newspaper that São Bento College was reorganizing its teaching staff and I was being summoned did I write a letter to the Dean of the Catholic University, Most Rev. Paulo de Tarso Campos, Archbishop of Campinas, whom I knew well. In the letter, I told him I was ready to take my chair. Since he was a friend of mine, I asked him to bring the matter to the Cardinal's attention.

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<sup>571</sup> PUC-SP was established on September 2, 1946 by a merger of the São Bento College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters (founded in 1908) and Paulista Law School. Another four Church institutions were attached to them but had independent financial administrations. It was given the "Pontifical" title by Pope Pius XII in 1947 (cf. <http://www.pucsp.br/universidade/historia>). *Legionário*, No. 735, September 8, 1946 published a report on the university's inauguration.

<sup>572</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.



I sent the letter to Campinas. Not long after, he called me: “Plinio, would you like to come to Pius XII Palace at such a time to talk to me?”

“Certainly. I’ll be there.”

I thought there would be a meeting with the Cardinal, that he would be present. But no. There was only Dom Paulo de Tarso, but the meeting was held in the Cardinal’s palace, no doubt to make it quite clear to me that everything that would be said reflected the views of the Cardinal himself.

Dom Paulo de Tarso told me:

“Look, I received your letter, and you are entitled to this position. However, if you start talking about Catholic Action or speak against Jacques Maritain in your lessons, you will create a huge controversy within the University that will affect us all. For this reason, I think it will be better for us to risk a lawsuit with you. We will gain a few years during which you will not be able to take up your professorship because the lawsuit will take years to resolve, and then if you win, we will see what we can do.”

Winning such a lawsuit would be very difficult. The Archdiocese had enormous influence. I said:

“Dom Paulo, if this is the only commitment you are asking for, and if, for the rest, I remain entirely free to teach history as I understand it, I will accept the chair on those conditions.”

He looked me in the eye and said:

“Can I count on your word of honor?”

I said:

“You can count on my word of honor and my word as a Catholic.”

He smiled, obviously very relieved, and said:

“Then present yourself at the Catholic University at such-and-such a time and see Father such-and-such, who will help you take possession of your chair so that you may begin to teach.”

I said goodbye to him politely, *ma non troppo*, and a few days later, went there and asked for the director:

“I would like to talk to the director; I am Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.”

“Ah! Just a minute.”

I was received by a priest I knew to be close to a progressive wing within the Benedictine order. He was the school’s director, and I had met him before.

I said:

“Father so-and-so, you know me, I am Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira.”

“Certainly! How can I help you?”

“I arranged such-and-such a thing with Dom Paulo de Tarso, and I have come here to take my chair.”

He said, “Ah, yes,” in a rather bleak voice and began to talk to me about time schedules and similar matters, which made me realize that he had been ordered to receive me.

He then remarked about a topic I do not recall, and I answered, “Of course.” He turned to me ferociously and said, “Of course and course not is all the same, do you hear?!”<sup>573</sup>

I realized he was looking for a pretext to pick a fight with me.

I just looked at him sweetly and pretended not to have noticed anything. So, having been unable to start a quarrel, he said to me:

“Well, you can start your classes the day after tomorrow.”

“All right, thanks.”

“Your classes will start at such and such a time.”<sup>574</sup>

I began teaching and stuck religiously to the commitment that I had given to Dom Paulo de Tarso.<sup>575</sup>

In college, I said what I wanted to say without specific reference to the current situation in Brazil. However, the students perceived what I was saying about historical events related to my work as a public man.

I always taught what I thought it was my duty to teach. I could not have accepted the job under any other conditions.

For example, my teaching strongly opposed the French Revolution and the 1917 Russian Revolution. Of course, the new point of view adopted by the University, from which the Catholic left was about to emerge, was somewhat different.

There were differences, but these were dealt with on both sides with great courtesy, almost to the end.

Towards the end of my tenure at the university, I felt a certain pressure from the left. But it was an episodic pressure at a time when I had already resolved to leave teaching to take up a position as a public man, officially intervening in the country's debates through the organization I would later establish, the TFP.<sup>576</sup>

### 13. A ‘Frightening’ Logic

At one time, a disagreement occurred between the teachers and the administrative staff of the Catholic University because of the paltry salaries that the university was paying. It had nothing whatsoever to do with doctrine. The university council, of which I was a member, decided to hold a meeting.

The chairman was opposed to my position. They asked me to take a strong attitude in this protest, and I said very clearly:

“Look, I have to think about this. You know that my positions on theological and philosophical subjects contradict those of the Cardinal and the priests who run the University. If I act on this matter, they will understand that I

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<sup>573</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>574</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

<sup>575</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>576</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira, 6/13/90.

am exploiting the salary issue as a pretext to muddy the theological questions. This would be no help to you in this salary dispute because all they will do is dig in their heels and refuse to budge.”

The chairman said:

“It does not matter; whatever stumbling blocks may be on the way, your logic frightens them.”

This chairman was their close friend; they were at odds only on the salary question. He was the Professor of Logic at the University.<sup>577</sup>

Overall, however, Our Lady favored me, and I was able to work as a teacher for about fifteen years.<sup>578</sup>

## Chapter II

# At the Law Office

### 1. My First Office

I had a law office before being elected congressman on the single list in 1933.<sup>579</sup> After I was elected, I kept it closed.<sup>580</sup>

The office had a huge and beautiful room. It was in a building on the corner of Libero Badaró Street and São João Avenue, where the Bank of Brazil building is now.

The building belonged to my grandmother. São Paulo was experiencing a tremendous economic crisis then, with many rental properties standing empty. So I went to see her and asked if she would permit me to occupy one of the rooms that had not been rented. Of course, she said yes.<sup>581</sup>

### 2. A Contract to Administer the Properties of the

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<sup>577</sup> Tea 7/19/92.

<sup>578</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>579</sup> SD 9/3/88.

<sup>580</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>581</sup> SD 9/3/88.

### **Archdiocesan Chancery**

After the closure of the Constituent Assembly, my salary as a professor and the remnants of rental income from buildings that my mother owned jointly with her sisters gave us enough to live.

My father worked as a lawyer in São José do Rio Preto and often came to São Paulo. But every little problem or incident, any minor inflation, could upset the budget, and I needed to take care of my expenses.

One day, Dr. Paulo Barros de Ulhôa Cintra asked me, “Why don’t you ask Dom Duarte to let you manage some of the buildings owned by the archdiocesan chancery?”

I wrote a long letter to Dom Duarte.

Soon after, his secretary called to ask if it was convenient for me to see him at such a time. I said yes.

I went, and he told me:

“Look, I was thrilled to receive your letter. I will entrust such-and-such buildings owned by the chancery to your management.”

It was a good number of buildings.

“And we will pay you such-and-such a salary.”

It was nothing brilliant but reasonable enough, and I thanked God for it.

“You may start immediately.”

So I did.

Then I began to receive clients, my professional life began to develop and take shape, and with this, a great weight was off my mind.<sup>582</sup>

Sometime after that, I moved my offices to a set of rooms on Quintino Bocaiuva Street no. 176, one of the best office buildings in São Paulo at the time. It was a huge building with good rooms.

I worked as a lawyer there for many years. There were two rooms: mine and the other belonged to Dr. Paulo and served as a waiting room.

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In this set of rooms, a little corner of the hallway was unused.

A seed was planted in this corner, initially relatively insignificant in size.

Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg, who had just graduated, put a screen there and set up his engineering office. It was so primitive that the drawing board of his office was the wing of a door he had obtained somewhere. Later, he acquired a partner, an extremely bright young man also called Plínio – Plínio Xavier da Silveira.<sup>583</sup>

### **3. An Unexpected Visit; Legal Representation of the Carmelite Order**

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<sup>582</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>583</sup> Tea 2/27/92.

Around 1940, Dr. Paulo and I took over the legal representation of the Carmelite Order.<sup>584</sup> We acted as counsel for that Order for another ten to fifteen years.<sup>585</sup>

You may think that the Carmelites came to me because I was a well-known Catholic, but the reason was different.<sup>586</sup>

I was in my office when someone knocked on the door. I said: “Come in!” and, looking up, saw a tall, thin priest<sup>587</sup> with a friendly face, already quite elderly, respectable-looking but definitely not Brazilian.<sup>587</sup> He was accompanied by an older Brazilian<sup>588</sup> from Ceará, a much smaller man with a lively eye and a derby on his head.<sup>589</sup>

I had never seen either of them before. The priest soon turned out to be a man of very few words. On the other hand, my countryman from the Northeast made up for this by talking almost non-stop.

He advanced toward me with his hand held out.

We shook hands, and I immediately noticed he was respectable. I found out later that he had been a Catholic leader so long before my involvement in the Catholic movement that I had never met him.<sup>590</sup>

He said:

“Dr. Plinio, I am Primitivo Sete, judge of the Court of Appeal, now retired.”<sup>591</sup>

Then he introduced the priest to me:

“And this is Friar Canisius Muldermann from Holland, Provincial of the Carmelite Order.”

“Ah! Very nice to meet you both. Do sit down.”

Friar Canisius said:

“Pleased to meet you....”

That was all he said. But he was a good man.<sup>592</sup>

The older gentleman, obviously the spokesman of the delegation, then unleashed a torrent of words that left me quite stunned:

“I have, until now, acted as counsel for the Carmelite Province of Rio, represented here by Friar Canisius Muldermann. I now intend to close all my activities as an attorney and deliver my last client to you. What I am doing here has a highly symbolic value; it is an occasion to pay tribute to a man I greatly admired, your great-uncle, Councilor João Alfredo Corrêa de Oliveira. I was a great admirer of his for this, that and the other reason. So in passing on to you

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<sup>584</sup> SD 11/4/72.

<sup>585</sup> Lunch EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>586</sup> SD 11/4/72.

<sup>587</sup> Tea 2/27/92.

<sup>588</sup> Lunch EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>589</sup> Tea 2/27/92.

<sup>590</sup> Lunch EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>591</sup> Tea 2/27/92.

<sup>592</sup> Lunch EANS 4/9/87.

my last client, I do so to the bearer of the same blood as the Councilor, thus honoring his memory.”<sup>593</sup>

I could never, in my wildest dreams, have imagined that one day, a client would come to me through the agency of Councilor João Alfredo. Nothing could have been more unlikely.<sup>594</sup>

I said:

“Oh! Your Honor, how kind of you; I hardly know how to thank you. I feel incredibly honored.”

I made all the compliments that are customary on such occasions. Then I turned to Friar Canisius:

“I hope I may be a worthy successor to Judge Primitivo Sete and live up to the standards of advocacy to which he has accustomed you; I will certainly do my best.”

We said goodbye and set a date for a meeting with Friar Canisius so he could initiate me into what would be required.

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Friar Canisius was a towering and very quiet Dutchman.<sup>595</sup> He was old, with white hair, and his face had a curious feature: extremely bushy eyebrows of long wiry hair that looked like whiskers over his eyes, forming two tufts.<sup>596</sup> He had a very noticeable Dutch accent, and whenever you said something that he did not understand, he would say, “Man, oh man,” and pull on his eyebrows.<sup>597</sup>

He was not very talkative, only discussing subjects that interested him, but he was always friendly and cordial.<sup>598</sup> He was an immensely sensible, respectable man, a typical priest of the older generation: very upright and honest, taking the business of the Carmelite Order very seriously and knowing how to look after its interests.<sup>599</sup> He became a good friend, and we always got on well; he often came to the office on business for the Order.

One day, I told him:

“Friar Canisius, such-and-such a company is looking to buy this island that the Order owns in such-and-such a place. The price they are offering is very good.”

“Ho, ho! Yes, this can be done....”

I asked Friar Canisius how to deliver the deed to them. He replied:

“Ah! It’s difficult. This cannot be sent. They have to examine the document

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<sup>593</sup> Tea 2/27/92.

<sup>594</sup> Lunch EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>595</sup> Tea 2/27/92

<sup>596</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>597</sup> SD 11/4/72.

<sup>598</sup> Dinner EANS 6/15/82.

<sup>599</sup> Tea 2/27/92.

at our house.”

“But, Friar Canisius, that is not commercial usage. The seller delivers the title to the lawyer, and the lawyer delivers it to the buyer.”

“No. This title document is worth more than the island.”

“How come?”

He said:

“It is a title signed by King Philip II when he was king of Brazil, giving the island as a present to the Carmelite Order!”

I laughed and told the company: “If you want, you can send a lawyer there. But he will not permit this title to be removed from the convent.” I explained the situation.

They also laughed and sent a lawyer. The deal was made in Santos.<sup>600</sup>

He died suddenly, and other younger monks succeeded him. These young ones were far more talkative than he had been. We had long talks about Brazilian politics. But for them, the hot topic was the Netherlands. I learned more about the Netherlands than I did my whole life before or after! Conversations about the Netherlands and the Dutch colonies went on and on, with many details.<sup>601</sup>

#### 4. Legal Services to the São Bento Monastery

I also counseled the Monastery of São Bento, having been mandated by Msgr. Pedrosa.

The monastery's two legal representatives were Dom Desiderius Schmitz and Dom Aidano Ebert, both very nice and pleasant Germans.<sup>602</sup>

Dom Aidano was fat but maintained a good posture, which had long been taught in Benedictine convent novitiates.<sup>603</sup>

Dom Desiderius was slender, tall, and very kind. He had been a banker before becoming a Benedictine monk,<sup>604</sup> but he left the banking world and entered a monastery of the Order in Germany.<sup>605</sup> Still relatively young, he looked like a figure from a medieval painting, with a well-proportioned head and body, his hair cut short in the Benedictine fashion, a light complexion and blue eyes. He had a stately presence and was an intelligent man.<sup>606</sup>

The two would always come to see me on business when the office was about to close. They generally came in with a broad smile. I am familiar with the Germans' style and would send them out for sandwiches and beer.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>601</sup> Dinner EANS 6/15/82.

<sup>602</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>603</sup> Dinner EANS 6/15/82.

<sup>604</sup> Quick word 6/30/92.

<sup>605</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>606</sup> Dinner EANS 6/15/82.

<sup>607</sup> SD 7/16/88.

They came to transact business but were much more interested in the conversation.

Every time they came to see me, they talked to me for hours after we finished their business.

On some occasions, we would talk until late hours. To prepare for this, they always came equipped with plenty of cigarettes (they both smoked like chimneys).

Sometimes, they were at odds with me in matters of doctrine because they were already half-won over by the liturgism.<sup>608</sup> We frequently clashed during our discussions, but they were open-minded, liked these discussions, thought them interesting, and “attacked” me.

They would tell me that my spirituality was Spanish. I would say, “Very well. Spanish, if you like, but it is Catholic! Now let's see....”<sup>609</sup>

The two priests enjoyed these discussions so much that once, when they visited the Marian Congregation and *Legionário*, they arrived around 8:30 PM, and the conversation lasted until 4 AM.

As always, I had sent for beer and other things. But from midnight onwards, we all had to fast. They would celebrate Mass, and I would receive Communion; therefore, we could not eat.

So, from just after midnight, the conversation ran on without fuel until 4 a.m.

##### **5. Attempted Character Assassination by a Relative of Dom Motta**

One day, the two Benedictines came to see me. Their usually cheerful faces looked rather sad, and it was obvious that they were worried about something.

Dom Desiderius took the floor:

“There is something I must tell you, which is rather unpleasant. There has just been a large Benedictine chapter held under the presidency of the arch-abbot. And a certain Mr. So-and-so, introducing himself as a militant Catholic, a Commander of the Holy See, a leading light of the Catholic Movement, appeared there to tell us that his great friendship with us compelled him to tell us something about you. He recommended that we be cautious because – he said – you are a very good Catholic, a very nice person to deal with, but a lousy lawyer. He told us that Father Riou, the Provincial of the Jesuits in São Paulo, had complained bitterly about you. It seems that the Jesuits wanted to redraft their statutes; you took a hand in that, and whatever you did was such a disaster that they were threatened with closure, loss of their property, whatever you can imagine. Now, the greatest job we have for you is precisely the revision of our statutes. So the

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<sup>608</sup> Dinner EANS 6/15/82.

<sup>609</sup> SD 7/16/88.



General Chapter, very shocked at this story, has ordered us to inform you that they are sorry but can no longer retain you as their lawyer.”

I said:

“Is that all, Dom Desiderius?”

Dom Desiderius replied:

“It’s enough, isn’t it?”

“It’s nothing at all! I know Father Riou, and I want you to come with me to talk to him tomorrow so that you can hear Father Riou himself tell you that this is a lie, nothing but filthy slander. I have never done any legal work for them in my life.”

They heaved great sighs of relief, and Dom Desiderius said:

“We would never have thought that a man like that would have stooped to such lies.”

I said:

“Well, you will hear what Father Riou has to say.”

I picked up the phone, called Father Riou at São Luís High School, and asked for an appointment. Father Riou invited us to come the next day, and at the appointed hour, the three of us presented ourselves there.

Father Riou came into the room. He had never met the two Benedictines before (he was French; they were Germans). I made the introductions, we sat down, and I said:

“So-and-so told such-and-such a story about me on such-and-such an occasion. That’s what you told me, wasn’t it?”

The Benedictines: “Yes, it was.”

I said:

“Now, Father Riou, I would like you to tell us the truth.

Father Riou said:

“After I talked to you on the phone, I’ve been thinking. I have been here as a Provincial only for three or four years, while you have been practicing as a lawyer for longer than that. So I contacted my predecessors to see if they had ever had any dealings with you, and I can confirm that you have never done any legal work for us, that you have never been asked to review our statutes, and that we have never consulted you. Moreover, our statutes date from 1900 and have not been modified.”

I smiled and said:

“Well, that was before I was born.”

The two laughed, relieved, and said: “We will inform our superiors.”

But I said:

“No, I’m not prepared to leave it at that. I would like to ask Father Riou for a letter stating everything he has just told us, and I would like you to read this letter to the General Chapter and display it there for everyone to see.”

And Father Riou wrote the letter, and they took it to show to the Chapter.

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In the afternoon, following the Chapter, the two Benedictines appeared at my office.

I asked what had happened during the General Chapter, and they said:

“It was a bombshell such as you can hardly imagine. We arrived there, and they asked us if we had fired Dr. Plinio. We said no, that we had done something even better: we had kept him.”

General incredulity and exclamations:

“What?!!! Having heard the facts from a man of unquestionable veracity, you still kept him on?!”

Dom Desiderius then took Father Riou’s letter and showed it to them.<sup>610</sup>

I do not want to give the name of the man who had slandered me. I did not resent him, and I decided not to fight him.

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610 Dinner EANS 6/15/82. Father Riou’s letter (of 6/18/43) to Dom Aidano Erbert, OSB, reads:

“At the request of Your Reverence, I hereby declare that since the Society of Jesus has, for many years, had a legal representative to look after its legal business, it has never had to solicit any consultation or work of a professional nature from Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira. The allegation that Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira has committed any technical error concerning the Society of Jesus or any work, association, or institution maintained or directed by it is, therefore, entirely baseless.

“Regarding our civil statutes, more specifically, I must inform you that they date back to August 15, 1900, when Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira had not yet been born. Since then, these statutes have never been reviewed or modified, and Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira has never been consulted concerning any related matter.

“Hoping that this statement will eliminate any derogatory version to the contrary, with feelings of the most profound religious esteem, I recommend myself to Your Reverence’s prayers and Holy Sacrifices.”

It was a calumny so blatantly unfair and so obviously connected to the stubborn smear campaign against Dr. Plinio that Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer, then only a monsignor, felt the moral obligation to report what had happened to the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Aloisi Masella, in a letter dated September 9, 1944, from which we highlight the following passage:

“Maybe ‘Commander X’ is not entirely unconnected with this whole campaign either. As we know, this gentleman, abusing the confidence that his religious appearance and demeanor create in Catholic circles, has lately been conducting a smear campaign against Dr. Plinio and generally [against] those of us who contribute to the *Legionário*. This is becoming more pronounced after the appointment of the new archbishop, from whom he may be expecting protection and support due to His Excellency’s family ties with his wife. Already some time ago, in an attempt to hurt Dr. Plinio’s legal practice, he did not hesitate to falsify a legal text to convince the Benedictine monks that Dr. Plinio was an incompetent lawyer. On that occasion, he spread an entirely apocryphal story that Dr. Plinio had greatly harmed the Jesuits by his incompetence, although Dr. Plinio never had any dealings with the Jesuits as a lawyer. Father Riou can attest to this sad case because he has first-hand knowledge of the facts and has seen documents that have left him entirely convinced.”

I remember that later when I was at the archdiocesan Chancery, I saw a group comprising the new Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva,<sup>611</sup> the Archbishop of Belo Horizonte, Dom Antonio dos Santos Cabral (who would later virulently attack my book *In Defense of Catholic Action*) and this layman who had slandered me.

And I saw Dom José Gaspar introduce that layman to the Archbishop of Belo Horizonte as a great friend:

“He is a great friend of mine, related to the Archbishop of Maranhão, Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta.”

Upon learning that he was a relative of Dom Motta, the Archbishop of Belo Horizonte opened his arms and effusively embraced him.<sup>612</sup>

## **6. Solid Friendship with Dom Desiderius and Dom Aidano, Despite our Differences**

On many occasions, Dom Desiderius supported me with great loyalty.

Later, Dom Aidano entered the fight against Dom Pedrosa, showing his solidarity with me during the affair concerning my book *In Defense of Catholic Action*.

Dom Aidano was the prior of a magnificent Benedictine monastery in Santos, located in a mountainous area. He was second in importance only to the archabbot.

I once went there to visit him and found a little wooden statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception at the entrance. She looked delighted and stamped her feet on a series of little heads of priests.

I laughed and said:

“What is this, Dom Aidano? People enter your convent, and the first thing they see is an anti-clerical statue?”

“Doctor, these are heretics, almost all priests... And there is Our Lady, stepping on the heads of the priests. Come and see.”

The heads of those heretics were visible down the neck, and it was possible to distinguish the religious order to which they belonged by the piece of their habit that was shown on top. There were Benedictines, Dominicans, and Augustinians – among

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<sup>611</sup> Archbishop José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva (Araxá-MG, 1901-São Paulo, 1943) studied philosophy and theology at the Provincial Seminary in São Paulo and the Latin American Pontifical College Pio in Rome. He graduated from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and obtained a doctorate in Canon Law. From 1934 to 1937, he was rector of the Ipiranga Central Seminary. Named Auxiliary Bishop of São Paulo in 1935 during the pontificate of Dom Duarte, he succeeded the latter after he died in 1939 and was later elevated to Metropolitan Archbishop. Although, on the one hand, he entrusted to Dr. Plinio the presidency of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action (on 3/11/40), one of the most important positions among the laity, he was also one of the key figures who introduced progressive ideas into Catholic circles. He died on August 27, 1943, in a tragic plane crash in Rio de Janeiro, at the age of 42. The plane he was traveling on struck a wall of the Naval School, located next to Santos Dumont Airport, with its wing and subsequently disappeared into the bay waters. No. 577 of the *Legionário* (08/29/43) contained a detailed report on this accident.

<sup>612</sup> SD 7/16/88.

them, Luther, of course.

I said:

“Will you permit me to publish a photograph of these in the *Legionário*?”

“Yes, doctor, of course! It’s nothing but historical truth!”<sup>613</sup>

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Not long after, I left my teaching and law practice to dedicate myself fully to the Catholic cause and to apply myself full-time to the apostolate.<sup>614</sup>

## Chapter III

# The *Legionário* Journal (1935-1947)

### 1. A New Approach: From a Parish Newsletter to a National Weekly

In 1935, I effectively took over as director of the newspaper *O Legionário*.<sup>615</sup> Since the Catholic Electoral League had closed, I wrote to Dom Duarte, asking if I could have the furniture of the LEC offices for the *Legionário*. It was high-quality furniture—beautiful curtains, desks, carpets, and leather chairs. I took it all to furnish the *Legionário*’s board room, to create an atmosphere that indicated that this was not just any little religious newsletter.

I got the parish priest of Santa Cecilia to place almost the entire ground floor of the headquarters of the Marian Congregation of Santa Cecilia at the disposal of the *Legionário* and mobilized a group of friends to help me redesign and transform the paper entirely in an attempt to make it the first Catholic newspaper in Brazil, reflecting the philosophy and attitudes that we wanted to promote.<sup>616</sup>

A certain number of combative priests collaborated on the paper. Among others was the Jesuit Father Arlindo Vieira, who was extraordinarily sympathetic to our views. He was a man of great culture, representing the best of what the Jesuits had to offer.

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<sup>613</sup> MNF 4/24/92.

<sup>614</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>615</sup> Dr. Plinio’s name first appeared as *Legionário* editor on issue No. 125 of 06/08/33, when he was still a congressman in the Constituent Assembly. He effectively assumed the direction in 1935. In the following year, with issue No. 203 of 02/08/36, the journal went from a fortnightly newsletter consisting of two sheets to a weekly journal of eight pages that appeared every Sunday. On April 11, 1938, the public company *Legionário S/A* was set up; this went on to manage the publication, with the clear goal of eventually turning the *Legionário* into a Catholic daily; this goal, however, was never reached due to the obstacles thrown in its way, which will be discussed later.

<sup>616</sup> SD 6/23/73.

He wrote highly polemical articles against Maritain and Tristão de Athayde and against the entire liberal Catholic school that was emerging.<sup>617</sup>

There was also Monsignor Ascânio Brandão, who wrote “Preaching and Hammering,” a column the title of which was already an indication of the controversial nature of its contents. He came from Pindamonhangaba and later became pastor of São José dos Campos. He belonged to the Diocese of Taubaté, which covered all that area. Tall, with a dark complexion, he was, despite his kind and pleasant personality, a man prepared to fight and not afraid of controversy.<sup>618</sup>

Msgr. Antonio de Castro Mayer wrote the “Catholic Column,” commenting on the Gospel. It was a very popular section that many priests consulted when seeking inspiration for their sermons.

Within the Marian Congregation of Santa Cecília, I invited everyone with the required level of intellectual ability and achievement to contribute; I also asked Marian congregants who were university graduates from the other congregations to work on the *Legionário* with us.

In this way, some other contributors immediately made their mark.<sup>619</sup>

The genuinely courageous Catholics supported the newspaper, fearless in the face of controversy and unafraid to fight.

There were also supporters with a more accommodating spirit, not keen on a fight but still opposing the “ecumenical” spirit that is so prevalent today; their enthusiasm was somewhat less noticeable.

So we had a firm core of partisans, and around this core, many supporters applauded and approved but were not prepared to take the battle to the point that it should be taken.<sup>620</sup>

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In this way, from the *Legionário* group, the first seed of what would later become the TFP began to develop.<sup>621</sup>

Among the first to fight along with me were<sup>622</sup> Paulo Barros de Ulhôa Cintra, Adolpho Lindenberg, Fernando Furquim de Almeida, José de Azeredo Santos, José

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<sup>617</sup> Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) was a French writer, thinker and Catholic convert, whose philosophy ran the gamut from rejection of the modernist movement and membership in the Action Française to the profession of *integral humanism* within a secular State that was to be “vitaly Christian” even if composed of atheists. He was one of those who were responsible for the policy of ‘reaching out’ to the Communist regimes and one of the main ideologues of Christian Democracy in Latin America. He was one of the founding fathers, in 1947, of the Christian Democratic Organization of America (ODCA). His thinking profoundly influenced Alceu Amoroso Lima, and the entire current of the Brazilian and Latin American Catholic left.

<sup>618</sup> SD 3/18/89.

<sup>619</sup> SD 8/25/73.

<sup>620</sup> SD 3/18/89.

<sup>621</sup> SD 6/23/73.

<sup>622</sup> SD 2/18/89.

Benedito Pacheco Sales, José Carlos Castilho de Andrade, José Fernando de Camargo, and José Gonzaga de Arruda.<sup>623</sup> It may be said that the TFP was a daughter of *Legionário*.<sup>624</sup>

## 2. The Aims of *Legionário*

Our aims for the *Legionário* were the following.

With few exceptions, Catholic journalists of that time were horrified by controversy and made arrangements to exist comfortably alongside the Revolution. They did not praise it, but they did not attack it either. They pretended not to have noticed its existence.

I had heard of two journalists who were exceptions to this general trend, but they were before my time and before I joined the Catholic Movement: Jackson de Figueiredo and Carlos de Laet.

As soon as the month of Mary arrived, the current genre was to publish little articles titled *Amaryllis* or some such thing, with little flowers drawn by hand around a poem composed by a Daughter of Mary. That was the style of most Catholic papers, read only by those already frequenting the sacristies and parish circles. They were, for the most part, nothing more than internal bulletins to meet the parish's requirements.

When I assumed the direction of the *Legionário*, I resolved to open wide all windows and doors to discussions of national, international, political, cultural, philosophical and theological questions. I addressed these issues in a combative style, writing “with the tip of the sword” and maintaining an ongoing controversy with almost everyone opposed to the true Catholic spirit.<sup>625</sup>

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Initially, the *Legionário* addressed the general public, intending to conquer it. It was, therefore, written partly to convert non-Catholics and partly to increase and deepen the fervor of those who already were, to provide them with direction and guidance.

However, when I read *Sept* magazine, which, although promoting the *liturgical* current, showed considerable grit, I realized that this approach would have to be changed. It became clear to me that a small newspaper must either target a unique, small but influential audience, through which it could eventually influence a larger public, or it would fail.

*Sept* was a French weekly with about the same pages as the *Legionário*. It was well presented and attractive, full of articles on hot topics that gripped the attention of the French public at that time and thus had considerable influence on

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<sup>623</sup> *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga* cit.

<sup>624</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>625</sup> SD 2/18/89.

events.<sup>626</sup>

Following this example, the *Legionário* stopped being a paper aimed at the conversion of non-Catholics and became a newspaper to guide those who already were Catholics. And not just any Catholics, but the participants in the Catholic Movement, then made up of the most fervent Catholics who always went to Mass on Sundays and usually belonged to religious associations: they formed a section of society that devoted part of the time, or even all its time, to serving and supporting the Catholic Church and the expansion of the Faith.

It was obvious to me that influencing the direction of Brazil's future development would be possible through this target group, to whom we would provide orientation and guidance.<sup>627</sup>

### 3. Unofficial Organ of the Archdiocese of São Paulo

In a short time, the *Legionário* gained many new readers.<sup>628</sup> Because of its stance, it soon became one of Brazil's most significant publications in the Catholic press, distributed from one end of the country to the other.<sup>629</sup>

When Dom José Gaspar was appointed Archbishop of São Paulo, our relations with him were initially quite cordial. I had no trouble persuading him to elevate the *Legionário* to “unofficial organ of the archdiocese.”

In this way, the *Legionário* conveyed to some extent the voice and thoughts of the Archbishop, a characteristic that gave it great prestige.<sup>630</sup>

### 4. A Point of Reference for all Catholics in Brazil

So, the *Legionário's* voice began to be heard in the internal life of the Catholic movements and to influence the discussions among Catholics in Rio, Minas, Porto Alegre,

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<sup>626</sup> In a letter sent in 1947 to Dom Manuel d'Elboux, then Bishop of Ribeirão Preto and later Archbishop of Curitiba, Dr. Plinio characterizes the *Sept* weekly as follows:

“In France, the Liturgical Movement was mainly driven by the weekly *Sept* weekly, which was concerned less with the liturgical problem itself – although it took care to remain within the scope of the general principles underlying this movement – than with the developing political and social principles professed by its adherents. *Sept* was the mouthpiece of a whole group of intellectuals who had gathered around the French Dominicans from the province of Toulouse, attracted by their intellectual prestige. One of the leaders of the group was Mr. Jacques Maritain, the real pontiff of the movement, all of whose books were considered the repository of the collective doctrine with which no member could disagree without ‘apostasy.’ The social doctrine of *Sept* was so audacious, so focused on the imperative of reckless cooperation between Catholics and Communism, that the very Master of the Sacred Apostolic Palace, Father Cordovani, OP, published an article in *L’Osservatore Romano* roundly denouncing such errors. The magazine published the article, saying that it had been forced to do so by the Holy See.”

<sup>627</sup> SD 3/4/89.

<sup>628</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira, 6/13/90.

<sup>629</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>630</sup> The *Legionário* was only taken out of Dr. Plinio's hands in December 1947 on orders of Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta, then Cardinal-Archbishop of São Paulo. After that, it was published under another director. Nine years later, on January 25, 1956, it was replaced by the current *O São Paulo*. Dr. Plinio was not involved in *O São Paulo*, and its orientation was diametrically opposed to that of the old *Legionário*. *O São Paulo* is today the official organ of the archdiocese; the *Legionário* was its unofficial organ.

and Recife.

They also began to read it in Montevideo, Buenos Aires, and even Santiago de Chile, which was already quite far off. Some echoes were also heard in Europe; very rarely would we hear of reactions in the United States.

My long-term goal was to turn it into a daily paper.

In this way, the *Legionário* became a means for our group to exercise some influence and to spread our counterrevolutionary ideas in Brazil.<sup>631</sup>

## 5. Obligatory Visit for Foreign Catholics

Whenever some high-profile Catholic personality from a foreign country came to São Paulo, it was *de rigueur* that a visit to the offices of the *Legionário* should be part of the program. It was a point of honor for any foreign Catholic.

As a result, we had some exciting visitors, among them the famous Dominican Theologian Father Garrigou-Lagrange and the Japanese Admiral Shingiro Yamamoto (a Catholic and a religious leader in Japan).

We also received numerous visits from prominent figures of the Brazilian Catholic milieu.

For example, the archbishop of Belo Horizonte, Dom Cabral,<sup>632</sup> had established a daily paper in that city called *O Diário Católico*, to which several intellectuals in Minas Gerais contributed. One night, I was surprised by the whole staff's visit to that paper. They had come from Minas Gerais to discuss collaboration and a standard line of action between the *Legionário* and the *Diário*. Until the crisis of Catholic Action arose, our relationship was cordial and quite close.<sup>633</sup>

In São Paulo, the Marian Federation maintained offices that governed and supervised all Marian Congregations throughout Brazil. But the real *élan* came from the *Legionário*, the clear and visible representative of the *aille marchante* of the Catholic Movement in São Paulo.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> In a letter to Dr. Plínio, Father Arlindo Vieira passed on a laudatory comment that he had heard from the famous Father Leonel Franca:

“To cheer you up, I will tell you something that Father Franca told me about four or five years ago. We were bemoaning the lack of a Catholic newspaper in Rio and saying that those that pass for Catholic papers did not deserve the name. They were, in general, weeklies with a misguided editorial policy and no influence amongst Catholics.

“[And then] Father Franca said to me: ‘It is not the financial side that is the problem. His Eminence [Dom Leme] could raise several thousand for this purpose without difficulty. But ... To whom should we entrust the paper? We have no people with the necessary formation. This will only be possible when we have half a dozen Plínios.’”

<sup>632</sup> Most Rev. Antonio dos Santos Cabral (1884-1967) was bishop of Natal (1917-1921) and then bishop (1921-1924) and subsequently Metropolitan Archbishop of Belo Horizonte (1924-1967). He eventually became a bitter enemy of Dr. Plínio and the *Legionário* after he had joined the progressive current that was emerging at the time. There are reports that, during a meeting of Catholic Action, he even ordered that Dr. Plínio's book dealing with the deviations of the movement be burned.

<sup>633</sup> SD 3/18/89.

<sup>634</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82. In this context, the bishop of Nova Friburgo, Dom Clemente Isnard, an exponent of the liturgist wing of the Church in Brazil and an impartial witness, commented: “The Marian movement had



Within the Catholic Movement, there was generally a kind of intuitive trust in the *Legionário*, so the Catholic laity took any position the paper adopted as an undisputed and indisputable fact.<sup>635</sup>

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Many years later, talking to a director of the TFP, an archbishop of Belo Horizonte complained that it had been necessary to overthrow me because whenever I appeared in public, at meetings where there were also bishops present, I was acclaimed with more enthusiasm than were the bishops.<sup>636</sup> He also said that it had been necessary to break my moral authority because I had acquired such personal influence that if a layman learned I was at odds with a bishop, the layman would have scruples about disagreeing with me but would have no qualms about disagreeing with the bishop. He very likely exaggerated when he said this. But there was some truth in the exaggeration. People were already beginning to be somewhat suspicious of the silent bishops (at that time, they were not yet progressives) and were drawn far more by tough and strong leaders who were unafraid to engage in combat.<sup>637</sup>

If the ecclesiastical authority continued to honor and support us, we could transform middle-of-the-road Catholics and get them firmly into the counter-revolutionary camp. The doors were wide open!

Brazil, whose role in the twenty-first century is taking shape so clearly, was aiming very high. But imagine the encouragement it would have meant for Europe and the United States to know that in a country still so new, there was this potential for Counter-Revolution.<sup>638</sup>

## 6. The *Legionário* Repeatedly Denounces the Alliance between Communists and Nazis

Within its general orientation, the *Legionário* took up very controversial attitudes, fighting not only Communism but also two other evils that were emerging at the time and would set their mark on the future.

One of them was the progressivism that was beginning to spread throughout Brazil; the other was Nazi-Fascism.

Progressivism, whose leaders initially wore a more moderate mask and employed mild formulas, eventually adopted extreme positions analogous to those of the modernism condemned by St. Pius X.

Nazi-Fascism would find enthusiastic followers in Brazil, especially among anti-communist groups, due to the warlike spirit of the time, which had many

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grown to a remarkable extent in the State of São Paulo: they were able to mobilize crowds that represented mass movements such as had never been seen before" (cf. Bernard Botte, OSB, *O Movimento Litúrgico*, Ed. Paulinas, São Paulo, 1978, p. 217).

<sup>635</sup> Lunch EANS 4/8/87.

<sup>636</sup> Dispatch Italy 8/18/93.

<sup>637</sup> Dispatch Italy 3/26/92.

<sup>638</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82.

convinced that defeating the Communist threat by violence was a legitimate way of defending the country.

As a result, there were many Catholics who saw Nazism and Fascism as a solution. The *Legionário* never did.

The waters were being muddied further by the fact that these two ideologies (progressivism and Nazi-Fascism) appeared to be opposed to each other.

This erroneous view led to a threefold controversy, often fought within Catholic circles, among progressives, Nazi-Fascists, and orthodox Catholics of the old school.<sup>639</sup>

The great tragedy of the struggle between Nazism and Communism, between Fascism and democracy, was not so much the complete loss of those who were already bad but the ruin, confusion, and internal laceration among those who had been good.<sup>640</sup>

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One example of these difficulties was the following: When the *Legionário* became aware that Nazis and Communists would ally and published an article stating that a pact between Russia and Germany was imminent,<sup>641</sup> a powerful adverse reaction occurred, especially on the right, because our prediction was critical of Nazism, then presented as the vanguard and guarantor of the anticommunist struggle.<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>640</sup> *Mystici Corporis Christi*, in *Legionário* No. 585, 10/24/43.

<sup>641</sup> RR 7/8/89.

<sup>642</sup> RR 6/3/89. The *Legionário* repeatedly pointed out the profound affinity between Nazism and Communism and even predicted that a pact between them was in the works. A few brief examples of such reports:

**August 28, 1938** – Once again the *Legionário* notes “the contrast between the anti-Communist statements of Hitler and his friendly policy with Russia,” pointing out “several offers made by Germany to Russia after the advent of Nazism, such as a loan of 200 million marks payable over five years.”

**September 11, 1938** – “Nazism and Communism: For some time, and on repeated occasions, the *Legionário* pointed out the ideological kinship of the two political doctrines. In short, the background and the essence of these two doctrines are the same; both are based on the same central thought.

**October 2, 1938** – “If we reduce the significance of the terms ‘national socialism’ and ‘communism’ to their actual meaning, we will see that the difference between them is negligible. ... The choice between Communism and Nazism is, therefore, a choice between Lucifer and Beelzebub, between the devil and the devil.”

**December 4, 1938** – “Just like the Bolsheviks, the Nazis do not respect private property.”

**January 1, 1939** – “While all the battle lines are being drawn, a trend is emerging with increasing clarity. It is that of the fusion of Nazi and Communist doctrines. In our view, 1939 will bring the consummation of that fusion.”

**March 12, 1939** – “It is becoming increasingly obvious that the two most dangerous regimes in the contemporary world are Communism and Nazism.”

**May 14, 1939** – “Think it over carefully: what could possibly be the difference between ‘national socialism’ and ‘national communism’?”

On the same day, the *International Notes* of the *Legionário* point out that “the news of a German-Russian pact has not been denied and that the Nazi press has ceased its diatribes against the Soviets.”

The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact was signed a few days later.<sup>643</sup>

The two diplomats agreed on several points, including the Russian domination of the small nations of the Baltic.

There was a “scandal”: How had the *Legionário* been able to foretell this?<sup>644</sup> There was, naturally, much whispering. Even the Archbishop, Dom José Gaspar, who disapproved of our positions, invited me to the episcopal residence to explain how I had known this before it happened.

I said, “Your Excellency, I don’t know. All I can say is that it seemed obvious when I considered the situation.”

He was quiet and said no more; he did not like this answer.<sup>645</sup>

This and other such predictions were milestones that marked the rise of the *Legionário* from a parish and archdiocesan newsletter to a national paper read all over Brazil.<sup>646</sup>

## 7. Persistent Defamation

Fascism and Nazism died. However, some opponents of the TFP still claim that it is Fascist and National Socialist.

In response, we presented the collected issues of the *Legionário*, from which they may see with their own eyes the continuing controversy between the pre-TFP and the Fascists and the Nazis as well as the Communists of that time. This leaves them without an argument because the controversy is continuous.<sup>647</sup>

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The fact is that a particular selection took place in this way.<sup>648</sup> An entire current of opinion formed around *Legionário* and eventually became known throughout Brazil.<sup>649</sup>

*Legionário* had moments of great brilliance, high efficiency, and lots of glories.<sup>650</sup> But it collapsed for reasons that I will discuss later. From its ruins, the TFP was born.

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The *7 Days in Review* column comments on the surprise this news has caused in certain circles: “A less superficial observer will not be surprised by this, given the ideological affinity between Nazism and Communism and the fact that Hitler is conducting a real proletarianization of social life in his country.”

**August 6, 1939** – “If the French and British military missions now traveling to Moscow fail – which appears likely – there will certainly be neutrality if not an alliance between the Reich and the Soviets.”

<sup>643</sup> Signed on August 23, 1939, this covenant is named after the Nazi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov.

<sup>644</sup> RR 7/8/89.

<sup>645</sup> Phone call with the United States, 2/17/95.

<sup>646</sup> RR 6/3/89.

<sup>647</sup> Interview with Prof. Nádia Silveira 6/13/90.

<sup>648</sup> SD 3/18/89.

<sup>649</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>650</sup> Dom Clemente Isnard, Bishop of Nova Friburgo and a leader of the liturgist movement describes the scope of the battle carried out by the *Legionário* thus: “Composed of people who were closely-knit and understood each other very well, the [*Legionário*] group represented a kind of spearhead against the liturgical movement. Those who wished to suffer [sic] could always await the weekly edition of *Legionário*, where they would inevitably find articles against the movement and its manifestations, against Maritain, against the ‘deviations’ of the Catholic Action, etc.” (cf. Bernard Botte, OSB, op. cit. p. 221).

Our history shows that every collapse and failure we underwent had the seed of something greater within it. And it pleased Our Lady that from ruin to ruin, from one “Chinese river” to the next “Chinese river,”<sup>651</sup> we should finally arrive at the creation of the TFP.<sup>652</sup>

[*Caption:* The photo shows Tristão de Athayde (circled, on the left) receiving Jacques Maritain (circled, right) on his visit to Brazil by invitation of the Centre Dom Vital. Maritain and others came to Brazil to set up groups and covertly spread the ideas of the Catholic left.]

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<sup>651</sup> The “Chinese river” was a metaphor Dr. Plinio often used to characterize the ups and downs of Divine Providence's ways concerning hopes for a victory of the Church and Christian civilization before they are fulfilled. This metaphor is based on the multiple bends in some rivers in China, which head toward the coast and almost reach the sea, only to turn back inland, covering many kilometers before flowing into the ocean.

<sup>652</sup> SD 6/23/73.



## Part IV

# How the Catholic Movement Was Derailed

## Chapter I Church Enemies Put on a Smiling Mask

I lived through the final years of a time when wickedness presented itself, jeering at and taunting good. The enemies of the Church spoke out openly against the Church and tried to attack, suffocate, and slander it. They slandered the clergy, bishops, and priests, mocked the sacraments, and sought physically to destroy churches. They were, in a word, in complete opposition to the Church.<sup>653</sup>

However, those adversaries realized that the Catholic Movement had become a major power in Brazil. And the forces of evil understood that attacking this power frontally would have been useless. It was necessary to undermine it, drain it of its strength, divert it, and divide it so it would falter and break under the weight of its internal divisions and deterioration.<sup>654</sup>

To achieve this, the enemies of the Church saw that it would be to their advantage to hide behind a mask and start a new conversation with Catholics.

I remember my dismay when, around 1932, attacking various errors in my usual way, I began to see that the opponent – which in 1930 had still been scowling at me – now looked at me as though to tell me: “Your spear does not hurt me anymore. Don’t

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<sup>653</sup> SD 6/14/82.

<sup>654</sup> Dinner EANS 6/14/82.

you realize I am shifting my ground and changing into something else?”

The underlying message was: “Times have changed, and the Church will no longer be as militant as before. Her enemies have become meek, and she has followed suit. Her combative positions must not only be relegated to the past but forgotten entirely and forever. A new era has begun.”

I looked around me and saw that the same Catholics who had been applauding my fighting spirit a year before now looked with sympathy at the opponent, implying that if I persisted in my combative position, they would turn against me.<sup>655</sup> Persons who had previously fought alongside me because they could see the opponent grimacing now saw a smiling opponent and passed to the other side. And I was left behind, alone.<sup>656</sup>

Tristão de Athayde was an enthusiastic adherent of this new position. He and I used to clash violently over this question. He was naturally mild, friendly, cultured, engaging, and a great conversationalist. He was the opposite of truculent. He liked to give a pleasant impression and to say lovely things. He liked mildness, not strength. And I was an enthusiastic admirer of the virtue of fortitude.<sup>657</sup>

That was, therefore, the new strategy of the evil forces in their attacks against the Church.

From the beginning, that attack was intended to undermine what was most potent and most fervent within the Catholic Movement, which was the movement of the Marian congregants.<sup>658</sup>

If they were able to dismantle the basis of this Catholic force, they would destroy the best of what it had to offer. And once that was gone, the rest would fall apart by itself.

How was this done?<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> Dinner EANS 6/14/82

<sup>656</sup> Meeting with the movement’s older members 5/16/93.

<sup>657</sup> Dinner EANS 6/14/82.

<sup>658</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>659</sup> SD 6/25/88.

## Chapter II

# In the Political Arena: Honoring Integralism, Discrediting the Marian Congregations

### 1. A Less than Valiant Attitude in the Face of Communism

1934 saw a thriving Marian Movement, while the Communist movement also strengthened.<sup>660</sup> The Catholic Electoral League had become a mammoth organization.<sup>661</sup>

What was it, then, that everyone was hoping for? The Catholic Movement would provide the spiritual weapons to bring down Communism, and the Marian movement would be the solution against the Communist movement. It would have been the natural course of events.

We lived in a period when the idea that Communism was a serious danger that could only be resisted and averted by a firmly anticommunist regime was increasingly accepted. Everybody thought it reasonable, and all those who understood the issues sufficiently sympathized with an anticommunist regime.

But in this emergency, the Marian movement began to take on a position in the face of Communism that was not particularly manly. Unfortunately, this was due to the less-than-valiant attitude adopted by the ecclesiastical authorities. Everyone felt that the Marian Congregations had no choice but to be guided by the attitudes of the ecclesiastical authorities in this respect.

### 2. A Shower of Cold Water for the Enthusiasm of the Best Congregants

I will give only one example of what I mean.

To celebrate the first anniversary of the victory of Catholic amendments in the Constituent Assembly of 1934, the Federation of Marian Congregations of São Paulo organized a massive rally of congregants for July 16, 1935. This rally was set to be held at the Praça da Sé in São Paulo,<sup>662</sup> preceded by three days of solemn lectures at São Bento Church

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<sup>660</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>661</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>662</sup> This Marian rally, attended by congregants from the capital and many cities across the state's interior, was initially planned as a great solemnity and intended to be an outstanding event in the history of São Paulo,



to be given by laypeople. A large crowd attended, and the church was filled to capacity.

Then rumors started flying around that the Communists were planning to attack the Marian congregants.

All congregants gathered at the Church of São Bento received it as great news. They could hardly wait to face, without weapons, the Communists in Cathedral Square.

One day before the rally, Dom Duarte was attending the formal session, seated behind the organ of São Bento Church, where he could not be seen because he was sick.

Suddenly, he saw the Secretary of Justice and Public Security, Artur Leite de Barros, come in with a message from state Governor Armando Sales, asking him to prevent the Marian congregants from parading on the public streets for fear of some clash with the Communists. He added that if there was such a clash and any congregants died, the government of São Paulo would accept no responsibility.

The old archbishop, then about seventy years old, thinking, naturally enough, of the children who might die, of the mothers who might cry and other sentimental aspects of that kind, and above all, of the opportunity to do the state governor a favor, what did he do?

He sent Dom José Gaspar, the auxiliary bishop at that time, to address the congregants in more or less the following terms:

“My dear Marian congregants, I come to ask you a formidable, a tremendous sacrifice: that tomorrow, you do not hold your rally out on the square in front of the cathedral but in the courtyard of the Sacred Heart of Jesus High School. We will have the parade afterward.”<sup>663</sup>

The Marian congregants received this communication with disappointment but quietly and without resentment, although sad to be deprived of this opportunity to offer their lives for the Catholic cause.<sup>664</sup> However, at the prospect of a parade afterward, they accepted, more or less cheerfully, the idea of holding the rally at the Sacred Heart of Jesus School. So, the rally was transferred from Cathedral Square to the school courtyard.

The parade took place the following day.

The number of Marian congregants gathered there was huge, and it was one of the most beautiful scenes I had ever seen! The number of congregants equaled their quality. Aesthetically speaking, it was the most beautiful episode of the Marian movement.<sup>665</sup>

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impacting other parts of Brazil. The *Legionário* published the following program, which was later modified: “[On the 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm] after the march through the city’s main streets, the two Marian columns will head to the Praça da Sé, where they will be greeted, at the top of the staircase of the cathedral, by representatives of the highest religious and civil authorities: the episcopate, the State Governor, the Secretariat, the Judiciary, the Mayor, members of the [state] Assembly and members of the diplomatic corps. The speakers will be Dr. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, Dr. Cassio Vidigal, Canon Manuel Macedo, and Father Antonio de Moraes” (*Legionário* No. 175, 7/7/35).

<sup>663</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>664</sup> SD 11/4//92.

<sup>665</sup> According to an article published in *Legionário*, their number was estimated at 15,000 participants. This figure is not exaggerated because the Sacred Heart of Jesus School building occupies two city blocks in length and

Amid all that effervescence, with everyone waiting to start the parade, Dom José Gaspar reported that Dom Duarte was asking them for “a second sacrifice”: that the Marian congregants forgo their parade.

That request fell like a shower of cold water on the rally.

Everyone realized with perfect clarity that at a time when it was necessary to adopt a strong and fearless stance in the face of Communism, the ecclesiastical authority was asking them to show weakness.

This discredited the Marian movement in the eyes of the best and most dedicated—those who would naturally be on our side—and thoroughly demoralized the elites of the Catholic Movement.

The worst part was that all the talk and the attitude of the ecclesiastical authorities reinforced this impression of weakness.

How should we, Marian congregants, react to this? Could we react at all?

We had nothing to do since our orders were clear: “Do not interfere in politics and do not make trouble.”

### 3. Disappointed, Many Migrate to Integralism

Just at that time, Integralism raised its head, supported by excellent propaganda in the media, ostentatious parades with its adherents wearing a uniform of green shirts and conveying the idea of being a robust and well-organized force against Communism.<sup>666</sup>

So, what was the force that appeared capable of reacting? It was Integralism.

And so the dialectics of Integralism versus Communism took hold of the Catholic media, establishing the idea that anyone who was not an integralist was by default a Communist and that anyone who did not promote Integralism was promoting Bolshevism.<sup>667</sup>

Some of our best members, who were close to our group and brilliant young men, defected to the Integralist side at that time despite all my efforts to keep them in our movement.<sup>668</sup> The Integralist movement took many of our best members, usually the best. They said that they no longer wanted to be Marian congregants because the Marian Congregation was nonsense, while Integralism was a positive force.<sup>669</sup>

Even Catholics that Integralists brushed aside gave them some support by saying that Integralism was better than Communism, that only Integralism could save Brazil and other things like that.

### 4. The Rise and Fall of Integralism: Getúlio Vargas’s “New State”

At this time, Dom Helder Câmara became an Integralist leader in the North of the

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one city block in width, with a huge internal courtyard. The pictures of the event show that courtyard filled to capacity with a compact crowd of Marian congregants (cf. *Legionário* No. 176, 7/21/35).

<sup>666</sup> Integralism was crystallized in the so-called Brazilian Integralist Action (AIB) founded on October 7, 1932 by Plínio Salgado (1895-1975), a Brazilian journalist, writer and politician.

<sup>667</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>668</sup> Lunch 5/8/87; SD 2/25/89.

<sup>669</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

country despite being a priest.<sup>670</sup> A story has it that he wore the green shirt of the *Integralistas* under his cassock on the day of his ordination.

Tristão de Athayde was also sympathetic to Fascism and Integralism. He wrote an article advising all Catholics to join the Integralist movement.<sup>671</sup>

Having filled their ranks with numerous new members who joined them from all sides, the Integralists began to organize marches. One day, they held a demonstration against Communism on the Avenida Paulista.

This march displayed the movement's rank and file, wearing boots and olive-green shirts. A band around an arm with a circle on it surrounding the Greek letter Sigma ( $\Sigma$ ), which means totality, was also displayed.

They also held a massive demonstration at Cathedral Square. The Communists posted snipers on top of some of the buildings around the square who fired at them. By a happy coincidence, only three or four were hit by bullets. The rally then dispersed. But this was considered proof of the "danger of Communism."<sup>672</sup>

The press reported that a paper had been discovered revealing that they planned a tremendous Communist coup in Brazil. That paper was allegedly lost by a Jew named Cohen and thus became known as the "Cohen Plan."

"Alarmed" by these reports, Getúlio Vargas approached the Integralists and had several meetings with Plínio Salgado and Rocha Miranda.<sup>673</sup>

On November 10, 1937, all of Brazil was surprised by the news that Getúlio Vargas had seized power, dissolved the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and suspended the Constitution; the incumbent state governors were appointed as federal intervenors who could be dismissed at any time in the states in which they had hitherto been governors, and Getúlio

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<sup>670</sup> Dom Helder Pessoa Câmara (1909-1999) was a priest from the State of Ceará, ordained in 1931. He actively participated in the Brazilian Integralist Action (AIB) and became a member of its High Council, which consisted of twelve members, in 1937. In 1946, when the Archbishop of Rio, Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, sought to have him as his auxiliary bishop, he encountered opposition from the Holy See because of Dom Helder's past in the Integralist movement. The pope refused to approve the appointment, which was only made six years later, in 1952, thanks to the intercession of Monsignor Montini, then sub-Secretary of State of the Holy See and future Pope Paul VI. During this period, Dom Helder changed his political allegiance from Integralism to militant progressivism. Always with the support of Monsignor Montini, he became the great promoter of the creation, in 1952, of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), of which he was appointed Secretary-General, as well as the creation, in 1955, of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM). He participated actively in the Second Vatican Council and was one of the promoters of the *Pact of the Catacombs*, signed by about forty Council Fathers on November 16, 1965. This pact strongly influenced, decades later, the development of liberation theology. Differences of opinion with Cardinal Jaime Câmara made it difficult for him to stay in Rio de Janeiro, and he was appointed as Archbishop of Olinda e Recife in the State of Pernambuco, a post he kept until his resignation on April 2, 1985 (cf. Roberto De Mattei, *The Crusader of the Twentieth Century – Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*, op. cit.; and generally known data).

<sup>671</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>672</sup> SD 2/25/89.

<sup>673</sup> Rocha Miranda was a member of a family of well-known Integralists. During these meetings, it became more or less understood that Getúlio Vargas would stage a coup d'état, dissolve the liberal-democratic system and appoint Plínio Salgado as Minister of Education.

Vargas enacted a federal Constitution of a radical Fascist character.<sup>674</sup>

However, Plínio Salgado was not appointed as promised. To make a long story short, Vargas declared Integralism dissolved before the end of November.<sup>675</sup> The following year, in 1938, Plinio Salgado went into exile in Portugal.<sup>676</sup>

## Chapter III

# Communism and the Modernist Mentality Infiltrate Catholic Circles

### 1. The Catholic Environment Before the Crisis

Having described the circumstances that undermined the Catholic Movement in the political arena, I will now discuss how they weakened it from the theological and ecclesiastical points of view.<sup>677</sup>

That is where the story of the Catholic progressivist crisis begins.<sup>678</sup>

By 1935, I had been militating within the Catholic Movement for seven years. I witnessed a series of misunderstandings between movement members, which were always solved very quickly; I always found it edifying to see how such misunderstandings dissipated.

Sometimes, there would be a particular spirit of competition, a little rivalry, or something similar between one association and another, but nothing that could not quickly be resolved.

In other words, complete harmony reigned.<sup>679</sup> Since the phenomenon of the Catholic Left had not yet raised its ugly head, everyone stood united around the same doctrine. There was, therefore, much unity and cohesion.<sup>680</sup>

We lived in undisturbed religious peace; all Catholics had complete confidence in all other Catholics, and the harmony among the religious associations could not have been

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<sup>674</sup> The new dictatorial regime, known as *Estado Novo* (New State) lasted until October 1945.

<sup>675</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>676</sup> SD 2/25/89.

<sup>677</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>678</sup> SD 3/18/89.

<sup>679</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>680</sup> SD 6/16/73.

greater.

No idea of doing anything disloyal, malevolent, anti-Catholic or underhanded would ever have entered the head of a Marian congregant or a member of any other congregation or association about any of the others. The idea that something like that might happen did not even occur.

The internal crises that had hit the Church in Europe and, to some extent, the United States had not yet reached Brazil.

I thought that the Catholics were on one side and the world on the other, that the part of the population that was sensitive to Hollywood's cinematic influence, bad magazines and press constituted a mass different from us, not directly at war with us, but looking at us with dislike and mistrust in their eyes.

An incipient Communist movement existed, and the Communist movement was the great dragon, the great adversary.

## 2. Incubation of Progressivism in Small Groups

This idea of perfect harmony within the Catholic Movement, of an absence of internal enemies, conveyed an unrealistic picture because Catholic left-wing movements in Europe were already sending propagandists to Brazil, supported by prestigious people of the local Catholic Movement.

Tristão de Athayde, Sobral Pinto and numerous clergy members began to invite these activists to Brazil with the mission of founding groups and covertly spreading the ideas of the Catholic Left.<sup>681</sup>

More than any others, the Liturgical Movement and Catholic Action were tools to ensure that leftist ideas could penetrate Catholic and other circles. Once these groups had gained a foothold in the Catholic Movement, they could count on the support of the Catholic forces, which had considerable influence and resources.<sup>682</sup> These movements aimed to destroy the counter-revolutionary tone of the Brazilian Catholic environment and turn it into a revolutionary movement.<sup>683</sup>

I could see the JOC—Juventude Operária Católica (Young Catholic Workers), a branch of Catholic Action—working to modify society's structure. Ultimately, it promoted a class struggle to abolish the rich and all private property and to obtain complete equality for all social classes.<sup>684</sup>

The enemy penetrated the ship's hold and settled down in it.<sup>685</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> Heráclito Fontoura Sobral Pinto (1893-1991) was a Brazilian jurist. Deemed a leftist Catholic, he had, as a lawyer, defended the Communist chieftain Luís Carlos Prestes, arrested for having led the Communist Uprising of 1935.

<sup>682</sup> SD 7/2/88. The foundations of Catholic Action were established in Brazil during the First National Eucharistic Congress held in Salvador (Bahia) on October 3 to September 10, 1933. Two years later, on June 9, 1935 Brazilian Catholic Action (ACB) was officially created as its statutes were approved by the Brazilian Episcopate.

<sup>683</sup> SD 2/18/89.

<sup>684</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>685</sup> SD 2/18/89.

I would even argue that we were witnessing a genuine rebirth of modernism: the same tendencies, mentality, covert and dishonest methods, and spirit of rebellion against all restrictions, all authority, and all tradition.<sup>686</sup>

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It is necessary to stress that this new spirit did not come to surround us like a cloud as a subtle and elusive ideology. It was, in fact, deliberately introduced into Brazil by people who had come here for that very purpose, had a specific ideology and could count on Catholic Action as a first-rate instrument for its diffusion; it was, consequently, a real organization.<sup>687</sup>

Its propagators were fanatical conspirators, living a hidden life and were adept at the supreme art of accusing of being aggressive those precisely whom they wanted to attack.

When a controversy arose about their erroneous positions, one tactic was to try to stifle it under the guise of keeping the peace, deploying all their forces to prevent the issue from being submitted to the Holy See.

Gradually, this ideology dominated the situation entirely; eventually, it destroyed all obstacles.<sup>688</sup>

The enemy was inside the gates, and we would have to confront it in a completely different fight from anything we had ever done.<sup>689</sup>

### 3. Robert Garric and the “Social Teams”

The first hint I received of this attempt to destroy the Marian Congregations movement and deploy progressivism in Brazil came, singularly enough, from my mother, who opened my eyes to it.

It was during my time as a congressman, and I spent much time in Rio. One day, I received a letter from her, which, unfortunately, I have not kept, to which she had carefully pinned a small newspaper clipping (if I remember correctly, it was from *O Estado de S. Paulo*) telling me to “read the news above, about the French professor so and so.”<sup>690</sup>

Shortly afterward, the Havas news agency began telegraphing to all the newspapers in Brazil<sup>691</sup> a piece of news presented as newspapers usually do when seeking to honor someone.<sup>692</sup>

This news went something like this: “We are happy to announce that the famous French Professor, Robert Garric (he wasn’t that famous), is in Brazil and will be

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<sup>686</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Abbé Luc Lefebvre 11/7/47.

<sup>687</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Fr. José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, SJ, 4/30/48.

<sup>688</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>689</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>690</sup> SD 4/16/94.

<sup>691</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>692</sup> Lunch EANS 6/10/82.

coming to São Paulo to launch the ‘Social Teams’ movement that aims to interest Catholic youth in the fate of the workers and introduce and spread the idea of social justice in Brazil.”<sup>693</sup>

The Marian Congregations went unmentioned, but the news implied that any existing apostolic organization would look backward and primitive compared to this big new movement from France.<sup>694</sup>

Although my mother understood little of the overall context, she commented, “My dear son, see if this is not done to bring down the Marian Congregations and hurt you.”<sup>695</sup>

I have no idea how she inferred from this news the intention to bring down the Marian Congregations.<sup>696</sup>

I always liked receiving letters from my mother but disliked the news she sent me.<sup>697</sup>

Tristão wrote to me, saying, “Garric is coming, and you really need to get to know him, etc.”

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Garric presented himself as a professor at the Sorbonne or some associate who had come to Brazil, under a contract with the São Paulo state government, to take the chair of French Literature at the College of Philosophy, Science and Letters. That was where he planned to launch the Social Teams.<sup>698</sup>

#### 4. A Talk with Robert Garric

I had briefly met this Robert Garric in Rio and had managed to dodge any closer contact with him.<sup>699</sup> But on one of my weekend trips to São Paulo, I receive a phone call:

“Professor Garric is staying at Hotel Terminus and would like to meet with you to discuss the Social Teams.”

I went to the hotel and talked with Roberto Pantoja, a young man from Rio who

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<sup>693</sup> SD 11/26/88.

<sup>694</sup> Lunch EANS 6/10/82.

<sup>695</sup> SD 11/26/88.

<sup>696</sup> Lunch EANS 6/10/82.

<sup>697</sup> SD 11/26/88.

<sup>698</sup> Robert Garric (1896-1967): entered the French Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1914; became an assistant professor (*agrégé*, i.e., temporary professor) of Letters in 1919 and, as such, was then appointed as associate professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1928. He was part of the reformist Catholic movement and, in 1920, founded the so-called *Équipes Sociales*. His first visit to Brazil was reported by the *Legionário*, no. 124, July 16, 1933. His appointment in 1934 as professor of French literature at the College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters was reported in the *Legionário*, no. 145, May 13, 1934. He came to São Paulo from Rio on June 12, 1934. The secular newspapers of São Paulo reported his arrival with great fanfare. On December 4, 1934, *O Estado de S. Paulo* published an article titled “The Social Question,” announcing that “today’s lecture by Professor Robert Garric will be on the ‘Social Teams,’ a great social movement that is doing untold good in France – a lecture that will be of the greatest interest to intellectuals, students and other men of goodwill.”

<sup>699</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54 (see also news in *Legionário* No. 145, 5/13/34).

accompanied him. He was a pleasant, cultured young man who spoke perfect French.<sup>700</sup>

Pantoja just listened to our conversation. It seemed to be roughly understood that after this meeting with Garric, Pantoja and I would have lunch together, just the two of us, and talk. But by the time he left, he said nothing more about lunch, so we never got to have that conversation.<sup>701</sup>

Garric was very charming and amiable. He told me that he had come to Brazil to launch the Social Teams movement, which intended to reunite young people and offer Brazilian Catholic youth a chance to do some good by freeing them from the obsession with pious practices and making them aware of social issues.

I did not like this approach to the subject because, according to sound doctrine, any good Catholic's first and most crucial preoccupation must be the life of piety, the interior life, and the devotions; the other things come after that, in second place. And this movement was already starting by reversing this fundamental order of things.<sup>702</sup>

Mr. Garric went on to tell me that he had participated in the 1914-1918 war and that, along with his companions, he had met men of different social classes in the trenches. That made them realize that the interaction between different social classes brought men closer together. So, they decided it would be good to continue socializing after the war and establish a link between different social classes.<sup>703</sup>

According to him, that should be done as follows: students should go to working-class neighborhoods and live with the workers. That gives rise to a "fantastic" apostolate: they would bring the workers complementary cultural notions and teach them to read and write but not say anything about religion.<sup>704</sup>

So then, the theory went, the workers, "moved" by all this goodness, would one day come to ask the student, "But what are you: a Catholic?"

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<sup>700</sup> SD 11/26/88.

<sup>701</sup> SD 4/16/94.

<sup>702</sup> SD 11/26/88.

<sup>703</sup> The feminist leader Simone de Beauvoir, who was not only a disciple of Jean-Paul Sartre and an admirer of Che Guevara but had also been a student of Garric at the Institute of Sainte-Marie de Neuilly, explained the thinking of this professor with rather less circumlocution: "At the age of twenty, he explained, he had discovered in the trenches the joys of **a camaraderie that suppressed social barriers**. ... **Deny** all limits and all the things that separate us, get out of my social class, get out of my skin: I found this slogan electrifying" (Simone de Beauvoir, *Memoires d'une jeune fille rangée*, Gallimard, 1979, p. 173 – emphasis added).

<sup>704</sup> To measure the extent to which the Catholic media were caught off guard concerning this imminent infiltration, we refer the reader to an article praising the "Social Teams," published in the *Legionário*, no. 145, on May 13, 1934, at a time when Dr. Plinio had not yet assumed the direction of the paper: "So the first 'teams' were set up. The students brought the working classes the education they lacked and the technical preparation that was to make their lives easier. ... And these lectures in a familiar environment, during which **it was never permitted to mention religion or politics**, cemented friendships, undid prejudices ... During walks together, a perfect comradeship was required" (doc cit., p. 5 -. Emphasis in original).



And the student would reply, “Yes, I am.” The worker would then have some “revelation,” and some would convert.

Garric presented this as a fantastic way of doing things. What could be better?

I asked: Mr. Garric, is your movement Catholic?

“In the sense of being a Christian movement, yes.”

“But I wanted to know precisely this: Is it Catholic, or isn’t it?”

“No, Catholics must prevent the movement from appearing Catholic.”

I thought, “Why would I leave the Marian Congregations, a great and brilliant movement, to join something like this?”<sup>705</sup>

Garric added:

“The [Social] Teams also work among the workers to teach them to claim their rights. After all, they cannot rely on good bosses who want to give them what is rightfully theirs. The workers must force their bosses to respect their rights, or they will never be able to have a decent life. We must teach them that sense of nonconformity.”

I listened to this whole conversation and kept smiling. I smiled the entire time.

And I asked:

“Professor Garric, has your movement been approved by the Church?”

“Oh, yes! Very much so. Such archbishops, such-and-such cardinals, have approved my movement as a lay movement that is not officially Catholic. I am a Catholic. I have several young people in my Teams who receive Communion daily. But this has nothing to do with religion.”

From the counter-revolutionary point of view, all these social issues are primarily moral. If one tries to separate the resolution of such questions from the influence of the Church, one takes a step in the direction of the Revolution.<sup>706</sup>

He finally asked me to let him have several Marian congregants, as though they had been pieces of furniture that were mine to give away, as though they had not been living beings that cannot be “given away” in exchange for ten oranges. I never even considered such an idea.<sup>707</sup>

“Certainly, Professor Garric, I will think about it and let you know. See you later.”

We never saw each other again. He was much older than me, but I could feel something fishy at work underneath all this.<sup>708</sup>

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Dom Duarte wanted no part of these “Social Teams.”

However, although Dom Duarte did not want them, and they were not set up in São Paulo, some were founded in Rio. And even here in São Paulo, some young men from the Catholic Movement joined these Teams. They eventually set up

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<sup>705</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>706</sup> SD 11/26/88.

<sup>707</sup> SD 9/17/88.

<sup>708</sup> SD 11/26/88.

liberal opposition to us.<sup>709</sup>

Tristão de Athayde promoted those Social Teams from the outset. He was the driving force behind the Liturgical Movement, Catholic Action, and all that I would later denounce in my book *In Defense of Catholic Action*.

As we exchanged correspondence, breaking up relations because of this book, Tristão was upset because every letter in it was contrary to his beliefs, particularly the program he promoted.<sup>710</sup>

The young men who became members of the first Social Teams he set up in Rio later became the initial element of the Liturgical Movement in that city.<sup>711</sup>

## 5. The “Constructives” Arrive in São Paulo

Another episode that foreshadowed this offensive for the overthrow of the Catholic Movement by persons from Europe, even before Garric arrived in Brazil, was the following:

In 1932, there appeared in São Paulo a Belgian lady, Mademoiselle Adèle de Loneux, a professor at the Catholic School of Social Service in Brussels.

This Belgian lady presented a rather singular appearance: straight black hair tied back in a severe bun in the back of the head, well-nourished, dressed all in black, flat shoes on her rather large feet. She cultivated a mysterious air, as one constantly turning over weighty questions in her mind, glistening eyes and an impassive gaze. But behind this seeming impassivity, there was an astuteness that, I believe, few people recognized.

She had come to hold a series of lectures at *Colégio des Oiseaux*. I had been asked to give two or three lectures in this series for an audience that consisted of the “*crème de la crème*” of the Catholic women’s movement in São Paulo.<sup>712</sup>

I remember that while I was giving my lectures, Mlle. Loneux remained at the back of the room, watching.

In those days, rumors circulated that Svend Kok intended to be ordained a priest.<sup>713</sup>

I, too, was asked if I did not intend to become a priest. Later, they told me that

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<sup>709</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>710</sup> Lunch EANS 6/10/82.

<sup>711</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (II) 8/7/54.

<sup>712</sup> This Intensive Social Training for Young Women, organized by the Canonesses of St. Augustine between April 1 and May 15, 1932, included, in its organizing committee, Mlle. Adèle de Loneux (1886-1969), director of the Catholic School of Social Service in Brussels, assisted by Mlle. Christine de Hemptinne, founding president of ACJBF (Catholic Action of Belgian Catholic Girls). This series of lectures was attended by girls and young ladies from the best society of São Paulo’s (cf.

[http://www.prof.joaodantas.nom.br/materialdidatico/material/1\\_-\\_O\\_significado\\_socio-](http://www.prof.joaodantas.nom.br/materialdidatico/material/1_-_O_significado_socio-)

[\\_historico\\_da\\_profissao.pdf](http://www.prof.joaodantas.nom.br/materialdidatico/material/1_-_O_significado_socio-historico_da_profissao.pdf); see also *Dictionnaire des femmes belges*, Éliane Gubin etc., Editions Racine, Brussels, 2006).

<sup>713</sup> Shortly after, in 1934, he actually joined the Benedictine Order, where he was known as Dom Teodoro Kok. In 1955, he became a Trappist monk.

when Mlle. Loneux heard this; she made a rather strange comment: “He’s too good a Catholic to become a priest.” This was a rather double-edged remark, I thought.

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About ten years later, I learned from Archbishop José Gaspar and a girl who had been invited to join Mlle. de Loneux's movement but had refused this invitation that Mlle. de Loneux had founded a secret religious congregation of nuns here. The nuns were to wear secular clothing but were bound to this congregation by a vow of obedience.

That secret religious congregation, called Auxiliaries of the Apostolate, was founded in Belgium by Cardinal Mercier.<sup>714</sup> It had two branches, one primarily designed to assist the Society of Jesus priests.

These Auxiliaries of the Apostolate persuaded girls of that group to join them. Some studied at the School of Social Work in Leuven or Brussels for one, two, or three years, then returned to Brazil. What they did there was effectively a novitiate.<sup>715</sup>

Their families did not know that they had become nuns, and neither did the public or I.

This helps us understand the genesis of the liturgical movement in Brazil because they eventually created a whole organization with much influence within the Catholic Movement. They were young women, almost all very wealthy, from the best families of São Paulo, intelligent, capable, with leadership qualities, and had received a misguided formation from Belgium.<sup>716</sup>

## 6. First, a Favorable Impression; Upon Closer Acquaintance, However...

When I noticed that they had appeared, I was initially very favorably impressed with the fact that the Catholic environment of São Paulo was being enriched by the emergence of a group of girls from good families (about ten of them) who seemed extraordinarily capable and intelligent.

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<sup>714</sup> Désiré-Félicien-François-Joseph Cardinal Mercier (1851-1926), Primate of Belgium, was archbishop of Malines from 1906 until his death; created cardinal in 1907.

<sup>715</sup> In an article of August 16, 2010, by the Bahian social worker Talita Carmona Vieira, we find the following information: “In 1932, Brazil had a visit from Adèle de Loneux, who brought new European ideals on Social Service through various lectures that she gave in this country, and when she returned to Belgium, she took with her two Brazilian girls, Maria Kiehl and Albertina Ramos, who were trained under European influence, returned to the country, and founded the School of Social Work of São Paulo” (cf. <http://www.webartigos.com/artigos/a-historia-do-servico-social/44882>).

<sup>716</sup> Within the *Legionário* group, we used to refer to them, among ourselves, as the “*constructives*” because they claimed that Catholic Action would completely reformulate the methods to be used in the Church’s apostolate, ushering in a new era of “goodwill” in which disagreements, polemics, and condemnations of error would be left aside. The aim would be to establish *constructive*, cordial and friendly relations with all people and currents hitherto considered adversaries of Catholicism, who would then, overwhelmed by all this goodwill, be converted and become good Catholics.

At first, I thought this was another decisive force, determined and able to fight for the Catholic cause.

So I received them very well and established good relations with them across the natural distance between the sexes.

After some time, however, I noticed something strange—a half-modernist, half-reckless, egalitarian attitude they were adopting. I had the feeling that they lacked the true Catholic mentality.<sup>717</sup>

They tried to get on good terms with our group at the *Legionário*, as they desired a good relationship with us. I had my misgivings up to a certain point, but on the other hand, I kept hoping that the situation could be rectified if they received the proper guidance from a good priest to act as their spiritual director.

They began to work with Catholic Action, presenting it as an ultra-new apostolate—a novelty that would completely reshape the Church's mode of action, giving her an extraordinary capacity to convert people, a laser beam for the apostolate. I thought this extremely strange.

## 7. The “Social Service” of the *Constructives*: Socialism Pure and Simple

The training these girls received focused heavily on *social service*, which was – right from the beginning and ever after – nothing but pure socialism.

After her lecture tour, Mlle. De Loneux returned to Belgium and, as far as I know, never returned to Brazil.

But her disciples were the girls who founded the Center of Studies and Social Action in São Paulo in 1932 and the School of Social Service in 1936.

The women's liturgical movement's entire leftist rank and file received its social (ultimately, socialist) education at this School of Social Service.<sup>718</sup> This school was the hotbed of Catholic Action and *Maritainism* among the women of São Paulo.<sup>719</sup>

They also founded the *Centro Leão XIII* and *A Lareira* (The Fireplace).<sup>720</sup> The latter was an interfaith organization that included priests known as liturgists and modernists by their doctrines and habits: Father Benedito Mário Calazans and Father Ramón Ortiz, of whom more later.<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>717</sup> Antonio de Castro Mayer, then still only a Canon, said of them in a letter (of unknown date) to Cardinal Sebastião Leme: “Almost all members of the fledgling Catholic Action were people who had been more or less converted, all of them young. I call them ‘more or less converted’ because although they might not have passed from infidelity to the Faith, they passed from a lack of interest in ecclesiastical matters to a seemingly greater fervor. They said that it had been C.A. that had awakened their enthusiasm.... It may well be said that C.A. came in through the window, excluding people who would have been more suitable by their sense of the purity of Catholic morals and by the integrity of their faith. Even worse, Catholic Action presented itself as downright revolutionary.”

<sup>718</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>719</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>720</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/6/54.

<sup>721</sup> From a report by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru, S.J., circa 1950 —Father Calazans also devoted himself to politics, being twice elected as state congressman for São Paulo and later as senator. Father Ramón Ortiz, a

They also founded the School of Social Service of Rio de Janeiro, as far as I know.

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Therefore, in 1932, we saw the penetration of socialism into Catholic circles in São Paulo; this took place in a very subtle, indirect way.

That corresponded to the modernist tactics of disseminating ideas: socialist formation imparted within a small nucleus but not announced outside. After that, these ideas would be spread gradually, more by allusions and insinuations than anything else, to disguise their doctrinal background for as long as possible.<sup>722</sup>

## 8. The “Constructives” Take Key Posts in Catholic Action

Taking advantage of the prestige enjoyed because of the expertise they brought back from Europe and the magnificent banner under which they worked, i.e., Catholic Action, they began establishing centers in various places like São Paulo, Rio, and Belo Horizonte.

Soon, these centers started making waves throughout Brazil, attracting other elements, among them the best of our intellectual and religious youth.

Through constant travel, regular correspondence, and various other means, people who had been trained in Belgium directly and personally formed and prepared all the new leaders of the main centers.

This gave Catholic Action throughout Brazil such uniformity of mind and action that it became a first-rate power for spreading ideas and guidelines in Catholic circles nationwide.<sup>723</sup>

## 9. Dom Martin Michler, a Promoter of Liturgism

While the *School of Social Work*, of predominantly Belgian origin, was developing in São Paulo, the Liturgical Movement, which originated in Germany and France, was born in Rio de Janeiro around 1933.<sup>724</sup>

Rio's group of *liturgists* arose from the converging influence of the Dominican priests of Toulouse, France, and of the Benedictines of Beuron and Maria Laach, Germany.<sup>725</sup>

Rio de Janeiro became the citadel of the Liturgical Movement. A good number of monks from the prestigious St. Benedict Monastery and laymen such as Tristão de Athayde (a man of entire confidence of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Rio, Dom Sebastião Leme da Silveira Cintra) supported this movement.

In São Paulo, Catholic Action enjoyed full support from the young Auxiliary Bishop Dom José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva.<sup>726</sup>

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native of Taubaté, was also a professor of journalism at Fundação Cásper Líbero and Vice-Dean of the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC).

<sup>722</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>723</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Fr. José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga SJ, 4/30/48.

<sup>724</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>725</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>726</sup> SD 7/2/88.

Alceu Amoroso Lima (pen name of Tristão de Athayde) was one of the most ardent enthusiasts of the new trend. He seduced many into joining the liturgist camp because he was a prestigious writer, president of Catholic Action throughout Brazil, president of Centro Dom Vital, a Catholic organization with a network of branches in various cities of the country well known to Brazilian intellectuals, and director of *Ordem* magazine, subscribed to and read throughout the nation, including seminaries.<sup>727</sup>

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Dom Martinho Michler, a German monk from the São Bento monastery in Rio, coordinated this attack.<sup>728</sup>

He was one of the most appealing men I ever met.

Tall and slender, he had a highly communicative smile and very affable manners, making the person he was dealing with feel like agreeing with him. He had an enchanting way of being.<sup>729</sup>

Very intelligent and, above all, very *enjôleur*, he had a kind of radiation that made him genuinely graceful.<sup>730</sup>

However, he was the mentor of all these ideas one could not agree with.<sup>731</sup>

I remember attending some lectures he gave at Centro Dom Vital in Rio.

He gave the singular impression of an extraordinary mastery in all his movements. Even his slightest movements were graceful: he would bend down to pick up a piece of paper from the ground with naturalness and almost classic beauty; he laughed, and his laughter was captivating; he looked, and his gaze was velvety and pleasant; he rested, and his repose was communicative.

Nevertheless—and it is a mystery — he was very ugly and a bit heavy.<sup>732</sup>

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I also remember the last time I saw him.

Members of the *Legionário* group and I had gone to visit Bishop Mayer in the diocese of Campos.

We were walking along one of the beaches in that area. There was beautiful weather, magnificent sunshine, a vast beach, stupendous sand, and a sea much more beautiful than the sand.

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<sup>727</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, SJ 4/30/48.

<sup>728</sup> Dom Martin Michler, OSB, born in Ravensburg, Germany, in 1901 and deceased in Rio in 1988. Trained in Romano Guardini's school, Most Rev. Clemente Isnard says that he brought to Brazil "the elaborations of the Maria-Laach Liturgical School and the Belgian Liturgical Movement" (cf. Fr. José Arioaldo da Silva, OFM, *O movimento litúrgico no Brasil — Estudo histórico*, Vozes, Petrópolis, 1983). He arrived in Brazil in 1933 and in July of that same year promoted a first retreat with the participation of six young men, celebrating there the first dialogued and *versus populum* Mass [turned toward the people] (cf. Stigmatine Fr. Laudimiro de Jesus Borges, "A participação da juventude no movimento litúrgico no Brasil," *Revista de liturgia* - [www.revistadeliturgia.com.br](http://www.revistadeliturgia.com.br)).

<sup>729</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>730</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>731</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>732</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

We discussed various matters when we saw a pickup truck approaching in the distance and a person smiling at us.

As he approached, we noticed he was wearing a cassock. Without quite recognizing him (I was never a good physiognomist), I kindly smiled, too.

When he got closer, I saw it was Dom Martin Michler.

I had already written the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*, and we had broken relations. But I still looked at him and thought, “What an appealing and charming man he is!”

We passed each other with the greatest cordiality on both sides. And we never saw each other again.<sup>733</sup>

The concrete fact is that this monk began to give courses to Catholic Action members in Rio de Janeiro on the Sacred Liturgy, entirely with the orientation condemned by the Encyclical *Mediator Dei*.<sup>734</sup>

These courses attracted many young people, who soon became noted for their

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<sup>733</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>734</sup> Many years later, during the Second Vatican Council, Bishop Clemente Isnard, a follower of Dom Martin Michler in liturgical matters, gave eloquent testimony of how great a stumbling block the Encyclical *Mediator Dei* had been to liturgist plans, particularly because it clearly corroborated the theses expounded in Dr. Plinio’s book *In Defense of Catholic Action*, prefaced by the Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil, Archbishop Aloisi Bento Masella.

Bishop Isnard euphorically uses the Council’s document on the liturgy to oppose that encyclical by Pius XII, which he claims had been superseded by the Constitution on the Liturgy. Let it be said, in passing, that this is quite a peculiar position on the part of a Catholic bishop. To Bishop Isnard, the conciliar document on the liturgy appears to have meant a kind of redemption of the liturgical errors condemned by *Mediator Dei* and earlier in Dr. Plinio’s book.

Also noteworthy is the fact that at the very moment when Bishop Isnard celebrated with Dom Martin Michler what they saw as a moment of triumph for the liturgist cause, his thoughts were focused on the opposition to liturgist errors that Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira had raised in his book *In Defense of Catholic Action*. A sign of how profound an impact the book had!

Here is Bishop Isnard’s statement:

“An unforgettable scene for me: The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, on the liturgy, was about to be promulgated in the morning of December 4, 1963. Thousands of bishops were arriving at St. Peter’s Basilica.

“At the moment when deeply touched, I was crossing the entrance gates, I providentially encounter Abbot Dom Martin Michler, O.S.B. I was coming from ‘Domus Mariae’ and he from St. Anselm’s College, and there we met, hugged and congratulated each other. What he had taught in 1933, his definition of the liturgy and his vision of integrating the liturgy into Church life were concisely formulated in the text approved by 2,147 bishops against 4 and promulgated by the Holy Father.

“The Church was taking a step beyond *Mediator Dei*. How the conciliar Constitution would ‘canonize’ many points the Movement’s enemies had condemned as ‘liturgism’ or ‘liturgicism’! What a mess for those who had doubted Dom Martin’s orthodoxy, thrown stones at the movement, and branded the Benedictines as heretics! I do not think that Benedetto Aloisi Cardinal Masella remembered the foreword he had written for Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira’s book that morning. But Dom Martin’s smile was an expression of delight, a gift of the Spirit that made us forget everything and only give thanks for that day of joy and victory” (cf. Bernard Botte, O.S.B., *O Movimento litúrgico—Apêndice de D. Clemente Isnard, OSB*, Editora Paulinas, São Paulo, 1978, Coleção Igreja Eucaristia, p. 230).

excessive liturgism. They were intelligent young people who entered religion in the Orders of Saint Benedict and Saint Dominic and developed an active work in favor of liturgism in Brazil.

Dom Martin Michler spread his mentality in São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, and several other cities, always with the support of many of his confreres. The same thing happened with other Benedictine abbeys and monasteries on a smaller scale.

Thus, the *spirit* of Maria-Laach Abbey, in all its temerity, penetrated Brazil and aimed predominantly at the circles of Catholic Action, which were well prepared to receive it. Finally, the two movements, liturgism and Catholic Action, fully merged.<sup>735</sup>

## 10. My First Contact with the Liturgical Movement

It was through Tristão de Athayde that I first had contact with this Liturgical Movement.

Every month, Tristão would meet with Catholic leaders at the building of the Catholic Coalition, of which he was president, located across the street from the Constituent Assembly. And he would invite one congressman per month to speak.

At a certain point, he remembered me and invited me to speak. He asked me to discuss a topic related to spiritual life.

I was unaware of the existence of this Liturgical Movement, and out of sheer coincidence, I expounded on several things found in the book by Dom Chautard<sup>736</sup> regarding the liturgy and the good liturgical movement of Dom Guéranger. And I spoke about this with some passion.

I noticed amid the audience a group of young men I had never met who seemed exceedingly interested – something unique!

After the lecture, Tristão, who lived near my hotel, told me:

“Wait for me here a bit, and I’ll go with you and drop you off at your hotel.”

“All right.”

We went down, I sat in the car, and it was the only time in his life that Tristão praised a lecture of mine.

“Plinio, that was a fantastic speech that you gave today! Your speech enchants me! A group of young men is dying to meet you and keep in touch. They are young men like this and like that, good Catholics.”

In the climate of confidence that reigned among Catholics then, I thought, “Wow, how his attitude toward me has changed!” He was seemingly very kind, but deep down, he was very cold.

At their first invitation, I went there. What did I encounter? In a room of the Catholic Coalition building, with the furniture put aside, with breviaries and in lay clothing, reciting the Divine Office, one taking the part of the abbot, the others that of the monks.

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<sup>735</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Fr. José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, SJ 4/30/48.

<sup>736</sup> Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard (1858-1935), Abbot of Sept-Fons, France, author of the famous work *The Soul of the Apostolate*.



There was, of course, nothing wrong with this *per se*.<sup>737</sup> What I did find curious, though, is that they told me, with an air of mystery: “Dr. Plinio, this is an exciting thing. But it must remain a secret.”

I did not like this “secret” business at all.

Why a secret? Our Lord recommends that the children of light proclaim what they do from the housetops. So why should this be kept a secret? What was going on there?

After singing the Office, it would have been natural for them to introduce the young men to me and for us to talk a little.

No! The boys filed out in procession and disappeared into another room.

“What did you think of it?” Alceu asked me. I said:

“Well, it is a prayer of the Church, a prayer from the breviary... although it is rather curious to see these boys use the breviary.”

“Yes, because... Do you know? This is something new. A German monk of the Benedictine Monastery here in Rio is teaching us a new form of piety, already being disseminated worldwide and part of the Liturgical Movement.”

“What’s that?”

“It aims to make people know and love the Sacred Liturgy and become familiarised with the Divine Office. Don’t you think this is a good thing?”

“It’s an excellent thing, but why must it be done secretly? Something so wonderful should surely be done openly for all the world to see?”

“No, no, because it is not advisable to attract too many people.”

I found this to be more than a little weird. “How is it not advisable? If it’s an excellent thing, the more people come, the better, surely? Why these closed little cliques? I think this should be open to everyone! What is this?”

Only later did I realize it was a movement that upheld erroneous doctrines in parallel with Catholic Action.<sup>738</sup>

## 11. The Influence of Maritain, Mauriac, and Bernanos

As I have already mentioned, the activities of some French Dominicans, whose Province in Brazil depended on the province of Toulouse in France, were also influenced. The *Sept* and *Aurore* weekly magazines formed the spirituality of these Dominicans. The spirit of the French writers Maritain, Mauriac and Bernanos was based on the mentality of the “*politique de la main tendue*.”

On the other hand, several Brazilian Dominicans had gone to study in France. They, too, were profoundly influenced by this mentality.

All these trends, that of Maria Laach and that of Toulouse, as well as that of the misguided Catholic Action, eventually merged into one movement. They had a deep affinity with each other that the essentially Latin and intuitive

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<sup>737</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 6/8/86.

<sup>738</sup> SD 6/18/88.

temperament of the Brazilians recognized immediately. Maria Laach did for theology what Toulouse did for philosophy and sociology, and what the errors and exaggerations of Catholic Action did for pastoral care.

Out of all this, an immense body of doctrine grew, accepted all over Brazil by the same people, advocated particularly by prominent and influential religious organizations that could count on the authority of their positions within the Church and the advantages of money, numbers, and talent.

In addition to these many influences, many priests favored and spread that spirit everywhere in their daily work—from the pulpit to the confessional to the seminaries.

## **12. Liberal Influences also from Canada and the United States**

To further complicate the picture, there was also a rapprochement between the Brazilian and innovative American Catholic circles, promoted partly by scholarships for Brazilians to study in the United States, by creating religious houses of U.S. and Canadian congregations in Brazil, etc. The ideas, habits, and trends of these liberal American and Canadian Catholics penetrated our society, eagerly received by Brazilian innovators, all of whom had manifestly lax tendencies in moral matters.<sup>739</sup>

I saw with the utmost concern a nation then with forty million Catholics and one of the Church's greatest hopes seized in its entrails by a large force promoting religious and moral breakdown in the name of the Church herself.<sup>740</sup>

## **13. Father José Gaspar Shows Enthusiasm for Catholic Action; Archbishop Cabral Advocates Liturgism**

A small episode, but one rather telltale about the future:

The spiritual director of the Federation of the Daughters of Mary of São Paulo was Father José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva, who used to write the preface for their yearbook. In this preface, he spoke about Catholic Action for the first time and with great enthusiasm.<sup>741</sup>

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Belo Horizonte was another strong focus of liturgism. Its Archbishop, Dom Antonio dos

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<sup>739</sup> A report, dating probably from 1951, by Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer, then already Bishop of Campos, stated that "His Eminence [Carlos Carmelo Cardinal Motta] introduced into the archdiocese [of São Paulo] Canadian Dominicans who immediately shocked the population with by their un-priest-like and frankly frivolous behavior. One of these, Father Marcelo Desmarais, gave lectures on the radio that became famous for his unconcern towards the worst modern vices and his scandalous language." This report also referred to "an American female congregation...giving modern dance classes to young women from wealthy families," to initiate them "into the charms of a 'renewed' and liberal Catholicism."

<sup>740</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J. 4/30/48.

<sup>741</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

Santos Cabral, immediately adopted the new ideas and became, over time, one of their strongest proponents.

Belo Horizonte became a Mecca (Tristão de Athayde even wrote that it had become a 'Rome') of liturgist movements in Brazil.<sup>742</sup>

The country's first and largest Catholic daily, the *Diário* of Belo Horizonte, read all over Brazil, immediately put itself at the service of this movement. With the magazine *A Ordem* and with the support of a few smaller magazines like *Vida*, the paper of the Catholic Action of Porto Alegre, *Diário* was one more major force placing itself at the service of liturgism.<sup>743</sup>

#### 14. My Conclusions

After listening and observing a lot, I soon drew the following conclusions:

— That the so-called clandestine religious order brought here from Belgium by Mademoiselle de Loneux had introduced into the Catholic Action of São Paulo a mindset fundamentally the same as that of the Liturgical Movement of Tristão de Athayde in Rio.

— That these people of Catholic Action of São Paulo collaborated closely with Tristão de Athayde and that these two movements (the Liturgical Movement and the Catholic Action) were both sides of the same coin even though they hardly ever mentioned each other.<sup>744</sup>

— Several priests, even bishops, supported these movements: they saw what they said and did, agreed with it, and covertly promoted those ideas.

— That these clerics, formerly friends of mine and *Legionário*'s, were increasingly sidelining us and placing the adherents of the new ideas into key positions within the Catholic movement.

— That there was a conspiracy to introduce these new ideas to replace the old.<sup>745</sup>

— That this conspiracy had already made much headway and even reached the most exalted levels within the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, among whom stood out, high enough to be out of sight, Dom Antonio dos Santos Cabral, Archbishop of Belo Horizonte.<sup>746</sup>

— And that, finally, this new mentality's main patron and protector was a bright and charming man no more than thirty-seven years of age: the Auxiliary Bishop of São Paulo, Dom José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva.<sup>747</sup>

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<sup>742</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>743</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga SJ, 4/30/48.

<sup>744</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>745</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>746</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>747</sup> SD 6/16/73.

## 15. Persecuted Jesuits Support Dr. Plinio

Liturgists, Maritainists, social workers and members of Catholic Action started their activities by unleashing a violent propaganda campaign against the Society of Jesus.

This propaganda was not an attack on the men of the Society but on the institution itself and the apostolic methods that it employed: against the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, allegedly dated and harmful; against Ignatian asceticism; against the spirituality of the Jesuits.

Since Jesuits generally ran the Marian Congregations and Marian associations, the attacks centered on them.

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Perhaps for this reason, we were not alone among those who rose to fight these errors. From the beginning, a Jesuit of extraordinary intelligence and capability, Father Cesare Dainese, led the fight.<sup>748</sup>

Later, another Jesuit whom I have already mentioned, Father Arlindo Vieira, also joined the fight. He was a prolific and top-rated Brazilian speaker, a dedicated, good man who gave famous lectures against Bernanos and wrote articles opposing Maritain. So did Father Louis Riou, the Provincial of the Society of Jesus.

These three Jesuits strongly and openly upheld the right ideas, supported by Father Felix Pereira de Almeida and Father Walter Mariaux.<sup>749</sup> I will explain further how I came to know the latter.

But I also noticed a rather curious phenomenon: several other Jesuits were utterly indifferent to us, to the point where their indifference came, on some occasions, close to hostility. The impression was that there was a kind of

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<sup>748</sup> Father Cesare Dainese (1894-1986) was born in Luvigliano, Padua. He entered the Society of Jesus in Brazil in 1912. He studied philosophy in Rome and theology at the Heythrop College in England. Ordained a priest in 1927, he returned to Brazil in 1930 to become the rector of the Colégio Anchieta in Nova Friburgo (1934-1935 and 1940-1945), of the Colégio Antonio Vieira in Salvador (Bahia), where he was promoted to provincial (1953-1957), and of the Colégio Santo Inácio of Rio de Janeiro (1963-1964) (cf. Roberto de Mattei, *The Crusader of the 20th Century: Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira*; Gracewing, Fowler Wright Books, Leominster, Herefordshire, England 1998).

<sup>749</sup> Father Walter Mariaux (Ülzen, 1894 – Munich, 1963): German Jesuit priest who began his apostolate with the Marian Congregations in Cologne (1929) and Münster (1933). In 1935, already in Rome, he worked at the Central Secretariat of the Marian Congregations. His open opposition to the Nazi regime made it impossible for him to return to Germany. In 1940, he came to Brazil, where that same year, he met and became a close friend of Dr. Plinio and established ties with the *Legionário* group. In 1949, he returned to Germany, where, beginning in 1953, he directed the *Paulus-Kreis*, the famous congregation *Maior Latina* and the national secretariat of the Marian Congregations. The magazine *Die Sendung* was the organ of his lay apostolate. Under the pseudonym *Testis Fidelis*, Father Mariaux published *El Cristianismo en el Tercer Reich* [Christianity in the Third Reich], Buenos Aires, La Verdad, 1941, a well-documented and implacable analysis of the persecution of Christians under the Nazis (cf. Roberto De Mattei, *The Crusader of the 20th Century*, op. cit.).

division within the Society. Father Saboia,<sup>750</sup> for example, started criticizing us when he returned from the United States.<sup>751</sup>

## Chapter IV

# The Doctrine of the Liturgical Movement and Catholic Action

### 1. Participation in the Priestly Power to Sanctify

The errors of the new current that we had to face revolved around the concept of the priesthood of the laity, both in terms of liturgy and Catholic Action.

According to traditional doctrine, the priest has a power that comes to him from his sacramental ordination, and the laity passively participates in this priesthood.

The innovators claimed that Pius XI had added something to the passive participation of lay people in the priesthood so that by joining Catholic Action, a

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<sup>750</sup> Father Roberto Saboia de Medeiros (1905-1955) was described by Alceu Amoroso Lima as “a spearhead in the fight for social rights.” The site of Father Saboia de Medeiros Ignatian Educational Foundation affirms that “his greatest concern was the social question” and calls him “an ardent supporter of the French philosopher Maurice Blondel and an assiduous reader of Aldous Huxley,” who maintained correspondence with both of them (cf. <http://www.fei.org.br/PadreSaboiaMedeiros.aspx>).

<sup>751</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 10/8/54.

layperson would *ipso facto* acquire a way of sharing in the priesthood, a participation that was no longer entirely passive,<sup>752</sup> but gave him a particular share in the power of jurisdiction; the aim was to establish a transformation of the layman's status in the Church.<sup>753</sup>

From this, they deduced that Catholic Action members should participate in the liturgy as true officiating celebrants, not passively but actively.

The Liturgical Movement also claimed they were no longer only part of the Church that is taught, governed, and sanctified but also had teaching functions and functions of government and sanctification that belonged to them as proper attributes of their new state.<sup>754</sup>

They were, in essence, priests, to a lesser extent, a kind of “light” version of the priesthood. As such, they were, to some extent, entitled to participate in Church government, teaching and sanctification.

According to their concepts, when the priest celebrates Mass (the central act of the Catholic Faith) and consecrates the host (the central act of the Mass), and the faithful pronounce the exact words as the priest, they are taking an active part in the act of transubstantiation<sup>755</sup> and cooperating with the priest in operating the transubstantiation.<sup>756</sup>

Of course, the same would apply to all prayers, requests, petitions and acts of worship of the priest during Mass: if a layperson pronounced these along with the priest, he would, in some manner, be grafted onto the words of the priest and would, somehow, be concelebrating the Mass.

That meant that all the laity were more or less sacralized. And this – mind you – was to apply also to laywomen. In this way, those who joined the Liturgical Movement would be converted more or less into priestesses. The old ban on women’s access to the priesthood or governing positions in the Church, imposed by none other than the Apostles, was to be abolished.

What it amounted to was no less than the abolition of the sacred boundary between the priest and the laity.

## 2. Joint Participation in Church Government

Catholic Action promoted something similar, no longer regarding sanctification through the liturgy but rather concerning Church governance.

They held that it was necessary to consider what St. Peter had said of us, the Catholic people: that we are a priestly and regal people.

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<sup>752</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>753</sup> Memorandum on the Brazilian religious crisis on the occasion of the 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress (Rio, 1955).

<sup>754</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>755</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>756</sup> SD 6/18/88.

Consequently, the supporters of Catholic Action's new ideas argued that we, the laity, are co-priests, co-kings, and co-governors.<sup>757</sup>

In what sense?

In Pius XI's definition, Catholic Action was a form of participation of the laity in the Church's hierarchical apostolate.

From this, they deduced that Pius XI had given the laity the power of carrying out an apostolate on behalf of the hierarchy, as though the laity could claim a kind of priesthood and the extraordinary graces accorded to the priestly ministry.<sup>758</sup>

The whole movement represented a push toward a position where the Church would no longer differentiate between the laity and the priests and where the words and actions of a layperson would weigh the same as those of a priest.<sup>759</sup>

This was also the basis for the trend, represented by the exaggerations of Catholic Action and the liturgical movement, to erase the notion that the Church is a hierarchical society rather than a society of unequals in which some have the task of teaching, governing and sanctifying, and others that of letting themselves be governed, taught and sanctified (cf. St Pius X, Encyclical *Vehementer nos*, February 11, 1906).<sup>760</sup>

As a result, the layman in Catholic Action was urged to take the reins into his hands and push the priest aside.<sup>761</sup> The basis for this way of thinking was: "The times when the priests, bishops and popes reigned over the laity are over. We have reached a time of freedom, equality, and fraternity. This means that liberty, equality, and fraternity must also rein in the church. We will now make our own way because our time is the time of the people. And we are the people within the Church."<sup>762</sup>

In their view, priests and bishops should still exist, but their power should be purely representative and figurative; the laity should have independence and resolve matters in the Church as they wanted and saw fit.<sup>763</sup>

On the other hand, according to these new doctrines, all laypeople must register as members of Catholic Action. In this way, practically all governing functions could extend to all the laity.

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<sup>757</sup> This was how they interpreted, by extrapolation, the beautiful phrase of Scripture that says, "But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare his virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9).

<sup>758</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>759</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>760</sup> Report presented by Dr. Plinio to Msgr. Valentini in Rome in 1950.

<sup>761</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>762</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>763</sup> Conversation 2/7/93.

### 3. A Pantheistic Vision and a False Conception of “Mandate”

The innovators loved to use the expression “the Mystical Body of Christ.” For them, it was not just a metaphor for a supernatural reality but an actual physical embodiment. Thus, the new doctrines fell under pantheism, establishing God and man on the same level.<sup>764</sup>

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On the other hand, the mentors of this new school said that Pius XI, when founding Catholic Action, had given it a “mandate” to do apostolate.

Because of this “mandate,” the Church had limited the task of carrying out its apostolate to Catholic Action, excluding any other organization. All other organizations devoted to the apostolate should consider themselves doing so on a purely auxiliary basis or cease such activities altogether because only Catholic Action had the right, under this “mandate,” to carry out the apostolate.<sup>765</sup>

This meant that all the old religious associations (the Marian Congregations, the Third Order of the Carmelites, the Third Order of the Franciscans, the Apostleship of Prayer, the Daughters of Mary, etc.) should disappear to be replaced by a single organization—Catholic Action—because it was worth more than all the others, and its members participated in the priest's apostolate.<sup>766</sup>

Moreover, they said, Pius XI had also given orders to the laity to carry out an apostolate within Catholic Action itself. Consequently, any layman taking some of his free time to carry out a particular apostolate outside Catholic Action was an undisciplined Catholic. He should join Catholic Action and do his apostolate within it.

The result of all this was the establishment of a veritable dictatorship of Catholic Action. If you could only do your apostolate within Catholic Action, and if, within Catholic Action, all apostolic activity was directed and circumscribed, you could either participate in their progressive apostolate or withdraw from the apostolate altogether. It was the implementation of a perfect ecclesiastical “Nazi regime.”

At that time, all this was considered very modern. I was immediately aware of their real goal: the death of the Marian Congregations.<sup>767</sup>

### 4. Immune to Sin: Taking “the Christ” into Morally Suspect Environments

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<sup>764</sup> Report presented by Dr. Plinio to Msgr. Valentini in Rome in 1950.

<sup>765</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>766</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>767</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.



This doctrine was accompanied by another, impinging upon the Church's moral teaching.

The “*constructives*,” for example, ultimately claimed that a Catholic could frequent morally suspect environments, even places of perdition, without danger to his soul, as long as he had received Communion beforehand because that meant that he was carrying “the Christ” (they did not like to talk about “Our Lord Jesus Christ”) within himself.<sup>768</sup> So the Christian should take Communion in the morning, say a little prayer during the day, and go to these morally suspect places at night to “take the Christ” there.<sup>769</sup>

The idea was that a person who received Eucharistic Communion would be “vaccinated” against every temptation and evil prompting.<sup>770</sup> In their view, the laypeople of Catholic Action were so “sacralized,” blessed with such novel graces and were so juxtaposed to the Hierarchy that there was no possibility they would sin.<sup>771</sup>

Consequently, it would be possible, for example, to visit the *Cassino da Urca* (which, at that time, was one of the most frequented locations for immoral purposes in Rio de Janeiro) and not commit a sin but rather an act of virtue.

Why would a person doing so be performing an act of virtue? Because he would be “taking the Christ” to the Casino da Urca, which was full of people who had never received Communion or had not done so for such a long time that the Eucharistic memory had already vanished from those wretched souls.

And that member of Catholic Action who had received Communion early in the day and had, in this way, established a union with “the Christ” could take “the Christ” to those people who, for thirty or forty years, had lived in a state of mortal sin.

What would then take place would be a kind of “contagion.” “The Christ” would be in the young man from Catholic Action but not the young lady with whom he danced. However, the young lady would end up being touched by “the Christ” because she danced with a young man who had received “the Christ” in the morning.<sup>772</sup>

So, to conquer the modern world, they were no longer advised to leave it, as recommended to their members by the former religious associations. On the

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<sup>768</sup> RR 4/16/94.

<sup>769</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>770</sup> RR 4/16/94.

<sup>771</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>772</sup> RR 4/16/94.

contrary, they were now told to enter it, mix with it, pretend not to see what was evil in it and move at will in all environments.<sup>773</sup>

It is not hard to understand that this doctrine would eventually lead many to the edge of the abyss and beyond. Neither was there a lack of those who considered that acts contrary to morality could, in a certain way, be rendered “holy” if committed with “sincerity,” “innocence,” and “simplicity.” This idea of holiness subsistent in immorality manifested itself, for example, in the copious mystical-sensuous literature published in *A Ordem*.<sup>774</sup>

These new ideas – it is essential to pay attention to this point because it is at the heart of the matter – were an attempt to adapt Catholicism to our century's philosophical systems and customs.

It would not be difficult to demonstrate that the irrational pantheistic mysticism of many modern philosophical systems was also at the basis of the ideological movement of the innovators. The moral teachings of our day, which favored the free and unfettered satisfaction of all instincts and passions and despised any discipline that could be exercised upon them by human intelligence and willpower, also profoundly influenced the moral concepts of the innovators.<sup>775</sup>

## 5. Denial of Original Sin and Church Militant. Ecumenism

These concepts involved a virtual denial of original sin. The idea was as follows: “Men, in essence, are not bad. Bad people are bad because good people distrust them. On the day that the good starts trusting the bad, the bad will turn around and become good. With the bad, we must implement the policy of the extended hand. Let all men do what they want, and all will be well.”<sup>776</sup>

In the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*, I pointed out this fundamental error as the starting point of a particular ecumenism, which implies that you convert heretics and schismatics by establishing sweet and loving relationships with them.<sup>777</sup>

Any apostolate should, therefore, be *ecumenical*: discussions should never, ever be polemical; the smile would be the natural vehicle for God's grace.

And if a person, instead of smiling and being kind, were to argue with those in error, that person would reject the “*faithful of Christ*” who want to come “*to the Christ*.”

Therefore, it was essential to never say to anyone, “You are in error. You

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<sup>773</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>774</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>775</sup> Draft of a report to Monsignor Ottaviani (Holy Office) Dr. Plinio offered Bishop Mayer in 1950.

<sup>776</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>777</sup> RR 4/16/94.

are wrong in your thinking.” Or: “What you are doing violates this or that commandment of God’s Law.” No! Smile! Just keep smiling.<sup>778</sup>

Consequently, the attitude of the Church militant had lost its *raison d’être*. The correct attitude of the Church must be *conciliatory*, always open to reconciliation, and ready to ensure that good and honest people will always win the battle without fighting. The result would be that, in the face of so much love, so much love, so much love, human wickedness would not be able to resist.

There was, therefore, no reason to go on fighting. Fighting was the wrong thing to do.<sup>779</sup>

## 6. Extravagant Sacred Art, Erotic-Mystical Literature, Fighting the “Mania” of Morality

One of the things that shocked me about these innovators was the support they gave to the most audacious and extravagant exaggerations of sacred art and extremely dangerous erotic-mystical religious literature.

This seemed to be one of the reasons why they also promoted great freedom of customs in Catholic circles.

They accused the Marian congregants, the Daughters of Mary and other associations of having a self-righteous and somewhat old-fashioned ideal of purity.

They supported greater intimacy between the sexes, joint trips and excursions, and wearing hyper-modern, skimpy swimsuits. They said that sexual questions and problems could and should be discussed not only in private and in a manner ensuring that modesty was preserved but also in courses and lectures to be attended by both sexes and even on the radio and other media.<sup>780</sup> It was, in

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<sup>778</sup> Quick word with Canadians 8/17/93.

<sup>779</sup> RR 4/16/94.

<sup>780</sup> A report by a member of the Marian Federation, forwarded by Dr. Plinio to the Spanish priest José Antonio Laburu Olascoaga, S.J., professor of psychology at the Gregorian University in Rome (probable date 1950), reads: “The sensual, mundane environment also penetrated this Marian Congregation [of the State High School] in other ways. Since its director was, at the same time, the general assistant of Catholic Action, he decided to permit the headquarters of the Marian Congregation to be used for coed courses (to be attended by young people of both sexes) held by the JOC [Catholic Worker Youth]. These courses...are taught by young people from the JEC [Catholic Student Youth]; at the end of each course, a festive gathering with music and singing would be held. One of these songs was a samba...titled ‘Chiquita bacana’ [Chiquita Cool]. The lyrics of this samba are extremely immoral...To sing this samba would discredit any decent person. However, during the party of the JOC, the song featured different lyrics, stating that the very nice Chiquita herself would be attracted to the JOC. Furthermore, the contacts of the Congregation with C.A. [Catholic Action] have been unedifying for the former. During a joint meeting of congregants and JEC members...JEC decided to organize lectures on ‘attractive topics such as sexual matters,’ according to one of their leaders.... If the congregants did not want to attend because they might feel shocked, they had only to stay away.... There was one thing, in particular, that left a very negative impression on the Marian

short, time to stop worrying about morals. The “mania” of morality should disappear. The Church existed, so they said, not to preach morality but to carry out the “apostolate.”<sup>781</sup>

Deep, very deep down, morals ceased to matter. And the very definition of a Catholic changed, too.

In general, when I was a congressman, Catholics were earnestly committed to being serious. They laughed little, presented themselves with gravitas, and said things that mattered and had depth, maturity, and thought.

Not so for these people. The new Catholic should always laugh, joke, and take everything with easygoing naiveté.<sup>782</sup>

In short, Catholic Action did to the apostolate what the Liturgical Movement did to piety. They were two aspects of the same heresy.<sup>783</sup>

## 7. Latent Class Struggle in the “Exclusive Option” for the Working Class

At that time, a movement in Europe, particularly in Belgium, was undergoing extraordinary development; this movement was known as the JOC, Young Catholic Workers.

This movement had been founded by Father Joseph-Léon Cardijn, who, if I am not mistaken, was later made a cardinal during the pontificate of Paul VI.<sup>784</sup>

This movement was extraordinarily well organized. What it did, it did efficiently, thoroughly and with good taste, particularly in its public manifestations, so that many young people found it impressive and exciting.

I remember seeing photographs of the Belgian JOC occupying colossal stadiums, with Catholic working-class families in the stands and young people parading and performing various exercises. I was enthusiastic at the sight of these parades.

The first “pioneers” of progressivism in São Paulo claimed that workers’ movements were the only things worth promoting today because the upper classes had lost all their prestige. The existence of these upper classes, they said, was a kind of carbuncle on the body politic, more or less like the hump of a zebu ox within the social order, and it was necessary to do away with these classes. In

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congregants: A girl who had participated in the retreat lit her cigarette on the lamp burning in the chapel before the tabernacle.”

<sup>781</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>782</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>783</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>784</sup> Joseph-Léon Cardinal Cardijn (1882-1967) was director of Brussels Social Works, chaplain of the Christian Unions and coordinator of the Catholic Workers Youth. He founded Belgian Catholic Action in 1920, participated in the Second Vatican Council and received the cardinal’s hat from Paul VI on February 22, 1965.

other words, it was a clear manifestation of the spirit of class struggle toward which this movement tended.

I am an enthusiast of the Belgian JOC, its movements, and the impressive number of young people it recruited, both in the male and female JOCs, but I categorically opposed it.<sup>785</sup>

I maintained that guiding the popular classes toward the good was easy as long as the upper classes took the right direction concerning the Faith in Catholic doctrine.<sup>786</sup>

## 8. Bottom Line: Another “church” Established Inside the Church

All this said, the balance of this whole movement was:

— We were in the presence of a new, optimistic, cheerful, permissive, and self-satisfied religion, which started from the idea that by having complete freedom, man behaves well.

— Like the blade of a sword hidden inside a sheath, they also wanted to hide the blade of an anti-Catholic religion within the sheath of the true Catholic Religion; it was another “church” introduced within the Church.

— Preached within the Church was a revolution equivalent to the French Revolution within the State; the same thing. What we were witnessing was, therefore, the beginnings of a French Revolution inside the Church.

— All this was obvious even before the Revolution of May 1968, when the ideal of the Sorbonne, the motto of which was “It is forbidden to forbid,” was implemented in the Catholic Church.

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<sup>785</sup> Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira’s diagnosis of the tendency to promote class struggle in the JOC was impressively vindicated. The Belgian JOC, after steeping itself in the Marxist spirit, in 2014 went so far as to give up the name Catholic or Christian. The April 14, 2014 issue of the French newsletter *La Vie*, belonging to the Parisian *Le Monde* newspaper group, published the following report:

“After debates and votes, the National Council of the Belgian JOC has concluded that it no longer makes sense to call themselves ‘Young Christian Workers,’ but ‘Combative Organized Youths’ (*Jeunes organisés combattifs*). ... a few months ago, the movement chose for itself a new name, more in line with its current struggles.

“‘An important challenge was to define ourselves not by what we are not, but by what we are,’ the movement’s magazine reports. ‘It had become clear that many young people did not see themselves reflected in the words **Christian** and worker.’

“The movement’s qualification as ‘Christian’ was also seen as an obstacle to the inclusion of people of other faiths:

“‘Two years ago, the young JOC members decided to indulge in a long process of reflection on the identity of the JOC,’ a press release of the movement explained. Now, ‘JOC members seek to organize all those who rebelled and want to combat all forms of oppression caused notably by the capitalist system.’”

<sup>786</sup> SD 10/14/94.

## Chapter V

# Methods of Disseminating and Expanding This Doctrine and Movement: Its Conspiratorial Character

### 1. Conspiracy on the Sly. Combatting Devotion to Our Lady

They did not state this doctrine with such clarity. It was all “conspired.”<sup>787</sup>

In their writings, they rarely revealed their ideas openly and unequivocally. They did not mention the truths that they wanted to destroy but presented an implicitly mutilated and deformed image of Catholicism. They also increasingly adopted an ambiguous language that could be interpreted either way, in its erroneous and proper sense.

In this way, they tried to fight and discredit devotion to Our Lady by talking about it as little as possible; in other words, hardly ever. In their devotional books, they ignored the existence of Mary Most Holy, implying to the unaware and unsuspecting reader that devotion to Our Lady was superfluous and of little value.<sup>788</sup>

They also praised bishops so much that they gave the faithful a distorted view of the Church's organization, creating the impression that the bishop was almost everything and the pope almost nothing.<sup>789</sup>

They did not impart this doctrine in clear and unequivocal statements but through confused messages that gradually but surely shaped people's minds.

I noticed another example of this confusion in the Liturgical Movement: they recited the Office correctly, with much refining; everything was quite right and could only impress people well. However, they introduced errors when

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<sup>787</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>788</sup> On May 13, 1943, Father Arlindo Vieira, then in Belo Horizonte, wrote Dr. Plinio, “Things here are not going well at all. The confusion reigning in people's minds is almost inconceivable. Simple and truly pious souls are scandalized. The so-called ‘priestesses’ are annoyingly impertinent. A short while ago, one of them started a study circle at Immaculate College, claiming that a great evil was reigning there that was canceling out all the efforts of Catholic Action (!); this great evil is that the students put an exaggerated devotion to Mary at the center of their spiritual life...the Mother Superior got up to speak and highlighted the immense benefits that devotion to Our Lady brings to our souls. The girls burst into applause, and the heretical adviser stormed out. We are facing a dangerous heresy whose consequences are unpredictable.”

<sup>789</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J., 4/30/48.

explaining the meaning and purpose of a particular prayer: the old forms of piety should be replaced; people should no longer recite the Rosary or the Way of the Cross; there should no longer be Communion outside of Mass. Everyone was told to participate in the Mass with the priest and stop thinking about the old forms of piety.

People were told: “The layman participates in Holy Mass with the priest.” But what does “participate” mean? It was never clearly explained. What was implied, though, was that it was something very new and significant.

When they noticed someone offering resistance, they would sabotage that person. They promoted only those who were prepared to accept and promote their doctrine and gave seats of honor only to those who were willing to do so.<sup>790</sup>

And so, on the sly, in the dark, a kind of conspiracy was taking hold of the Catholic environment – a “Catholicism” that was not Catholicism because there cannot be two kinds of Catholicism. There is only one Religion: Roman Catholic and Apostolic, and any attempt to adapt Catholicism to a so-called “new” mentality is a deformation of Catholicism. It was, therefore, something that could not be accepted.<sup>791</sup>

## 2. Seemingly Disjointed Nuclei

However, the proceedings of these people in their secret meetings were altogether different. In their small study circles and lectures, in person-to-person contacts, they were much more straightforward and open about their aims; a veritable process of initiation would start when they noticed that their hearers were reacting favorably to their message, they would increase their confidences gradually until the point where the direct “apostolate” of their boldest doctrines could start.

So liturgists proceeded cautiously, using spoken words that would be carried away by the wind more than writings that could remain to bear witness. If anyone dared to report their maneuvering, they would immediately claim to be victims of slander.

Therefore, it was one of the most challenging tasks to prove that someone was an adherent of liturgism. I kept a hefty archive of letters and newspaper articles, which allowed me, with some effort, to prove the things that I described in the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*. However, not many could provide such proof without equal effort and documentation.<sup>792</sup>

I have already mentioned that small groups went to Europe to receive training from European movements contaminated by this mentality. After

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<sup>790</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>791</sup> Quick word with Canadians 8/17/93.

<sup>792</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J., 4/30/48.

returning to Brazil, they would spread these errors. People also came from Europe with the open intention of introducing this mentality into Brazilian Catholic circles.

Although these nuclei were linked, those links were not apparent.

The majority of Catholics did not realize this networking and went along with these things because these nuclei were composed of people who went to Communion daily, appeared very religious, very Catholic, but who sabotaged, in every possible way, all that was tried and tested, traditional and sound, and worked hard to disseminate the new doctrine without appearing to do so.<sup>793</sup>

They generally sought to highlight legitimate aspects of Catholic doctrine that they presented exaggeratedly.<sup>794</sup> All in all, it was a well-hidden conspiracy.<sup>795</sup>

### **3. Some Bishops Realize What Was Going on and Close the Gates**

Was there a reaction?

The errors encountered no reaction in the prominent dioceses: Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, and others. There, the liturgists assumed leadership positions, used these to exert influence, and neutralized those who defended traditional doctrine. This enabled them to realize their plans without anyone putting significant obstacles in their way.

They were also successful in some smaller centers, such as Guaxupé. The Bishop, Dom Hugo Bressane de Araújo, was instructed to remove all statues from the parish church at Poços de Caldas, which was under his jurisdiction. That was after the publication of the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, which condemned this practice.

The liturgist campaign continued unchecked in Uberaba, Campinas, Juiz de Fora and other cities.

Many of our bishops realized the problem and defended themselves against it by closing their dioceses to the agents of dissolution. Among these were the bishops of Piracicaba, Ribeirão Preto, Bragança Paulista, Curitiba, Jacarezinho, Valença, Mariana and others.

But these bishops were aware that Catholic Action was governed, at its highest levels, by an ideology rooted deeply in error and that they would find themselves, sooner or later, unable to prevent this ideology from spreading from the national and archdiocesan councils to their dioceses. They judged it better not to fight the evil head-on but only to oppose it by abstaining and beating a prudent retreat.

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<sup>793</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>794</sup> Quick word with Canadians 8/17/93.

<sup>795</sup> SD 6/25/88.



In this way, the evil was kept away temporarily from certain dioceses. But these attempts at resistance were individual efforts, all subsequently shattered. There was never any official reaction.<sup>722</sup>

To move the weakest, the most shortsighted, as well as the inert majority to take action, it would have been necessary to make people understand that they were in the presence of a vast system of ideas, creating a whole new mindset and that the penetration of this system of ideas in Catholic circles was not only happening in Brazil but in almost all Catholic countries; that, ultimately, it was a subtle and for this very reason doubly dangerous attempt by a secular mentality to snatch souls from the fold of the Church; and that the very subtlety of the danger turned it into a threat not only for those already prone to evil but even for those souls who sincerely desired to be good.<sup>796</sup>

To tackle this task, the bishops' open and general cooperation would have been necessary. Without such collaboration, no complete and adequate work could have been done.<sup>797</sup>

Unfortunately, what we saw was quite the opposite. The destruction of healthy resistance would not have been possible if—this is the primary point—the innovative powers had lacked the support of ecclesiastical authorities in the centers I have just mentioned and various others that were important, though not as central.

I am not judging intentions but merely pointing out verifiable facts. These facts show that, invariably, those centers' authorities did everything to honor the innovators and discredit and destroy any healthy reaction. All impulses from the leading centers, which spread to the entire periphery, pointed in this direction.<sup>798</sup>

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<sup>796</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J., 4/30/48.

<sup>797</sup> Draft report Dr. Plinio offered Bishop Mayer to be delivered to Most Rev. Ottaviani at the Holy Office, 1950.

<sup>798</sup> Memorandum from Bishop Mayer to Father Leiber, probably of 1949.

## Chapter VI

# A Vacuum Is Created Around Dr. Plinio and *Legionário*

### 1. Scathing Criticism to Undermine Dr. Plinio's Influence

Then, I began to notice a vacuum being created around me in Catholic circles.<sup>799</sup> Suddenly, some of those whom I had believed to be good Catholics started to question my actions and indulge in specific criticisms in my presence that seemed to indicate the existence of an agenda intended to marginalize me. And I did not know why.

One example of this type of criticism – and a very characteristic – was the following.<sup>800</sup>

In my history classes at *Sedes Sapientiae* College, I always endeavored to explain my points clearly, and the students in my class always found my lessons clear.

One day, Mlle. De Loneux, the nun who would not admit to being a nun but belonged to a half-secret religious order, told the school's director: "I would like to attend a class of Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira."

The director told me that a fellow Belgian had heard much about my classes and wanted to attend one.<sup>801</sup> Would I agree?

I said, "Yes, certainly. I will see they put a comfortable chair for her in the classroom; I am pleased to have her listen to my class."<sup>802</sup>

So she came and sat in the back row, watching me teach the class.<sup>803</sup>

After the class, it would have been expected that she would come and say a few words, at least to thank me for allowing her to attend. However, she disappeared.<sup>804</sup>

Days later, the school director said, "You have no idea how impressed Mademoiselle de Loneux was by your class."<sup>731</sup> She has been praising you to the

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<sup>799</sup> Dinner EANS 11/23/90.

<sup>800</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

<sup>801</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>802</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

<sup>803</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>804</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

skies.”<sup>805</sup>

I found it odd that she had not made these laudatory comments directly to me but was conveying them to me via another. And I thought, “There is something fishy about this.”

“Ah, yes? What did she say?”

“She said that your explanations, as a teacher, are so obvious that she thinks you are wasted as a university professor and had better teach in a school for the mentally retarded, because with somebody able to give explanations as clear as the ones you give, even the retarded could not fail to understand you.”<sup>806</sup>

It was a snakebite, although it initially sounded like a great compliment.<sup>807</sup>

However, it was a way to demean a teacher, not for a defect but a quality. This quality was significant enough to make it worth degrading.<sup>808</sup>

This is what the sabotage method was all about: under the guise of kindness,<sup>809</sup> advise them to send me among imbeciles to prevent me from carrying out, by my influence, any apostolate.<sup>736</sup>

## 2. “Warnings” about the End of the Marian Congregations

Another case that I remember, just before Catholic Action appeared, involved a good lady whom I respected very much and even liked. She was unrelated to me and was from an excellent São Paulo family. She was also very Catholic but had fallen under the influence of certain priests.

Once, she said:

“Plinio, are you happy to be only a Marian congregant? Would you not want something more?”

“If there were something better, I would. But what could that be?”

“It will come, you’ll see. He will bring something new when he returns from his trip to Europe. It will be just the thing for you. The Marian Congregations have served their turn; they’ve become obsolete!

“They’re made obsolete by what?”

“You’ll see.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

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<sup>805</sup> SD 6/25/88.

<sup>806</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

<sup>807</sup> Quick word with Canadians 8/17/93.

<sup>808</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

<sup>809</sup> SD 6/25/88.

Sometime later, when the Marian Congregations were at their apogee, Msgr. Gastão Liberal Pinto, who was very close to me and had played an enormous role in my candidacy for congressman, told me:

“So, Mr. Marian congregant, how are you?”

“Very well, thank you, and you, how are you?”

“Fine, fine, thanks. Ah! The Marian Congregation has served its turn, eh! It is over.”

“Why should it be over, Monsignor?”

“There has to be something else. It cannot stay a Marian Congregation forever. The same thing over and over again – a Marian Congregation!

I almost asked him: “The same thing repeatedly... and you are still a priest? For me, once baptized, I remain baptized forever. What are you trying to say?”

But I said nothing. I kept quiet, trying to understand what he was telling me.

I wondered: through what channels am I receiving these warnings? Where are they coming from? What is this watchword about? “*Écoutons, parlons bas, marchons à petits pas, ne faisons point de bruit*” – “Let us listen, lower our voices, walk slowly, make no noise.” What is to come out of all this?<sup>810</sup>

### 3. An Ultimatum for the *Legionário* Group

At one point, I noticed that the *constructives* influenced a young man from our group.

He was one of the youngest in our group. He was reasonably intelligent and good with people, but he was always willing to agree with whomever he perceived as being on top. Hence, I was never quite convinced that he really believed in what we stood for.

One day, the girls of Catholic Action decided to hold a conference in the same building on Immaculate Conception St. that housed the Marian Congregation of Santa Cecilia headquarters.

Downstairs were the *Legionário's* offices, the Marian Congregation's organ. The Marian Congregation's rooms were on the second floor. The upper part of the house, the third floor, was occupied by a large hall for lectures, theater performances, and other activities.

While the girls were holding their congress upstairs,<sup>811</sup> I was downstairs, working with those preparing the next issue of the *Legionário*,<sup>812</sup> a team consisting mainly of young men who would later become the founders of

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<sup>810</sup> 11/23/85.

<sup>811</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>812</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

*Catolicismo* magazine and, finally, of the TFP.

They were seated at their tables in the newsroom, working on the news using materials provided to them.

While an atmosphere of concentrated work and religious silence reigned in the *Legionário* office, all I could hear from above, where the progressivist meeting was taking place, was a lot of noise and loud and frequent applause.<sup>813</sup>

I found this rather strange because that is the kind of frenzied applause and laughter usually heard when people laugh at immoral jokes—that is what it sounded like upstairs.

After the party, I saw everyone who had attended the meeting on the third floor walking down the stairs. Finally, the editor of the *Legionário* (who later became a politician) also appeared. He had left his work in the newsroom that day to attend the event upstairs, organized by the *constructives*.

He came into my office and stood before me with the attitude of someone rubbing his hands.

Looking at me in a rather condescending manner, he said:<sup>814</sup>

“Plinio, note the difference between the two floors. You down here, with the young people of the *Legionário*, represent the old, serious Church, praying, working, and fighting against the opponent. Above is the new Church, laughing, dancing, having fun, going to the beach, swimming pool, everywhere, bringing Christ with them. And I want to warn you that there are plans to bring about fundamental changes in the Church. If you join the new Church, we will have much political power; not even the highest positions would be out of your reach. But if you continue as you are now, you will be alone and completely crushed, and you will have no future.”<sup>815</sup>

“You will be swept away, and your career as a public man will also be over.”<sup>816</sup> You will be relegated to the margins unless you change your methods and the doctrines behind your actions. Catholic Action has been taken over by a new force that is no longer compatible with the methods of the *Legionário*. And the *Legionário* will be liquidated,<sup>817</sup> completely marginalized by the hierarchy. And we will pass ahead of you.”<sup>818</sup>

That was a warning message coming from some higher-up.<sup>819</sup>

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<sup>813</sup> Sup 8/5/90.

<sup>814</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>815</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

<sup>816</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>817</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>818</sup> Quick word with Canadians 8/17/93.

<sup>819</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

#### 4. The Conversation Provides Important Information

I told him:

“Look here, so-and-so, I don’t choose my convictions for political reasons. You can explain to me what this new mentality consists of so that I can analyze it and follow it if I agree or reject it if I don’t: do not expect me to change my position because of all this commotion.”

He looked a bit embarrassed but replied:

“You are deliberately refusing to open your mind. We bring Christ with us, even to immoral dance halls. You would not go to such a place. If they tied you up and forced you to go there, you’d be criticizing them, you’d be angry, and you would show it. And as soon as they untied you, you would leave. Do you know what we do? We dance! Don’t be shocked or irritated: we dance. Because we go there without prejudice, with a cheerful spirit, and take Christ in. Result: Christ enters that place and produces conversions.”

I said:

“True, but it isn’t Christ who enters these places; Satan enters your souls. In such places, any man of normal inclinations faces temptation; you cannot be exempt. Or were you conceived without original sin? If so, and if you can prove it, I will pay homage; I will sit at your feet and admire you, but first, I want some proof.”

“No. That’s not the way things are. If you go there looking for evil, you will find it. If you think about it all the time, it is evident that you will let evil in. But if you go there with the idea of not seeing evil, it will not assail you. Just don’t look for evil!

I: “It would assail me! It seems that you – apparently like everyone else on the top floor of this building – are much more virtuous than I am. Everyone on the third floor appears to be immune to evil. Down here, we’re not. The result: we fight, and you don’t.”<sup>820</sup>

I realized he was repeating what he had heard at one of those private meetings. It was an excellent opportunity for me to learn what they said there.

He then told me:

“The question is this: here, at the *Legionário*, you represent an old type of Catholic. You are always fighting. You think that Catholic doctrine must be spread out in full view of everyone. You believe polemics are a good way to explain and strengthen principles. You think that when people are not well

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<sup>820</sup> Dinner EANS 6/19/82.

versed in doctrine and customs, you must tell them so to their faces. You believe that boys and girls should always be serious, live thinking of higher things, and employ noble and beautiful language. That kind of thing is over! We are living in a new era, in a world of equality, in the world of Catholic Action. Catholic Action aims to make the Church fight for social revolution. We must abolish the differences between social classes, end every inequality, and eliminate all that grim seriousness. We live in a time of joy, of insouciance; we must think of Christ's joy. The passion of Christ is over.”

I said:

“Ah! I see. I see.”<sup>821</sup>

“Everyone is afraid of you, with your certainties, authoritarianism, and way of arguing that leaves people with their backs against the wall. We are not living in these times anymore.”

I interrupted him:

“Excuse me, what times are we living in again?”

The talk about “dialogue” had not started yet, but the mentality of super-ecumenical dialogue had already entered into the poison fang of the viper.

He said:

“We are no longer living when a man of aristocratic appearance, looking like a professor of everything and everyone, can just lay down the law, and once he has solved a problem, no one else needs to say anything more about it. Now is the time of study circles, where no one is master of anyone else as we search for the right path. We have come to a time when we all sit down together, each giving a friendly opinion without ulterior motives, just as collaborators among other collaborators, without telling anyone they are wrong. We are no longer putting so much weight on this distinction between truth and error, good and evil, orthodoxy and heterodoxy. No! We must walk together, seeking the truth, hand in hand, in charity.”

I thought, “Here is the spirit of the French Revolution; here is the viper I have dedicated my life to fighting. I have hammered this viper in every possible way outside Catholic circles, and now I have to see that it has changed its tactics and is coming in through the ground beneath our feet.”

I asked him:

“But have I ever mistreated anyone for them to be so afraid of me?”

“No, but you scare them with your anachronistic views.”

“Whom do I scare?”

“Me and everyone else.”

“But, curiously, here the room is full of people who are unafraid of me.”

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<sup>821</sup> SD 6/16/73.

“Yes, but it’s because you do not know; you need to see the vacuum created around you. You are very affirmative. Today, this is not acceptable anymore. We live in an age of freedom of opinion, of opinions that we try to reconcile, not opinions presented in this way.”

I thought, “Ah! Here is another aspect.” And I let him go on to see what else he would reveal.

“There must be a female collaboration; nowadays, the sexes are equal; we must all collaborate as equals.”<sup>822</sup>

## 5. “I’d Rather Suffer Any Fate than Sell Out”

I replied:

“You’re ultimately trying to buy me. I see a comrade in arms asking me to drop the fight and fraternize with the enemy to be rewarded handsomely by all kinds of promotions. And I am told I’ll be out on my ear if I do not go along.”

Then I got up and spoke politely but firmly:<sup>823</sup>

“Now listen to me, so-and-so. For me, any fate would be preferable to selling my soul. If it should be my fate to be the last man standing, I will be the last of the soldiers of the traditional Church. But the traditional Church will never die. Talking about being the last of the soldiers is just a figure of speech: after me, there will come others who think like me and who will carry on the fight.<sup>824</sup> The Catholic Church will never change, nor will she ever sell out. She will never adopt false modernity contrary to her most fundamental principles to exist comfortably. She does not exist to adapt herself to the world but to reform the world according to her principles. Anyone who fails to understand this is not thinking according to her teaching. And I would infinitely prefer to be blotted out, barred, pushed aside, ignored, maligned, forgotten; I choose all that to abandon my allegiance to the true image of the Catholic Church, the image I was taught when I learned my catechism at my mother’s knee.”<sup>825</sup>

“Well, you’ve been warned. Just don’t complain later.”

“I would only complain if I knew God had abandoned me in the fight. But that will never happen because I have confidence in Him and trust in Our Lady. And they never abandon us, so this will not happen. I may be defeated, but others will come after me, and they will prevail. I will not abandon my position.”<sup>826</sup>

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<sup>822</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>823</sup> Quick word with Canadians 8/17/93.

<sup>824</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.

<sup>825</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>826</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/28/95.



Thus, as long as Our Lady was served, the pre-TFP showed itself in this total sacrifice and renunciation project.

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The youth who had spoken to me left the ranks of *Legionário*, joined the progressivist movement, and gave himself up to that atmosphere of joyful excitement that reigned on the top floor. It symbolized a state of mind, a way of looking at the world that would reach its peak sometime later.

This young man had an extremely successful career as a politician, reaching the highest positions in Brazilian political life. He helped to lead Brazil into the sad situation in which it is now, a situation of pre-Communism, two steps away from full-blown Communism.

And we, fighting in the opposite trench, helped many Brazilians to place themselves in a much brighter situation: a minority, yes, but a minority that has given proof of strength, has said *no* loudly and clearly, has made itself known throughout Brazil; there is no place in Brazil where they don't know of the existence of the TFP.

But everything that poor young man had warned me of what came to pass. We were relegated to the sidelines, excluded from the mainstream they tried to cast us out into the shadows.<sup>827</sup>

## 6. What Was Behind It All?

The conversation with the young man left me intrigued.<sup>828</sup>

It seemed that he had been instructed to challenge me, to see if he could get me to commit some imprudence they could use in a smear campaign against the school of thought we represented.<sup>829</sup>

I thought to myself, "This young man (it was 1939; he was about 23, and I was 30 or 31 years old) and those girls must have known that they could rely on support from above when they started this fight. Who is it, at the top, who supports them?"<sup>830</sup>

So I decided the following: "Instead of fighting, I'll listen to find out what is going on inside their heads; I will do my best to ensure that, despite their alleged fear of me, they reveal their ulterior thoughts to me; when I have found out, I will be able to take the steps that the circumstances may require.

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<sup>827</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>828</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>829</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>830</sup> SD 6/16/73.

So, lots of small talk, pleasantries, smiles.<sup>831</sup>

## 7. Invitation to a Catholic Action Meeting

One day, my parish priest, Father Luiz Gonzaga de Almeida, told me:<sup>832</sup>

“Plinio, there will be a meeting of Catholic Action here, an extraordinary thing. Wouldn’t you like to attend?”

“I’ll be there.”

If I remember correctly, Dr. Paulo Barros de Ulhôa Cintra came to that meeting with me. It was held in a house rented by the parish on Santa Cecilia Square.<sup>833</sup>

On arrival, I found a table with a bright green pitcher standing on it, creating an agreeable play of colors. The table was filled with flowers—calla lilies if I remember correctly. Those flowers seemed to smile.<sup>834</sup>

Three ladies of good families, in their early thirties but dressed like young girls in floral frocks, were present there.

“So, there will be a meeting here?”

“Yes, but not in the boardroom; we do not have meetings. We have study circles. The times when one spoke and others listened are over (the era of collegiality was already beginning). This is no longer accepted or tolerated in Europe or the United States. And here in Brazil, it will change, too.”

They formed a circle and said: “Instead of having a person who knows the doctrine and can justify it by arguments, with everyone else just listening, we will each give a fragment of the truth. And then, from fragment to fragment, we will create a complete truth, without controversy, just through a discussion among friends.”<sup>835</sup>

I placed myself among the audience assisting at this spectacle. The three girls sat down and began a dialogue, the exact terms of which I do not remember but which went more or less like this:

“So-and-so, what do you think is the definition of Catholic Action? Is it participation or collaboration in the ministry of the Church?”

And the other, the mandatory smile firmly plastered on her face, responding in a sweet tone:

“Ah! So-and-so, you know this is a difficult question to answer?”

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<sup>831</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>832</sup> Father Luiz Gonzaga de Almeida was then pastor at St. Cecilia’s Church in São Paulo. Appointed on January 27, 1936, he left the parish in September 1946.

<sup>833</sup> RR 11/23/85.

<sup>834</sup> Dispatch Italy 7/24/95.

<sup>835</sup> RR 11/23/85.

“It is hard, yes. But if we love each other and discuss it with love, we shall arrive at a definition.”

“You're right. Love solves everything!...”

I could hardly believe my ears. The idea of finding a definition through love instead of logic completely contradicted everything I had ever known or believed and was utterly unheard of. But I kept quiet, trying to look politely attentive.<sup>836</sup>

As time went on, it became increasingly difficult to disguise my amazement. My only preoccupation was keeping them from realizing what I was thinking.<sup>837</sup>

The basic idea was that, by being friends with everyone, it would be possible to find a way to touch all human beings, who would then change their way of thinking so that excluding reason from the discussion would make *ecumenism* feasible.

It was a philosophical school but a completely misguided one.<sup>838</sup>

A new form of government was entering the Church. It was a new Church. At night, their soulmates in Rio de Janeiro went to the Casino da Urca to dance and take “Christ to the Casino.” They participated in Dom Martinho Michler’s *liturgist* Mass with Communion in the hand and all things already the precursors of today’s modernized liturgy with all its errors. Everyone was “friends” with everyone else and was part of the same conspiratorial group.<sup>839</sup>

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<sup>836</sup> Dispatch Italy 7/24/95.

<sup>837</sup> RR 11/23/85.

<sup>838</sup> Dispatch Italy 7/24/95.

<sup>839</sup> RR 11/23/85.

## Chapter VII

# The Role of Archbishop José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva in the Scheme of Things

### 1. The Archbishop's Profile

I have already mentioned this, but it is worth repeating: In 1935, Father José Gaspar, then spiritual director of the Federation of the Daughters of Mary in São Paulo, wrote a foreword to that Federation's yearbook enthusiastically advocating Catholic Action.<sup>840</sup> He intended to close the Marian Congregations and turn them into Catholic Action.<sup>841</sup>

But the archbishop was still the old Dom Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, who kept a firm rein throughout his long episcopal government. Since he was old and suffering from a heart condition, the Holy See had appointed an Auxiliary Bishop for him, the young priest Father José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva. And the latter gave Catholic Action his full support.<sup>842</sup>

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Dom José Gaspar was from Araxá, State of Minas Gerais.<sup>843</sup> He was a person worth meeting.

He was the opposite of the old archbishop of granite, Dom Duarte Leopoldo.<sup>844</sup> Although his photos could give a better idea of his personality, he had a very agreeable presence.

He was a tall man, still young (thirty-four at the time, he was appointed auxiliary bishop) and had a curious contradiction: despite a dark complexion, he looked red at the same time.<sup>845</sup> His black eyebrows were a bit thick and ended at some undefined point. His eyes were black, somewhat velvety<sup>846</sup> and attractive, making his

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<sup>840</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (III) 8/8/54.

<sup>841</sup> SD 8/6/88.

<sup>842</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>843</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana, 6/21/90.

<sup>844</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>845</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>846</sup> SD 6/16/73.

interlocutor feel like agreeing with him.<sup>847</sup> He looked like a dreamer,<sup>848</sup> and his voice was soft and rather unctuous, like this:<sup>849</sup>

“Gooood moorning Dr. Plinio, how are you doing? Fine? How are your good parents? Are they doing well?”

“Well, and how is Your Excellency, Most Reverend Bishop?”

“Oh! I’m fine, thank you, thank you!”

He was a person at the same time extremely diplomatic, talkative, appealing,<sup>850</sup> very friendly and kind but also very headstrong. What he wanted, he had to have.

He was also a good speaker,<sup>851</sup> with average intelligence and airs of a very cultured person. To anything people said in his presence, he would listen attentively, with an air of complete comprehension, say nothing and then sabotage them or not, depending on the case. But his acts of sabotage were always smooth, soft, usually accompanied by a sigh.

From a certain point of view, he was the antithesis of my way of being.

Those who have seen my photograph as a youth can imagine what the meeting of the two men was like: one was straightforward and categorical, with a firm voice, saying things as they were; the other was soft, gentle, kind, and attractive.<sup>852</sup>

His whole temperament, thinking, and doctrines were utterly different from how I understood things should be in the Church.<sup>853</sup>

I always maintained the most cordial relations in my dealings with him. And ever since I met him, when he was a simple priest, I had a sense of lively and natural sympathy for him. But he undeniably was a person in whom contradiction was a habit, thoughtlessness a system, and naïveté a second nature. In his way of conceiving humanity and dealing with people, he entirely abstracted from the effects of original sin in man.

## **2. Dom José Gaspar Showed That He Trusted the Church’s Adversaries**

Whenever he faced an adversary of the Church, his constant and uniform tactic was to disarm him with many manifestations of affection and tenderness and, more seriously still, to give him compelling and convincing proof of confidence. Thus, he was not afraid of confiding extremely delicate issues to the hands of declared adversaries of Catholicism. That was, for him, the way of “winning” souls.

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A banker in São Paulo was known for his rather less-than-edifying lifestyle. But the archbishop wanted to “conquer” that soul by “his” methods.

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<sup>847</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>848</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>849</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>850</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>851</sup> SD 8/6/88.

<sup>852</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>853</sup> SD 8/6/88.

For this purpose, as soon as he was appointed archbishop, he had his secretary, Father Rolim Loureiro, take that man a rough draft of his Pastoral greeting, asking for suggestions regarding social issues.<sup>854</sup> A great industrialist, the banker canceled a whole section of the text, claiming its tone could favor Communist propaganda. The archbishop complained to Father Rolim Loureiro but did not publish the condemned passage.

That banker was the only layman consulted regarding the Pastoral. Canon Loureiro told me all this.<sup>855</sup>

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One night, while we were preparing the material for the *Legionário*, someone came to inform us that the car of the auxiliary Bishop (Dom José), who had come to visit us, was at the building's entrance.

I was surprised but immediately went down to receive him. He came into our newsroom, bringing a massive cake that someone had given him as a present for the editorial staff. He also brought a picture of Our Lady Aparecida. I gave the cake to our young staffers and sat down to talk with him.

After some time, they revealed the purpose of the visit: Dom José had talked to a Benedictine priest who had arrived from Germany and explained to him that people here in Brazil did not understand the Nazi problem well. In fact, according to that priest, the *Anschluss*<sup>856</sup> had been a good thing for Austria, and the Austrian Bishops had not been able to see the urgent need for the takeover of that country by the Nazis.

However, the *Anschluss* caused anger and indignation worldwide. We, the *Legionário*, published innumerable articles based on the premise that the only solution to the German problem was the restoration of the Habsburg dynasty, the defeat of the Hohenzollerns and the abolition of the Weimar Republic and national socialism in all its manifestations. This was the position *Legionário* held and staunchly defended.

Dom José added that the only man who had understood the situation, the great man who could save Austria, was Cardinal Theodor Innitzer, Archbishop of Vienna from 1932 to 1955.

Because of this, he had come to ask a favor from the *Legionário*: that we suspend all attacks on the Nazis. These attacks, after all, could only hurt the German colony and cause confusion because it was clear that we were wrong since this Benedictine priest had said the opposite.

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<sup>854</sup> Father Paulo Rolim Loureiro (1908-1975) was ordained on August 15, 1934. He was later made a canon and consecrated bishop on May 22, 1948; appointed Auxiliary Bishop of São Paulo and later Bishop of Mogi das Cruzes. He died in a car accident on August 2, 1975.

<sup>855</sup> Notes by Dr. Plinio on Archbishop José Gaspar when still living, undated.

<sup>856</sup> Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938 is known as *Anschluß* or *Anschluss*, a German word which means connection or annexation.

Out of respect for him, I did not return the answer that sprang to my lips: what a Benedictine who has been to Germany tells us does not automatically invalidate all arguments of a historical and doctrinal character, nor does it cancel out factual evidence.

So I said:

“It is very easy to stop attacking the Nazis. Your Excellency need only command. What I cannot do is write an article praising the annexation of Austria because that goes against all my convictions.”

Some days later, *L'Osservatore Romano* published an article criticizing the annexation of Austria and holding more or less the same position as the *Legionário*.

I showed him the article in the *Osservatore*, and he said:

“Ah! Well, in that case, forget about it.”

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Another fact that immediately caught my attention was the change of direction he imposed on the archdiocese's government.

Until the death of Dom Duarte, as long as Dom José Gaspar was still an auxiliary bishop, whenever there was an important issue linked to Catholic interests, our group would be called to give an opinion. It was the Archdiocesan Chancery's rule to avoid discussing such matters with suspect Catholics, liberals and people whose allegiance was unclear. They remained on the margins.<sup>857</sup>

When he became archbishop, Dom José Gaspar took, as the motto of his coat of arms, *Ut omnes unum sint* – That all may be one.

It is a most beautiful wish expressed by our Lord in the Gospel that all should unite around Him – in other words, that all should become Catholics.

But Dom José interpreted this motto in today's ecumenical sense: Catholics should mingle with all others and no longer distance themselves from them.<sup>858</sup>

Imbued with this mentality, his reasoning behind choosing persons to appoint to positions of trust in Catholic institutions was always this: for such an undertaking and function, we will not name a Catholic leader; they can stay in the shadows because they are faithful servants on whom the Church can count at any time, anyway. We will appoint someone who is a lost sheep and give them a high position and great responsibility.

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I will tell one story that illustrates this approach very well.

In 1936, while he was still the auxiliary bishop, he decided to set up a

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<sup>857</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IV) 8/9/54.

<sup>858</sup> SD 7/2/88.

Catholic radio station.

Since he had no money to set up a new one, he purchased an existing radio station run by a man without ties to the Church.

One day, he asked me to review the sales contract and give him my opinion as a lawyer. This contract provided the following: he would pay down an amount “x” obtained from donations as an advance payment. The remainder of the purchase price was to be paid in monthly installments of forty *contos*<sup>859</sup> each, which the Chancery would raise as donations from the faithful. To save money and avoid having to pay people to organize the collections, the owner of the radio station would take responsibility for raising these monthly installments. And when all was paid off, station ownership would pass to the Chancery.

He asked me:

“As a lawyer, Dr. Plinio, what do you think of this contract?”

“Your Excellency, will there be any accounts kept of the donations received to verify the claims of the radio station? Without such supervision, this man might receive considerably more than the monthly installment owed and still claim that he had received less.”

“There is no such control. Do you think it necessary?”

“As a lawyer, I would advise you to arrange such supervision. But if Your Excellency trusts the man and has reason to act as a lawyer would not act, this is a personal decision about which I cannot give an opinion.

“I’ll tell you a secret: Father so-and-so has told me that man is on the point of conversion due to these transactions with me. And that he even intends to donate the radio station to the archdiocesan Chancery long before the full payment has been made.”

When I heard this, I realized it would be useless to say anything more. So I kept my mouth shut. Over time, the radio began to receive donations and announced that the amounts received were much lower than expected. The whole thing led to a controversy in the newspapers, and Dom José Gaspar was deeply hurt and disappointed with the business.

Soon after, the bankers to whom he owed fifteen contos began to press him brutally to pay the debt. He told me this himself. I don’t know how he managed to pay these debts, but the adventure of the Catholic radio station was over.

This is a good example of how he saw the problem of relations with persons unfriendly to the Church. He was a man who saw black in all that we saw as white and white in all that we perceived as black.

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<sup>859</sup> *Conto de réis* – monetary value equivalent to one million *réis* until the 1942 reform, which replaced the *réis* with the *cruzeiro* as the country’s currency unit.



### 3. Open Hostility against Marian Congregations

He took that young *Legionário* editor I mentioned and the young women of the Center for Social Action Studies and organized them to set up Catholic Action. After that, he also invited us to join the organization and began open combat against the Marian Congregations.

At a formal reception held for members of Catholic Action, he attacked the Marian Congregations with such violence that he was presented with an official question from the Apostolic Nunciature, asking him to explain the reason for this extreme hostility.<sup>860</sup>

### 4. Dom Duarte's Death

On the morning of November 13, 1938, my Portuguese maid woke me by knocking at my door.

I got up and asked: "Ana, what is it?"

"Your aunt, Mrs. So-and-so, has telephoned to say that the Archbishop, Dom Duarte, is very sick.

"Ah! Very sick, is he?"

She was a very faithful Portuguese woman. To this day, I can see her before me with the strong arms of a peasant. She turned around and said, "He is gone!"<sup>861</sup>

I immediately realized how sad, serious and important this event was to us.

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As I prepared for the funeral, I wondered about the dress code.

At that time, people would attend the funeral of someone who had held high public office in tails. It would be a navy blue suit and black tie for an ordinary citizen.

I asked myself, "Nowadays, with everything changed so much, will the laity attend in tails or dark blue suits?"

But then I thought: "It is undeniable that I was the right arm of Dom Duarte in many different matters, and many knew this. He was a man who put a lot of emphasis on ceremony, so I'll go in tails. Let the others appear as they wish."

His body was exposed in Santa Ifigênia church, at that time the provisional cathedral, while the one on Cathedral Square was under construction.

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<sup>860</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (I) 8/6/54.

<sup>861</sup> SD 6/16/73.

Approaching the church, I noticed the masses who flocked there to pay their respects.

The funeral *cortège* left the church in an imposing procession; all the clergy of São Paulo – absolutely everyone – was there. Then came the archbishops and bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of São Paulo, followed by the archbishops and bishops from other dioceses outside.

There were representatives of the civil authorities and other VIPs, quite a few in tailcoats. And the monastery bells of São Bento tolled the death knell.

It was a magnificent procession. It went straight through the underpass of Santa Ifigênia toward the Largo de São Bento, along Boa Vista and 15 de Novembro Streets to Largo da Sé, which was full of people.

There were so many people that they even climbed the roofs of the buildings along the way.

It was a demonstration of the popularity of Dom Duarte, such as I would never have believed could happen for anyone in São Paulo. It was the popularity of that high respect, of that high seriousness, of that awareness of his dignity, that people usually do not make much of until he is gone and they realize the immense void he has left behind. And so the people came to accompany, at least as spectators, the archbishop's journey to his final resting place.<sup>862</sup>

##### **5. *Sede Vacante* in São Paulo. Dom José Gaspar's Disappointment**

When the funeral for the former archbishop was over, the seat of São Paulo remained vacant.

Who would be Dom Duarte's successor?<sup>863</sup>

Dom José was not an auxiliary bishop of the seat proper but had been appointed auxiliary bishop to the archbishop, so his function automatically ceased with Dom Duarte's death.

The Metropolitan Archdiocesan Council did not elect Dom José Gaspar as Vicar Capitular, but an old monsignor, Msgr. Martins Ladeira.

When we learned of this election's outcome, the *Legionário* reported on it and published two photographs, one of the new Vicar Capitular and another of Dom José Gaspar, with a very affectionate homage.

I visited Dom José Gaspar at the seminary that night to comfort him. He was highly disappointed that he had not been chosen.

We embraced and talked a bit, expressing our chagrin at the turn of events. When I got up to leave, he told me: "Dr. Plinio, I believe that wherever I go, I will never forget the *Legionário*."

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<sup>862</sup> Tea 9/19/94.

<sup>863</sup> SD 6/16/73.

I replied, “I don’t think we will ever forget Your Excellency, either.”  
And so we parted. It was a nice, even cordial farewell.

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Due to several circumstances, Dom José’s non-appointment represented a shower of cold water for the movement of Catholic Action in São Paulo. Since he was not elected Vicar Capitular, he had to leave the Archdiocese of São Paulo. So, for all the time the seat remained vacant—almost a year—he was away from São Paulo, and all the progressive plans he had been promoting were pushed aside.<sup>864</sup>

Then came the death of Pius XI. The chair of St. Peter and the archiepiscopal seat of São Paulo were vacant at the same time. It was necessary to wait for the election of the new Pope (Pius XII), who would then appoint the successor of Dom Duarte.<sup>865</sup>

Since São Paulo was, already in those days, a prominent archiepiscopal seat, it was part of the Church’s style to take a long time to fill it, partly because they had to obtain opinions from various sides, but partly also because it was considered a good thing for the Church to display her wisdom and the seriousness with which she approached her important decisions. This instilled confidence in the maturity of her judgments so that we were, for many months, left with this question: Who will be the new archbishop of São Paulo?<sup>866</sup>

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José Carlos de Macedo Soares ardently wanted Dom José Gaspar to come to São Paulo.

When Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pius XII) was in Brazil on his way back from Argentina, where he had attended the International Eucharistic Congress in Buenos Aires<sup>867</sup> as a papal legate, José Carlos de Macedo Soares went to see him. I later heard that during that meeting, he mentioned Father José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva about ten or fifteen times, recommending him, praising him, enumerating all the things he had done and describing his views on

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<sup>864</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>865</sup> Dom Duarte died on November 13, 1938, and Pius XI on February 10, 1939. Twenty days later (March 2, 1939), Pius XII was elected pope. Dom José Gaspar was appointed archbishop of São Paulo only on July 29, 1939, more than eight months after Dom Duarte’s death.

<sup>866</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>867</sup> The 32<sup>nd</sup> International Eucharistic Congress was held in Buenos Aires from October 9 to 14, 1934. Upon returning, Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli stayed in Brazil on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. At the Brazilian government’s invitation, he lodged at the presidential Catete Palace (Rio de Janeiro) until 1960, when the country’s capital was moved to Brasília.

this, that and the other. Everything indicates that he intended to make sure, far in advance, that Dom José would be elected archbishop of São Paulo.

## **Part V**

# Dom José Gaspar and Dom Carlos Carmelo, Successive Archbishops of São Paulo

# Chapter I

## Dom José Gaspar, the New Archbishop of São Paulo

### 1. “Difficult Times Ahead”

We at *Legionário* were hoping for the election of an archbishop who would correct the liturgical aberrations and the errors of Catholic Action and restore the Marian Congregations.

We were still hopeful when I received a phone call from a member of Catholic Action informing me, with great enthusiasm, that Dom José was elected Archbishop of São Paulo.

For our part, we paid Dom José all the homage and attention we possibly could. But yet, I felt that our whole situation had become weak and precarious due to his appointment to São Paulo.<sup>868</sup>

The young women of that Catholic Action group, needless to say, were bubbling over with delight.

He was in Itanhaém on holiday. The young women followed him there immediately to congratulate him.

I, too, decided to go down to Itanhaém to congratulate the new archbishop. He welcomed me very amiably, but I noticed he directed all the genuine sympathy to the other side.

When they approached him, he became lively and cheerful, even joking. When it was my turn and that of the *Legionário* staff, he adopted a gloomy, distant and ceremonious demeanor.

I thought, “Uh – oh. Difficult times ahead.”<sup>869</sup>

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Dom José came to São Paulo, and we were on the reception committee. The installation took place on September 17, 1939.

I remember Cathedral Square being full of people joining the

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<sup>868</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>869</sup> SD 6/16/73.

celebrations to honor him. The young women of Catholic Action wore distinctive white berets and kept shouting, “Long live our archbishop! Long live our archbishop!”

When he saw them, he left the procession to approach them, gave them a blessing and then returned to continue on his way. They were almost delirious with enthusiasm.

For me, that blessing was another sign of things to come.<sup>870</sup>

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It was also around that time that I noticed that the president of the Brazilian Catholic Action, Tristão de Athayde, with whom I corresponded regularly – was a very good friend: when he came to São Paulo, he would come to lunch or dinner at my house, while I did the same at his house whenever I went to Rio; even our families ended up becoming friends – also began to change and to adopt the new guidelines.

I thought, “I must find a way to create a situation with the new archbishop that will allow me, over time, to open his eyes and make him see what kind of things he is involuntarily supporting.”<sup>871</sup>

## 2. A “Message” for Dom José

A few days before Dom José took office, I visited the archdiocesan Chancery.<sup>872</sup>

His secretary, Father Paulo Rolim Loureiro, who later became Bishop of Mogi das Cruzes,<sup>873</sup> was there, and when he saw me, he came over, sat down next to me and asked:

“Well, Dr. Plinio, are you pleased with the appointment of Dom José?”

“Well, yes and no. I have a problem with Dom José. I have never talked to anyone about this, but since you are so close to him, I will tell you: I have quite a few complaints where Dom José is concerned.”

“You don’t say! What are your complaints?”

“Dom José does not understand me. He is a man of a very different temperament to my own, and because of that, he is chiefly concerned with the opponents of the Church while neglecting her best friends. We who are faithful to him, who have great regard for him, we who are true Catholics, are constantly put aside by him, while he heaps favor on the adversaries of the Church. In this

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<sup>870</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>871</sup> SD 6/16/73,

<sup>872</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>873</sup> SD 6/16/73.

way, the Catholic Movement of São Paulo has practically become a fiefdom of the opponents of the Church.”<sup>874</sup>

And I went on:

“He appears to believe that you can conquer the whole world with a smile and that all the opponents of the Church, if showered with favors, will eventually become good friends. Someone who adopts such a position toward the opponents of the Church must believe that a militant paper like the *Legionário* and a combative man like myself will destroy everything because we irritate precisely those who a smile could otherwise win over. So I understand that as far as we are concerned, he feels like a man about to receive visitors, but aware that there is a bulldog loose in the garden through which they must pass: to ensure that the party goes well, the first thing to do is to put a muzzle on the dog. So, his first concern must be to end our militant stance. And if he does that, he will make an end of us. I feel there will ultimately be no place for us under his archdiocesan government.”<sup>875</sup>

Father Loureiro was distraught and said:

“My friend, my friend, do not think so! Indeed, you are wrong! I will talk to him about this!”<sup>876</sup>

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Another thing I did was to look up a young priest named Antonio de Castro Mayer, who was a close friend of the archbishop. During our conversation, I called his attention to the trends prevailing within Catholic Action and the new archbishop's sympathies for this movement.

Both Father Mayer and Father Rolim Loureiro spoke with the archbishop.<sup>877</sup>

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### 3. President of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action

When I spoke to Dom José later, everything was sweetness and light, and he was intent on defusing the situation.<sup>878</sup>

Shortly after, the archbishop sent me an invitation to come and see him:

“Dr. Plinio, I want to establish Catholic Action here in São Paulo, and I want you to be its president and to provide me with a list of potential board members” (it was known as the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action).

“Certainly, Your Excellency, it will be a pleasure. I am entirely at your disposal.”

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<sup>874</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>875</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>876</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>877</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>878</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

I drew up a list of potential candidates for the positions on the Board, all members of the *Legionário* group:<sup>805</sup> myself as the president, by choice of the archbishop; first secretary, José Gonzaga de Arruda; second secretary, Fernando Furquim de Almeida; treasurer, José Benedito Pacheco Sales.<sup>879</sup>

Dom José invited Canon Mayer to be Assistant General of Catholic Action of São Paulo and Father Geraldo de Proença Sigaud to be Assistant General of the JEC.<sup>880</sup>

In this entirely unexpected way, we were placed at the head of Catholic Action. I took the responsibilities of this appointment very seriously indeed.<sup>881</sup>

Today, with hindsight, I realize that Dom José and I each intended to convert the other: I was hoping to show him where the progressivist group was going wrong, and he hoped to make me change my orientation and adopt progressivist ideas and attitudes.

#### 4. A Completely Different Mentality

As president of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action, I directed both its male and its female branches. Canon Mayer was my superior since he was the ecclesiastical assistant.

So the board meetings started.<sup>882</sup>

I had several conversations with Dom José Gaspar about the direction of Catholic Action. He always tended to temporize, not forbidding me to do as I thought best, but also refusing to distance himself from the other side.<sup>883</sup>

We would go to the Palácio São Luis, which was then the archbishop's residence. It was a large, aristocratic, very beautiful house.

The archbishop welcomed us in his small parlor:

“So, what news, what ideas are you bringing me?”

“We have come to submit a project of regulations for Catholic Action to Your Excellency.”

“Ah! right.”

“The project involves this, that and the other.”

And we got on the subject of fashions:

“Skirts must be below the knee, and the young women must wear socks.”

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<sup>879</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>880</sup> These appointments were officially announced at the clergy meeting of March 11, 1940 (cf. *Legionário* No. 392, 3/17/40). The installation ceremony took place on May 12 of the same year at the gala auditorium of the Archdiocesan Chancery (cf. *Legionário* No. 401, 5/19/40).

<sup>881</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>882</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>883</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.



“Well, yes.... Our Lady, however, did not wear socks....”<sup>884</sup>

Dr. José Gonzaga Arruda, who was present in his capacity as secretary of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action, replied, in his very characteristic voice:

“That is true, Your Excellency. But she wore a tunic right down to her feet.”<sup>885</sup>

A deep sigh from the archbishop.

All meetings went more or less like this: misunderstandings and doubts.<sup>886</sup>

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In 1940, Dom Mayer and I took him a declaration of principles for Catholic Action, asking him to approve it.

This declaration defined, among other things, the following point: that Catholic Action should try to appreciate the Marian Congregations instead of breaking away from them, and that it should see them as a kind of the inner nucleus of selection within the Catholic Movement.

I remember that we read this document to Dom José at a meeting of the Board, in an atmosphere of the greatest politeness – and of a tension that you could have cut with a knife.

After we had read out this proposal, Dom José, his eyes fixed on the horizon, said to Canon Mayer:

“Do you really want to publish this?”

Msgr. Mayer replied:

“To me, this seems a very good thing.”

“If this is what it seems to you, then publish it in your own name.”

“In your own name” meant: all the consequences will fall on you, I’ll have nothing to do with it. It was a way of disclaiming all responsibility and letting it fall upon us.

Msgr. Mayer said, “All right.”

The next day, it appeared in the newspapers: “By order of the Metropolitan Archbishop....”

## 5. First Meeting with Father Mariaux

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<sup>884</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>885</sup> SD 8/5/94.

<sup>886</sup> SD 6/16/73.

Six years after I had been a congressman,<sup>887</sup> on a night in 1940,<sup>888</sup> Father Roberto Saboia de Medeiros, a celebrated Jesuit,<sup>889</sup> gave a lecture at the School of Commerce Álvares Penteado, a building in São Francisco Square, which you reached by turning right when leaving the Law School.

As it was for the general public, I decided to attend, together with a few friends.

When I arrived there, I saw, near the back of the hall, a group of five Jesuits sitting together. I went up to say hello, as I was known to almost all of them. They returned my greeting with great friendliness.

Among them, in the center, was a giant too big for the chair he was sitting in.<sup>890</sup> He was tall, still young, with a pointed nose and blue eyes, and looked like one of the first Germans who invaded the Western Roman Empire.<sup>891</sup> His greeting was particularly enthusiastic.

I saw immediately that he was not Brazilian and that he was probably German. I had never seen him before.

When the lecture was over, I saw the Jesuits coming over to talk to me. This was unusual. They introduced Father Walter Mariaux to me, saying, “He is a Jesuit who has just come from Rome. Until recently, he was the director of the World Secretariat of the Marian Congregations. He will be spending some time in Brazil.”

Father Mariaux said to me, in French:<sup>892</sup>

“I only came to São Paulo because I was hoping to meet you. I have been trying to find out your address, but it seemed impossible to find. Finally, I called the place “x,” and no one answered the phone. So I came here in the hope of finding you because I was told that you might come to this lecture. Would it be possible for us to meet one of these days?”<sup>893</sup>

“For how many days will you stay in São Paulo?”

“Until I get a chance to talk to you.”

He told me something that caught my attention: “I am an enthusiastic reader of your articles in the *Legionário*.”<sup>894</sup>

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<sup>887</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

<sup>888</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>889</sup> SD 4/14/79.

<sup>890</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>891</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>892</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>893</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>894</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

He made several references to an article titled “Big Wigs,”<sup>895</sup> in which I had described a certain type of man, vacuous, inept, pompous, occupying positions and of no actual use to anyone.

He told me that he had laughed out loud when reading the article, that this phenomenon was the same worldwide: big wigs, good for nothing.<sup>896</sup> Then he said:

“Surely you saw that I have reprinted many of your articles in our international newsletter.”

I did not even know they had an international newsletter. But when I heard this (the secretariat was in Rome),<sup>897</sup>I pricked up my ears.<sup>898</sup>

Blond, very tall, herculean, of exuberant health and expansive gestures, with hands like a field marshal, always created a first impression of strength and determination, which was gradually complemented by other psychological elements. I have never known a personality richer in contrasts and yet more harmonious.<sup>899</sup>

We made an appointment—I don’t remember where—and we started talking. I soon realized that he shared our opinions on many points. It was an interesting conversation in an atmosphere of great cordiality.

He told me he had been director of the Marian Congregations in Germany, had obtained such and such results and wanted to create a youth organization here.

## 6. Closer Acquaintance with Father Mariaux

Since we worked very closely with Canon Mayer, who at that time was General Assistant of Catholic Action, I wanted Father Mariaux to meet him.

He was a very colorful character, with very expressive gestures, “*Ach!*” “*Ach!*” is a German exclamation, the equivalent to our “*Oh!*”<sup>900</sup>

He interrupted me:<sup>901</sup> “*Ach nein!*”<sup>902</sup> – his manners were not the most polished in the world – “No,” a gesture with one of his huge hands, “no!” “But why ‘no,’ Father Mariaux?”

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<sup>895</sup> “*Medalhães,*” cf. *Legionário* No. 300, 6/12/38 (this and other articles by Dr. Plinio in *Legionário* are available at <http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info>).

<sup>896</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>897</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>898</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>899</sup> “In Itaici,” *Legionário* No. 609, 4/9/44.

<sup>900</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>901</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>902</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

“I don’t like these important figures of the clergy. In general, they are ‘bigwigs’ like those you describe. Don’t make me waste my time talking to this man.”

I insisted, and he eventually accepted:

“Well, but only because you’re so insistent. Where will this meeting take place?<sup>903</sup> I do not want to have to go into any ecclesiastical building.”

“All right, Father Mariaux, we will have it at my house.”

He did not like to get up as late as I did; he was an extremely early riser. It took some diplomacy to arrange the meeting at 10 a.m. at my house.<sup>904</sup>

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At that time, I lived on Itacolomi Street in a house that was now demolished, which I shared with my mother.

It was a rented house, relatively small but tastefully furnished,<sup>905</sup> with lovely wallpaper, crystal glass panels and so on. My sister furnished our drawing room and did a great job. It was a very nice room, but it was small, and there was not much space for furniture.<sup>906</sup>

When my giant new German friend appeared,<sup>907</sup> he seemed to fill my little pink drawing room.<sup>908</sup>

I wondered briefly whether my furniture would withstand his weight, but I didn’t pay much attention to that; I was chiefly interested in his Roman connections.<sup>909</sup>

He said, in French: “*Vous habitez bien.*” I said, “It is at your disposition, Father Mariaux.”<sup>910</sup>

Then Canon Mayer came, and the contrast could not have been greater. Canon Mayer was dark, tiny, and overflowing with life but was as unlike a German as possible. Father Mariaux, on the other hand, was a 100% personification of the archetypal German. From that first meeting, they immediately became friends.<sup>911</sup>

I told the maid to bring a bottle of port wine—a common form of refreshment in Brazil—and some goblets on a silver platter.

He said: “Ach! Portugal, huh?”

He was very fond of port and could drink a lot of it – never to excess,

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<sup>903</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>904</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>905</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>906</sup> SD 4/14/79.

<sup>907</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>908</sup> SD 4/14/79.

<sup>909</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>910</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>911</sup> SD 7/7/73.

though.

He lit a cigar, and we started to speak about the general situation of the Church, national socialism and various other subjects in the same vein.

On some points, he went even further than I did regarding the Church's crisis. He told us about several things that had happened in Rome.<sup>912</sup> He saw the crisis within the Church very clearly. On that point, we were entirely in agreement.<sup>913</sup>

We criticized Jacques Maritain, a Catholic left philosopher very much in fashion worldwide at the time. We in Brazil had written many articles against this philosopher, and Father Mariaux had read them all.<sup>914</sup>

We completely understood each other regarding Nazism. He had released a book against the Nazis, of seven or eight hundred pages, exceptionally well researched and documented, proving that the Nazis had persecuted the Catholic Church most brutally. The book<sup>915</sup> was titled *Testis Fidelis — La Iglesia en el III Reich alemán*<sup>916</sup> [Testis Fidelis—The Church in the German Third Reich].

It is the best work on Nazism I have seen: religious persecution, all the evil the Nazis did, with very serious and solid argumentation; the doctrinal part is crystal clear.<sup>917</sup>

Given this harmony between us, his being a Jesuit and me a former student of the Jesuits and unconditional admirer of St. Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus as it was and should be, and since I really enjoyed German things very much, very much indeed, I soon had an enormous understanding of the man and then, over time, a true friendship.

I must admit that Father Mariaux's German background gave me great pleasure in dealing with him. I liked his categorical, somewhat truculent nature and emphatic way of speaking.

We would often invite him to our meetings and dine in restaurants, one thing and another. And he was a most interesting companion for lunch or dinner. He had an excellent conversation and was funny and smart. To watch him eating would have whetted the appetite of a stone or bronze statue. He was funny even in the Portuguese errors he made.<sup>918</sup>

## 7. Father Mariaux's Reasons for Coming to Brazil

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<sup>912</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>913</sup> Dinner EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>914</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>915</sup> Dinner EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>916</sup> Dinner EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>917</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>918</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

Why had Father Mariaux come from Europe to Brazil?<sup>919</sup>

He did not tell me, but he would say little things that made me realize that he was being persecuted.<sup>920</sup> Later, they told me that he did something reckless at one point.<sup>921</sup> Maybe some political pirouette made it necessary for him to leave Rome running.<sup>922</sup>

Then, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, a Pole, Count Wlodimir Ledochowski, gave him the freedom to go to the country he chose. He went to Argentina and, attracted by Legionário, came to Brazil.<sup>923</sup>

And I put myself entirely at his disposal for whatever he might want. He said he was going to visit Rio. That was more than understandable.

He went to Rio, spent some time there, and then called me one day from there:

“I wanted you to tell me, with total frankness, what you think: for my apostolate in Brazil, should I establish myself in São Paulo or Rio?”

I then gave him an immediate answer:<sup>924</sup>

“Father Mariaux, if you want to stay in Rio, do so. I think that you can do great good in Rio. I must tell you that Rio is the country’s capital, but the economic center is São Paulo. And it so happens that the society of São Paulo is organized like a cone. Economically, São Paulo runs Brazil, and about 200 or 300 families run São Paulo. These families’ children study at São Luis High School, where you can form a group. If your group is composed of these families, you will gain momentum in Brazil through this group.”<sup>925</sup>

He then set out for São Paulo, established himself at São Luis High School and began working with the students. This was all very normal.

That was the seed of the “Martim Group,” established in the 1950s, of which I will speak later.<sup>926</sup>

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<sup>919</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>920</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>921</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>922</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>923</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>924</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>925</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>926</sup> Lunch EANS 4/9/87.

## Chapter II

# Progressivist Scandal in Taubaté: First Blow Against Liturgism

### 1. New Priest: Uproar in the City, Scandals

Meanwhile, a tumultuous episode in the diocese of Taubaté, in the state of São Paulo, opened many eyes to the extremes of virulence the emerging new trend could reach.

As we have said, the diocese was governed until 1935 by a great bishop, Dom Epaminondas Nunes D'Ávila e Silva, who was succeeded as bishop in 1936 by Dom André Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti.<sup>927</sup>

In that diocese, a group of young priests was formed who frantically joined the liturgical movement: Father Ramon de Oliveira Ortiz, Father Carlos Ortiz<sup>928</sup> (who later apostatized and published, in the form of a novel, the story of his apostasy and of his sinful relationship with a young, “modern” woman of Catholic Action,<sup>929</sup> becoming a filmmaker and Communist propagandist); Father Benedito Mário Calazans, Father Jairo de Moura, Father Carlos Gomes, and some others. These priests became liturgists as soon as the movement appeared. They formed a liturgist cell that had great repercussions in Brazil.<sup>930</sup>

This group of “liturgical” priests led the sarabande to the point of performing acts of worship in an almost Communist way. They no longer said Mass on an altar but took a pantry table and placed it in the center of the nave, with all pews cast aside and chairs around it like a meal. They celebrated Mass there, with the people sitting around them to give the idea of a banquet.

There would be no statue on the table except for a small crucifix because the Code of Canon Law required it.

The idea was that the Christian community gathered around the priest, who was seen as its representative, to offer the sacrifice. At the time of the offering, all those who wanted to receive Communion took a host into their hands for the priest to consecrate. This practice became the emblem of their movement.

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<sup>927</sup> Most Rev. André Arcoverde was born in Pesqueira (State of Pernambuco) on December 15, 1878 and died on June 20, 1955 in Taubaté, where he was bishop from 1936 to 1941.

<sup>928</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>929</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>930</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

All this caused a massive uproar in Taubaté that reverberated throughout the diocese.

Another scandal broke when some of those priests started dating girls from Catholic Action. There was also the propaganda of Catholic Action recommending, among other things, that they should all go to places not recommended by Catholic morality to “*take the Christ*” there and other idiocies.

## 2. The Reaction of Msgr. João de Azevedo and Msgr. Ascânio Brandão

The poor Diocesan Bishop, Dom André Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti, suffered financial embezzlement from a priest who fled with the bishops’ money. The affair forced the bishop to resign. He had to flee to the Nunciature and left a letter at the diocesan Chancery.

The councilors of the diocese met and elected Vicar Capitular, a priest who was a friend of mine, Monsignor João José de Azevedo,<sup>931</sup> the vicar of Pindamonhangaba.

Monsignor João de Azevedo was a man of great stature. With hair already turning grey, glasses, regular facial features, and a decided manner, he was an insightful and intelligent man.

The right-hand man of Msgr. João was a priest from São José dos Campos, Monsignor Ascanio Brandão. Like the bishop, he was tall, logically-minded and determined.

This duo—Monsignor Ascanio and Monsignor João—struck the first blow against the liturgical movement in Brazil. Recognizing their achievements is important to do justice to their historical importance.

What happened was this:

Monsignor Ascanio was the chaplain of a female religious congregation, the Little Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, in São José dos Campos (which, at the time, belonged to the Diocese of Taubaté). This religious congregation was founded by a cousin I hardly knew, Mother Maria Teresa de Jesus Eucaristico.<sup>932</sup> She was an intelligent person and had a great deal of influence on Monsignor Ascanio.

Mother Maria Teresa called Monsignor Ascanio and asked him if he had not noticed something strange about the group surrounding Father Carlos Ortiz

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<sup>931</sup> Monsignor João José de Azevedo was Vicar Capitular from 1941 until the appointment of the new Bishop, Dom Francisco Borja do Amaral, in the year 1944. The new bishop dispensed with his collaboration with the diocese.

<sup>932</sup> Mother Maria Teresa of Jesus in the Eucharist, in the world Dulce Rodrigues dos Santos (1901-1972). Her father, Brasília Rodrigues dos Santos (Dr. Plinio's great-uncle), was chaired professor of Commercial Law at the São Paulo Law School, state assemblyman, and later federal congressman. Her mother, Helena Herold, was the daughter of German immigrants. The congregation was founded in São José dos Campos, State of São Paulo, where the motherhouse of the Institute of the Little Missionaries of Mary Immaculate is located.



and all their minions. She also recommended that Monsignor Ascanio examine the issue.

Monsignor Ascanio complied with the request and obtained an early glimpse of those deviations. Since he was a man of great righteousness and traditional spirit, he had no trouble recognizing the abuses being committed by that group for what they were. He intervened immediately, speaking first to one and then to another of those young priests, showing them exactly what was wrong with what they were doing.

The priests, however, told him that what they were doing was right and that they would continue doing it.

At one point, he said to one of these priests:

“The proof that you are wrong is that Monsignor Ramón Ortiz [who had this title because he was Vicar General] is much more moderate than you.”

And the priest answered:

“Come on, Ascanio, don’t you understand? Monsignor Ramón has been ordered to take a moderate stance because that will make it possible for him to become a bishop. The others, meanwhile, are showing their hand quite openly. Then, once he is bishop, he will see that the others hold influential positions.”

*Fiat lux* inside the head of Monsignor Ascanio, who sat down at once to write to the Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom José, and immediately afterward (on November 18, 1941) sent a similar letter to the Nuncio, Dom Aloisi Masella, giving a detailed description of the whole affair.<sup>933</sup>

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<sup>933</sup> Shortly after, on November 30, 1941, Monsignor Ascânio wrote a letter to Father Carlos Ortiz, of which we highlight the following passages: “My dear friend, for some time now I have been, and continue to be, in disagreement with certain positions adopted by yourself and by Father Calazans, Father Jairo and the two young men of C.A. [Catholic Action] in Taubaté, Benedito Ortiz and Quintanilha. The facts are well known, as are the attitudes taken by you, and I strongly disapprove of some of your methods and ideas.... Ever since I have seen you approve and support the style of Father Carlos Gomes in the ‘Agony of Christianity’ and you have revealed yourself a fervent disciple of Léon Bloy and Bernanos in these matters, I have felt that I cannot and should not, in conscience, support and encourage you as I have done until recently, believing that your ideas had not reached that irreverent and dangerous extremism.... I only want to ask one favor: do not use this language in the pulpit or when talking to the press. It scandalizes people, and it does damage. It is shocking. I do not like your way of looking at the religious vocation of the C.A. in our time. ... As for your teachings concerning matters of the heart, I have had complaints from people who attended your study circles and expressed surprise and displeasure at the language used there. ... Together with many bishops, priests, religious and faithful, I have always criticized the irreverent language you use in the pulpit, in study circles and in lectures about altars, images, and sacred traditions of the people. You can hardly imagine the shock and disgust that certain expressions you used concerning such matters have caused!... Your phrase – the Church is no fief of ecclesiastical authority – definitely went too far. Lay persons of the C.A. cannot be permitted to act as a sort of liturgical police in churches, drawing the attention of vicars to any shortcomings. The facts, my dear friend, are only too well known. The idea of spreading the practice of versus populum Masses, Gothic chasubles replacing Roman vestments, etc., and the language: altars that look like shelves, horrible statues of saints, etc., all this shocks and scandalizes people. I don’t believe in this exclusively liturgical piety, accompanied by contempt for extra-liturgical practices. I don’t like all these sarcastic remarks about Marian Congregations and pious associations,

### 3. At the São Paulo Bishops' Meeting, Denunciations and Damage Control

At the next meeting of the São Paulo Bishops, Msgr. João de Azevedo appeared as Vicar Capitular of Taubaté and said he had a case involving the Liturgical Movement in the Diocese of Taubaté to report. He brought the letter in which Monsignor Ascanio had described all the facts and several other documents, which he read at the meeting.

Since there had already been a scandal in Taubaté as a result of the departure of the former bishop, Dom André, the Episcopate of São Paulo decided not to aggravate things further and limited itself to drawing up a circular to be sent to the clergy of the province, enumerating the liturgical abuses committed there, but recommending that nothing be said to the lay faithful.<sup>934</sup>

In this way, they buried the subject to prevent new scandals.

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In our conversations with Dom José Gaspar, we always referred to this document:

“See how good it was that Your Excellency has managed to snuff this out in the archdiocese with the measures you permitted us to take within Catholic Action. What an excellent thing that was!”

He did not say anything.

These facts also put the Nuncio on his guard and helped him understand the seriousness of our problem.

### 4. Dom José Gaspar Protects the Scandalous Priests from Punishment and Welcomes Them

Dom José Gaspar had not expected this case to create such a scandal.

Seeing that Monsignor João was determined to take vigorous action against those priests, he intervened, saying that he thought it dangerous to drive

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scapulars, medals, and the rosary....Your manner of speaking about and criticizing extra-liturgical processions resembles that of the Protestants.... When speaking of the authorities, of bishops etc., do not use Communist expressions, such as ‘bourgeois clergy’ and ‘friend of the bourgeoisie’.... The methods for reforming the world are those of the Church and, in our days, those of the C.A. All the same, I have never encountered the language that you use sometimes in the pontifical documents... the world will not be renewed by revolution but by holiness” [emphases in the original].

<sup>934</sup> This Circular Letter to the Clergy of the Ecclesiastical Province of São Paulo warning against excesses of liturgism was sent in August 1942 (cf. Elói de Magalhães Taveiro, “Passing the Test of Time,” *Catolicismo* No. 150, June 1963.

them to apostasy and that it would be better to send them to São Paulo, where he would try to change their orientation.

So all these priests left Taubaté and descended on São Paulo.

Of course, since Monsignor João Azevedo refrained from issuing a decree against the *liturgist* priests in the Diocese of Taubaté, they were spared from severe consequences.

For the liturgists, the fact that these priests had come to São Paulo was an excellent thing, as these priests immediately began working with the staff of Catholic Action, who met at the Leo XIII Center and on the premises of other organizations of the same kind.

However, it wasn't suitable for Dom José as more and more people became aware that he was protecting that movement.

He reinforced this negative impression by doing something even more serious: he ordered Msgr. Ramon Ortiz to come and live in the episcopal residence itself and entrusted him with a task of paramount importance and responsibility: planning and organizing the future diocesan synod.

The synod was an assembly of priests presided over by the bishop. His task was to take the necessary steps to organize the diocese, which can only be planned by an excellent, observant and competent priest. Entrusting this task to Msgr. Ramon Ortiz was a slap in the face of Monsignor João and an act of support for the new movement.

Furthermore, he appointed another of these priests to the office of Religious Education Inspector, which caused an even greater scandal.<sup>935</sup>

All this produced a good deal of dissatisfaction with Dom José in many Catholic circles of São Paulo.<sup>936</sup>

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<sup>935</sup> At that time, Monsignor Ascanio Brandão vented his displeasure in a letter to Monsignor Mayer (December 31, 1942), saying: "The smear campaign against me and Monsignor Azevedo is being carried on in a terrible and underhanded manner. And ... they make themselves out to be the victims! ... But (and I am going to speak very frankly here), what has struck and shocked me most is the attitude of the archbishop [of São Paulo]. ... His Excellency is no friend of Bishop Azevedo; I know that he views me with suspicion, and ... has, living with him at the Episcopal Residence, the leader of the movement of Taubaté, the person responsible, the original defender of the entire liturgical revolution of the case of Taubaté! I know that, at the São Luís Episcopal Residence, they are whispering about the poor 'victims!' (!) and condemning the 'executioners!'...I see it all. I see and hear the absurdities and rumors spread by the 'inspector of religious education' boasting and shaming us all with his habitual impudence. I know of many things, Monsignor Mayer, plenty of dubious and indecisive attitudes on the part of the authority. ... I believe that His Excellency is under some sweet illusions as far as Dom André [Arcoverde] is concerned...the awakening could be very sad...I know that the leaders of the famous C.A. [Catholic Action] correspond, plot, and lay their plans in secret...and boast that they are conquering the archbishop! They hope to depose the Vicar Capitular of Taubaté and to have me banished following a canonical lawsuit that they are threatening me with. ... The attitude of the archbishop is extremely perplexing to me" (italics in the original).

<sup>936</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54. Canon Mayer, writing to Cardinal Leme, made the following comments on Dom José Gaspar: "The way he [Dom José Gaspar] has acted in the past two years shows his true intentions, intentions which, judging from the way things are now being done, are not the result of

## Chapter III

# The “Constructives” Are Overthrown

### 1. Deviations and Esoteric Doctrines: Verbal Report to the Archbishop

Given all these circumstances, in 1941, Canon Mayer and I—he in his capacity as Ecclesiastical Assistant and I as president of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action—started calling the leaders of several branches already existing to find out what was going on within Catholic Action.

We talked to the senior leaders and members of the mid-level boards to ensure the deep and vital understanding that is so fundamentally important between people engaged in the same apostolate.

In these conversations, the esoteric doctrine of these people came to light; it was not the leaders who betrayed themselves but the lower-level staff who told us some extremely revealing things.

We verbally reported to Dom José that the house was already on fire and that measures should be taken immediately.

“Dom José, Catholic Action is already infected everywhere, run by people who think such-and-such, who spread such-and-such errors. We have such-and-such information.”

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inadvertence or of a misguided tolerance of harmful elements, but the realization of a premeditated plan implemented with considerable intelligence and shrewdness. A closer look at the way he has dealt with the so-called Taubaté affair makes this abundantly clear. ... Without these priests changing their minds or giving the slightest sign that they regretted the errors they have been spreading, the archbishop began a campaign against the Vicar Capitular of Taubaté [Monsignor João de Azevedo], because he had refused to pander to the doctrines of that group. ... He accused him of violating the secrecy incumbent upon those who take part in the meetings of bishops when all that the Vicar Capitular had done was to communicate to his clergy the resolutions taken there. ... He accused him of violence and arbitrariness. ... Not content with this measure from a distance, he went to Taubaté in order to undermine the authority of the Vicar Capitular by taking part in the inauguration of a center of public health and childcare entrusted to a group of young women who had taken, and still take, an attitude that is openly opposed to the orientation of the Vicar Capitular.... But as I said, all this is done with a good deal of intelligence. He will never provide written proof of his intentions. There are even documents where he clearly supports a contrary position. But in conversations with the priests whom he trusts to spread his ideas, he is much more honest and straightforward about what he really thinks and wants; he also opens up when talking to laypersons eager to obtain greater freedom as regards Catholic morality.”

And we told him all we had heard, which was very serious.<sup>937</sup>

At one point, Canon Mayer said to Dom José:

“Your Excellency, the situation is dire. I will only be able to govern Catholic Action if Your Excellency gives me permission to depose all the directors and appoint new ones. I don’t know how to continue if Your Excellency refuses to do that. Please consider what you want to do.”

## 2. Dom José between a Rock and a Hard Place

The accusations were so severe that if Dom José had kept those boards and kicked us out, he would have taken an official position on the wrong side, which did not suit his plans.

So, between heavy sighs, he told Dom Mayer that he could dismiss the boards but that he should wait until he was away from São Paulo. Then he left for a three-week holiday at a thermal springs resort.<sup>938</sup>

In October 1941, Canon Mayer and I, duly authorized to do so, called meetings, he of the female and I of the male board members, and told all the directors that they were dismissed. After that, again, with the permission of Dom José, we published the lists of those who were to replace them.<sup>939</sup>

The new board members were all young women aware of Catholic Action's aberrations. They believed in sound Catholic doctrine, as promoted by *Legionário*, and provided Dom Mayer with minutes of their meetings, which was paramount to us.

Miss Adalgisa Giordano led this sound group. Others were Misses Estela

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<sup>937</sup> Canon Mayer, in the written report addressed to the Cardinal of Rio, Dom Sebastião Leme, which we have already cited above, described some of these deviations: “Concerning the priests, [these young women] thought they [the priests] knew nothing of C.A. and the apostolate so that it was necessary to ‘convert’ them by a kind of unobtrusive infiltration. Regarding the austerity practiced by the young women of our religious associations, they felt it was a reprehensible attitude that only turns people away from Our Lord. What is really necessary, according to them, is to be always cheerful and jovial, and to keep up with new ideas since this is the only way to get results in the apostolate. In addition to this moral liberalism, they also profess secularism in the apostolate: the priest should restrict his activities to administering the sacraments while they carry out the apostolate: the priests should do what the laity cannot do, distribute Communion, hear confessions, etc. ... As for religious sisters, they are not to be admitted to the circles of the members of Catholic Action, since C.A. is only for the laity.” We find echoes of this letter to Dom Leme, albeit without specific references to any persons, on page 7 of the *Legionário*, no. 478, of November 9, 1941, in an article by Canon Mayer, titled “Women’s Marian Federation on Crusade against Worldliness.””

<sup>938</sup> On this occasion Dom José went to Araxá (State of Minas Gerais), which besides being a thermal springs resort, was also his hometown, where his family lived (cf. letter to Cardinal Leme, cit.).

<sup>939</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

Gold, Aurora Ruiz, Angélica Ruiz, Caetaninha (Angelina Caetano), Iraci Ribeiro and several other young women who took charge of Catholic Action.<sup>940</sup>

### 3. Dom José's Crafty Way Out

When Dom José returned, old board members went to see him and complained. His reaction was an unparalleled feat of subtlety and cunning:

“You have been deposed. But you will, under my authority, set up an association that will be known as the Leo XIII Social Center. There, you can continue in the same direction, and I will not permit Father Mayer to mess with you. You have all my sympathy.”<sup>941</sup>

A few days later, they published a tribute to Dom José, which appeared in all the newspapers. The tribute included his reactions, showing him pleased.

In other words, we were indirectly repudiated. But we decided to hold our peace.<sup>942</sup>

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When I saw from which direction the wind was blowing, I realized that I would have to visit the Apostolic Nunciature in Rio to find out what the Nuncio thought about all these aberrations.

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<sup>940</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>941</sup> The MiniWeb Educação portal (<http://www.miniweb.com.br>), in its biography of Edith Junqueira Azevedo Marques, the founder of the Leo XIII Social Center, confirms – from a slightly different angle – the account given by Dr. Plínio: “Dom Castro Mayer, the bishop responsible for Catholic Action in São Paulo, after several disagreements, dismissed all the lay board of the movement [Catholic Action], to institute another of his confidence. (According to Clarisse Wey and Genoefa Frederico, everyone was expelled.) The archbishop at the time ... Dom José Gaspar de Affonseca and Silva (a friend of Miss Edith), called her to the archdiocesan Chancery, apologized for what had happened with Dom Mayer and asked her to create another group to continue to help the workers. So, way back in 1940, Miss Edith [Junqueira Azevedo Marques] and her companions in the movement, Heloisa Prestes Monzoni, Helena Junqueira, Lucy Montoro, Clarisse Wey, Genoefa Frederico, Maria Kiehl, Albertina Ramos, the last two having been the founders of the first School of Social Service in Brazil – the Escola de Serviço Social of São Paulo – rented a house at 755 Celso Garcia Street, in the working-class neighborhood of Brás.”

<sup>942</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

## Chapter IV

# Father Cesare Dainese: A Report to the Nuncio

### 1. Father Dainese's Providential Appearance

At this point, one of this story's most fantastic episodes occurred.<sup>943</sup>

One night,<sup>944</sup> I was at the headquarters of Catholic Action, taking care of some business, when in came a priest, not very tall<sup>945</sup> and with a briefcase in his hand.<sup>946</sup> From how he dressed, especially the cut of his collar, I could tell he was a Jesuit.<sup>947</sup>

He was Father Cesare Dainese, an Italian from the Veneto region.<sup>948</sup> Physically, he very much resembled St. Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>949</sup>

Although he was much older than I, in his late sixties, he was still in full possession of his strength.<sup>950</sup> He was, in fact, very clever and expressive so that wherever he entered, his vibrations would let you know everything that was going on inside.<sup>951</sup>

He was a man of great subtlety<sup>952</sup> and the impression he gave was that of a Jesuit of the classical school at the time of St. Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>953</sup>

On the other hand, he was very good with people and always knew how to say the right thing at the right time: a very capable man.<sup>954</sup>

I got up to greet him.<sup>955</sup> He acted as though he knew me.

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<sup>943</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>944</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>945</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>946</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>947</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>948</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>949</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>950</sup> Dinner EANS 4/8/87.

<sup>951</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>952</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>953</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>954</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>955</sup> SD 7/2/88.

“Hello, Father, how are you?”

“Dr. Plinio, how are you? I am Father Dainese.”<sup>956</sup>

We went to my office, and I said:

“Father, what can I do for you?”<sup>957</sup>

“You are the president of Catholic Action in São Paulo, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I am, Father Dainese.”

“I would like you to tell me exactly what your goals are and what you have in mind with the work that you are doing as the head of Catholic Action. I would very much like to know.”

I looked at him and thought, “He came here sent by someone else. He is very clever and has a lot of experience in life; I must show myself to be smart and experienced. I will not make a fool of myself and ask who sent him to talk to me. He will soon let me know, anyway, one way or another. I will tell him clearly what I think and not beat about the bush.”

So I said:

“Father Dainese, I’ll be frank with you. The situation is such-and-such. It is a wrong doctrine, a completely wrong direction. They want to destroy all ecclesiastical authority, the traditional morality of the Church, the traditional devotions and replace the Catholic religion with another. This religion is entirely made up of fun and dances, in a word, of concessions to the spirit of the world. Ultimately, it is a religion that implements the modernism condemned by St. Pius X. I feel deeply shocked by what I see, and I fight against it. I may be crushed in this fight, but I will fight to the end because this is a fight for the Catholic Church.”

He listened attentively until the end, and then he said:

“I agree with everything you say. You truly deserve support. Have you never tried to inform anyone?”

I said:

“Father Dainese, I live in São Paulo and have little opportunity to go to Rio. The person who should be informed is the Apostolic Nuncio, to whom I would like to submit my information. But I don’t know anyone who could act as a liaison between myself and the Nuncio.”

“I might be able to help you there.”

“So, Father, should I draw up a report for you?”

“Yes, do that.”<sup>958</sup>

Later, he says, “One day, after going to confession to me, the Nuncio told me this or that.”

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<sup>956</sup> Dinner EANS 4/8/87.

<sup>957</sup> SD 6/16/73 and SD 7/2/88.

<sup>958</sup> SD 6/16/73.



Of course, he said nothing that would have violated the seal of confession, but he gave it to understand that he was the Nuncio's confessor.

After a while, he got up and said his goodbyes: "So, Dr. Plinio, see you soon."<sup>959</sup>

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The following day, I visited Canon Mayer and told him about this visit. Canon Mayer explained that he was a Jesuit of great qualities and considered extremely intelligent.<sup>960</sup>

From this conversation until the moment when Dom Carmelo was appointed Archbishop of São Paulo, and even after that, I could count on the decisive support of Father Dainese.<sup>961</sup>

## 2. A Report and a Meeting with the Nuncio

Accordingly, I made the report. A few days later, this report was already on its way to Rio<sup>962</sup> through the kind offices of my good and distinguished friend, Father Dainese.<sup>963</sup>

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<sup>959</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>960</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>961</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>962</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>963</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Nuncio Archbishop Masella of 8/04/42. From a letter of Canon Mayer to Father Dainese, sent along with another Dr. Plinio's letter forwarding the report, both dated September 5, 1941, one can deduce that there was some hesitation as to whether the report should be submitted in the name of Dr. Plinio or in that of Canon Mayer:

Dr. Plinio has told me that you have asked him to inform the Nunciature about the situation in São Paulo. As a layman, he is a little afraid of doing the report the way it has been written...so he asked for my permission to present it in my name, or rather, that I show it myself. Father Dainese can easily see that the thing is not simple. For my part, I will not refuse to do anything that can contribute to alleviating the situation of the archdiocese. But I was not interrogated, and maybe the Nuncio will be shocked at such a Report. ... For all this, I earnestly ask Father Dainese to think about it and, after having prayed, to determine how to find what will best serve the interests of the Church in São Paulo.

To this letter of Canon Mayer, Dr. Plinio added his own, calling to Father Dainese's attention "the notes I deemed most typical about the situation of the archdiocese of São Paulo" and asking for "the favor of presenting them to his Excellency, the Apostolic Nuncio" and being "my interpreter with His Most Reverend Excellency." He also wrote about the appropriateness of keeping the document's authorship anonymous in this letter.

From his memoirs and the existing documentation, Father Dainese decided to present the report in Dr. Plinio's name.

For the record, it is worth noting, to understand Dr. Plinio's request that Canon Mayer assumes the authorship of the text, that, given the close friendship and the shared sense of service to a common cause existing at that time between Dom Mayer and Dr. Plinio, as well as Dom Sigaud, it was usual and commonplace for Dr. Plinio to write texts for the use of the two bishops, whose authorship they worthily assumed and Dr. Plinio no less worthily renounced, for the sake of the same cause, as part of a mutual collaboration and understanding that rendered invaluable service to the Church. Incidentally, this is also a

Some time passed, and then, one day, there was a message from Father Dainese. “Look, that gentleman would like to talk to you.”

“When?”

“He is spending this whole week here in Rio. You can come whenever you want.”

That was how I became personally acquainted with the Nuncio and the Nunciature.

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The Nuncio, Archbishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella,<sup>964</sup> was one of the most interesting men I have known. He was in his sixties at the time.

He was from a noble Italian family and the nephew of another great theologian, Aloisi Cardinal Masella.

With a light, ruddy complexion, he was of medium height, had a somewhat square face and very regular features, and was already white-haired. He had a very distinguished attitude and was extremely reserved.<sup>965</sup> He was an aristocrat and a prelate of the traditional Church in the truest sense of the word, an outstanding diplomat, and very well-connected within Rio de Janeiro's high society.<sup>966</sup>

Father Dainese introduced me to him in a large reception room, all gold, with mosaics, furnished in a palatial style.

He entered very jovial and kind, gave me his ring to kiss and said, “Come, come with me.” He led me to a second, smaller reception room, splendidly furnished but intended for more confidential interviews.

He sat on the sofa and asked me:

“Dear doctor, what do you have to tell me?”

I described the whole situation as I saw it.

He listened to me impassively the whole time. His face did not change, and he made no gesture of approval or disapproval: a perfect diplomat.

He had placed me in a position of trust, and I told him all I had to say.

He did not disclose his opinion but finally said:

“Yes, we do need to pray a lot. You pray a lot, and I will pray a lot, too.”

But what his lips did not say, his eyes did. And it was a delighted, extremely kind look, implying that he would act.

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common practice in high-level institutions, including the Holy See, where the pope's advisors often draw up the pontifical documents.

<sup>964</sup> Most Rev. Benedetto Aloisi Masella (1879-1970), by appointment of Pius XI, was Apostolic Nuncio to Brazil from April 26, 1927, and remained in that post under Pius XII. Created cardinal at the Consistory of February 18, 1946, after nineteen years residing in our country, he left Brazil to assume the post of Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments. During the Council, he was part of the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum*.

<sup>965</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>966</sup> SD 7/2/88.

I returned to São Paulo. A series of encounters with Father Dainese followed, with new information later forwarded to the Nunciature.

### **3. Dom José Gaspar Maneuvers to Remove Dom Mayer**

Suddenly, the news comes that Dom José is maneuvering to remove Dom Mayer from his post as Assistant General of Catholic Action.<sup>967</sup>

The Vicar General of the archdiocese, Msgr. Ernesto de Paula, who incidentally was very friendly to us, was invited to become Bishop of Jacarezinho (he later became Bishop of Piracicaba). Dom José planned to promote Canon Mayer to Vicar General instead of Dom Ernesto, thus removing him from the position of General Assistant of Catholic Action.

Dom José was planning to replace Canon Mayer with a priest sympathetic to the aims of the liturgical movement. And I, as chairman of the board, would have to end up resigning. Dom Mayer would be hovering in the clouds, dispatching papers, and Catholic Action would take a different path.<sup>968</sup>

Then, I called Father Dainese and told him about the case. He said:  
“All right, let’s see what we can do.”

### **4. Father Dainese and the Nuncio Intervene**

I was teaching a class at Sedes Sapientiae College when a nun came in to tell me that a priest in Rio wanted to speak to me urgently.

I ran to the phone, and he said, without saying his name:

“How are you doing?”

I quickly figured he did not want his name mentioned and answered:

“Well, how are you doing?”

“I am fine. If your friend should receive an invitation to be promoted, tell him not to refuse. Not to refuse!”

“You can be sure I will tell him not to refuse it.”<sup>969</sup>

I had a hard time giving the remainder of the class. After it was over, I told Father Mayer about the call. He was as mystified by the message as I was.

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A few days later, Dom Ernesto de Paula is appointed bishop. Soon afterward, the archbishop invites Canon Mayer to become Vicar General.<sup>970</sup>

But even so, Canon Mayer accepts the invitation.

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<sup>967</sup> SD 6/16/73. In a letter to the Nuncio of November 27, 1941, Canon Mayer confirmed this by saying, “several persons close to heterodox circles here mentioned that the archbishop would take me away from the function of Assistant General of Catholic Action by year’s end.”

<sup>968</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>969</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>970</sup> The invitation was made on November 25, 1941, for in his letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> to the Nuncio Canon Mayer said, “The day before yesterday, His Excellency the Archbishop invited me to the Vicariate General [and] already told me the appointment would entail my removal as Assistant General of Catholic Action.”

Shortly after the appointment, we learned that the Nuncio wrote a card to Dom José, saying more or less: “I congratulate you for choosing an excellent Vicar General, but do not dismiss his services in Catholic Action. His collaboration is invaluable.”

In this way, Dom Mayer came to hold the position of Vicar General and General Assistant of Catholic Action. Dom José’s attempt to remove Dom Mayer from the direction of Catholic Action was frustrated.<sup>971</sup>

That created a problematic situation for Dom José: Dom Mayer had been endorsed as General Assistant of Catholic Action by the Nuncio. How could he dismiss him without asking the Nuncio’s permission? And if the Nuncio refused that permission, what then?<sup>972</sup>

Father Dainese’s service on that occasion was invaluable to the good cause.<sup>973</sup>

## 5. A Very Meaningful Event: The Apostolic Letter *Com singular complacência*

Two months later, on January 21, 1942, Pius XII addressed to Cardinal Leme the Apostolic Letter *Com singular complacência* [With Special Delight], of which we made a careful and thorough examination.

First, note that the pope addressed a problem of worldwide significance—the Marian Congregations’ juridical situation within the organization of the lay apostolate after the foundation of Catholic Action with a document to the Cardinal Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro.

The Holy Father could have expressed himself authoritatively through his Secretary of State. He preferred, however, to honor the Marian movement of Brazil by addressing Cardinal Dom Sebastião Leme personally and in Portuguese—the official text of the document is in our language.

He also mentioned Brazil’s National Confederation of Marian Congregations and his “beloved son, Cesare Dainese, of the Society of Jesus.”

More significant still was his delight “to learn that the valiant Marian battle lines are efficient collaborators in spreading the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and that they are exercising a fruitful apostolate, through multiple and varied works of zeal.” The pope rejoiced in the magnitude of the role played by the Marian congregations, and expressed his great satisfaction that they “occupy a conspicuous place, as We are informed, in work and fight for the greater glory of God and the good of souls, and are of great importance to the Catholic cause in Brazil as a spiritual force.”

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<sup>971</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

<sup>972</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

<sup>973</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (V) 8/10/54.

What information did the pope have that led him to it? He says it came from the most authoritative and impartial sources:

“You, our beloved Son, have expressed this publicly on many occasions, and so have other Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate.”<sup>974</sup>

Once this document reached the hands of Cardinal Leme, he resolved to publish it on the occasion of a Marian rally that would occur shortly after. At the same time, he urged the Jesuit priests to speak as little about this Apostolic Letter as possible.

So, the Jesuits were silenced.

However, in São Paulo, the *Legionário* devoted a series of clear and precise articles to the Apostolic Letter.

Except for the *Legionário*, no one mentioned the subject at all.<sup>975</sup>

## Chapter V

### The Fourth National Eucharistic Congress

#### In São Paulo

##### 1. The Events of 1940 and 1942

In 1940, Father Mariaux came to São Paulo.

Canon Mayer was appointed Vicar General in 1941, the same year I started writing my book *In Defense of Catholic Action*.

The Fourth National Eucharistic Congress was held in São Paulo from September 4 to 7, 1942.

The Congress was an event of great solemnity. It was also extraordinarily brilliant.<sup>976</sup>

The president was not present, but high-ranking officials were in the gallery<sup>977</sup> -- the federal intervenor (the equivalent of today's state governor),

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<sup>974</sup> “Com singular complacência,” *Legionário*, No. 505, 5/17/42.

<sup>975</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>976</sup> On the day of its closing ceremony, the Anhangabaú Valley [downtown São Paulo] was filled with a crowd of over 500,000 people, who had come from all over Brazil.

<sup>977</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

members of the government and the armed forces, Archbishop Dom José Gaspar, and the Apostolic Nuncio, Dom Benedetto Aloisi Masella, who was accorded exceptional honors as the Papal Legate.<sup>978</sup>

## 2. Tension and Triumph: Speech in the Anhangabaú Valley

During this Congress, things clearly showed how tense our situation had become.

Dom José invited me to speak at the third solemn session in Anhangabaú Park and to deliver the greeting address to the authorities, although he knew very well that I opposed Getúlio.

Before the event, Dom José sent word that he did not want any of the speakers to improvise and that all should submit the written drafts of their speeches for him to see.

So I wrote my speech and sent it to him.

When I arrived there in the evening to speak, Dom José came over to me, very friendly and pleasant, and said to me:

“Dr. Plinio, there is severe resentment on the part of several Ministers of State against the Eucharistic Congress because so far, there has been no eulogy of Dr. Getúlio (he was a great fan of Getúlio). And I would like to ask you to warmly pay homage to Dr. Getúlio Vargas and express our gratitude for his support to the Congress.”

I replied:

“But, Your Excellency, are you ordering me to change my speech now, just before I get up to speak in front of a crowd of this size? Five hundred thousand people are here, and thousands of others are listening to the radio. Do you expect me to improvise a speech in a situation like this?”

He also had another request:

“Since Dr. Getúlio (he always called him “Doctor” Getúlio) had an accident on the road to Petrópolis and has one of his legs in a cast, please express joy on our behalf at his recovery.”

And then he added:

“There is also something else I want to ask you, Dr. Plinio. Since I have ordered that there should be some extra speakers who are not in the program, I want you to keep your speech very short: no more than ten minutes at most.”

I was the only speaker that night who would only speak for ten minutes. I said to him:

“Your Excellency, I calculated my speech for a very short time: fifteen minutes at most.”

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<sup>978</sup> SD 7/11/81.

“Yes, but this speech is too long. Please shorten it in some way.”

My speech was not too long. I said:

“Well, Your Excellency, I will do what I can, but I cannot guarantee the results.”

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The program for that night included a speech by Tristão. Then it was my turn, and the final speaker was the Bishop of Kansas City, Most Rev. John Mark Gannon, who did not speak a word of Portuguese.

Dom José Gaspar was at a table with all the authorities, while I was at the speakers' table, with the Bishop of Kansas in the middle, myself on the left and Tristão to the right. I must have looked fed up because Tristão put his hand on the back of the bishop's chair and bent around behind him to ask me:

“What is wrong with you?”

“I am furious because Dom José behaved to me in this and that way, and I consider this unacceptable behavior.

Tristão said:

“Come on; there's nothing to it. Just do it somehow; sometimes these improvisations come out best.”

I insisted:

“What annoys me is the lack of consideration behind it.”

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When it was my turn to speak, I gave the prepared speech, which took about ten minutes anyway. I also found a way to refer to Getúlio in an utterly impersonal manner without committing myself in any way.<sup>979</sup>

The speech did not contain any compliment to Getúlio. I hinted that he had a propaganda team out of this world. And that the glory of this propaganda

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<sup>979</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

joined another glory, the unanimity of Brazilians around the fight against the foreign enemy.<sup>980</sup> That was all.<sup>981</sup>

What saved me was that the representative of Getúlio Vargas, Fernando Costa (the Intervenor in São Paulo), thought my speech was terrific. He followed it delightfully and interrupted it once, leading others to clap.<sup>982</sup> And the other politicians, seeing that the *Intervenor* was satisfied, indicated they were also pleased.

The Papal Legate, Cardinal Masella, remained impassive. And Dom José Gaspar, seeing the effect of the speech, calmed down a bit.<sup>983</sup>

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When I finished the speech, I passed in front of the Intervenor, Fernando Costa, and bowed to him as speakers do. He then got up to hug me, and I returned his embrace.

Dom José was seated quite far away because of the protocol, but he also wanted to contribute to the general goodwill, so he smiled at me.<sup>984</sup>

Below, the people started clapping, shouting, “Plinio! Plinio!”

Dom José had seen a demonstration of the very popular *antigetulista* position because I made a speech in which, without saying anything negative

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<sup>980</sup> This “tribute” of Getúlio was limited to the following words:

“Rarely, in the course of Brazilian history, has anyone been surrounded by so widespread a concert of accolades and admiration as his Excellency, President Getúlio Vargas.

“It will be superfluous at this point to add one more to so many laurels. The situation of war in which we find ourselves [against the Axis nations], has made Brazilians of all geographical and ideological quarters of the country rise and stand firmly behind the president. This unanimous support of His Excellency’s government is now a patriotic imperative, which Catholics will be the first to honor, on the ground of devotion and discipline.

“But there is a particularly important statement to make here. His Excellency has been reminded thousands of times of the personal reasons why he has gathered so much solidarity around himself.

“It is necessary for the interpreter of Catholic opinion to state that the discipline of Catholics in their obedience to temporal power has much deeper roots, and that irrespective of personal considerations, their obedience to government is based on the conviction that they will, in this way, be obeying the will of God himself, discernible by the light of natural reason and the splendors of Christian Revelation.”

“We Catholics are not and cannot be adherents of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, and for this reason, we refuse to see the august authority of temporal power written in the sand, and quicksand at that, of popularity. That authority is anchored firmly within the bedrock of our Christian consciences” (cf. *O Legionário*, no. 525 of September 7, 1942).

<sup>981</sup> SD 7/11/81.

<sup>982</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

<sup>983</sup> SD 7/11/81.

<sup>984</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.



about Getúlio, I still managed not to praise him, which was enough to qualify as clear proof of *antigetulismo*.<sup>985</sup>

As soon as I had sat down, Tristão once again bent back behind the chair of the Kansas Bishop to tell me: “Not bad, that improvisation of yours.<sup>986</sup> You know that it was even quite elegant in places?”<sup>987</sup>

### 3. “In My State, You Would Have Been Arrested”

At the end of the session, as I was walking down the stairs of the dais, I found myself alongside Agamenon Magalhães,<sup>988</sup> the *federal intervenor* in Pernambuco, who had been my colleague in the Constituent Assembly.<sup>989</sup>

We greeted each other, he took my arm, and we went down together. And he told me, in the slightly sing-song accent of Pernambuco:<sup>990</sup>

“Plinio, Plinio, it’s a good thing you gave this speech in São Paulo and not in Pernambuco.”

“Why, Agamenon?”

“Because I, in Pernambuco, would have sent you to jail.”<sup>991</sup>

That was his way of telling me he had understood perfectly well what I had been doing when I gave that speech. I liked him a lot, so I said:<sup>992</sup>

“I’m not stupid, and I know where to speak. That is why I would never accept an invitation to speak in Pernambuco.”

He patted me on the back, and we said goodbye.

That was how that night ended up being a victory for the Counter-Revolution.<sup>993</sup> It was a standing ovation that I had probably never received before in my life.<sup>994</sup>

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<sup>985</sup> Phone call with New York 1/7/92.

<sup>986</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

<sup>987</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 8/20/78.

<sup>988</sup> SD 7/11/81.

<sup>989</sup> Lunch 7/1/93.

<sup>990</sup> SD 7/11/81.

<sup>991</sup> Lunch 7/1/93.

<sup>992</sup> SD 7/11/81.

<sup>993</sup> Phone call with New York 1/7/92.

<sup>994</sup> MNF 7/16/82.

Count Ernesto Pereira Carneiro invited me to lunch at the Hotel Esplanade in São Paulo a few days later.<sup>995</sup>

I went there expecting a big lunch for many people, but it was just a small party in a little room inside the hotel.

There was also Mateus Pereira Carneiro (who was, in some way, related to some members of my family), Dom Aquino Corrêa (Archbishop of Cuiabá), Dom José Gaspar and myself.

Dom José did not expect to find me there, and I did not expect to find him. But during lunch, we talked as though nothing had happened.

As we left, he took me by the arm and said:

“Is my President of the Archdiocesan Board still very angry with me?”

I said:

“No, Your Excellency, time heals all wounds.”

With the political ability typical of his State of Minas Gerais, he smiled, let the subject drop, and the Eucharistic Congress incident was over.

But this incident showed how great a tension existed behind all the amiability. And the book *In Defense of Catholic Action* was not even published.<sup>996</sup>

## Chapter VI

### *In Defense of Catholic Action, The Kamikaze Book*

#### 1. A Turning Point in Our History

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<sup>995</sup> Ernesto Pereira Carneiro was a journalist, politician and entrepreneur. In 1918, he acquired *Jornal do Brasil*. In 1935, he founded the *Jornal do Brasil* radio station. A Constituent Congressman in 1933, he was reelected congressman in 1935 (cf. [http://biografias.netsaber.com.br/ver\\_biografia\\_c\\_1606.html](http://biografias.netsaber.com.br/ver_biografia_c_1606.html)).

<sup>996</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

In evaluating our past, it is important to remember the circumstances that determined the blow struck against the rising tide of progressivism by the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*.

This blow was a *tournant*, a turning point in our history.

This turning point was marked by a voluntary renouncing of a position within the highest echelons of Brazilian Catholic circles in the interest of rendering a service to the Church's higher interests.

Catholic Action was the pipe through which the errors I denounced penetrated the Church. The Church itself was actually at stake.<sup>997</sup>

## **2. The Inoculation with Error Catches the Unprepared Catholics Off-Guard**

I noticed that the progressive trend was gaining momentum in São Paulo and all over Brazil, penetrating the seminaries and gaining influence over the clergy, in short, coming in like a torrent on all sides.<sup>998</sup>

It was a gradual and potent infiltration but simultaneously very circumspect.

The members of traditional Catholic circles were much more numerous than today but were naive and – unlike today – entirely unused for, and unprepared for, infighting within the Church. Because of this, most could not imagine that a bishop could be fostering erroneous ideas or that a clergyman could preach such ideas.

This attitude was so ingrained that, years later, a Catholic came to me and told me: “For me, a Catholic is obliged to ‘*sentire cum Ecclesia*,’ to have the mind of the Church. And that means having the mind of the Roman Pontiff, the bishop, the parish priest, and even the sacristan.”

To take the sacristan as a reference when ordering one's thoughts seems to be an excellent illustration of the point to which this misconception of discipline has brought us.

Therefore, the battle was not between the traditional majority and the new minority but rather between the veiled penetration of a new minority into traditional environments and the resulting gradual change of their ideas.

## **3. A Sacrifice Accepted with Open Eyes**

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<sup>997</sup> CM 4/29/90.

<sup>998</sup> SD 6/16/73.

Since these circles were very naive, somebody had to open their eyes to the ongoing infiltration. That person would have to be willing to suffer persecution, slander, inevitable insults and disparagement, and to accept the risk of being crushed and yet attack the infiltrators like a kamikaze fighter.

I knew there would be a scandal if I did it, and the naive majority would start to distrust this infiltration. And if I failed to do it, that naive majority would allow itself to be dominated completely.

What I needed to do, therefore, was to prepare a thundering denunciation.<sup>999</sup>

So, I made the following calculation:

“I’ll write a book denouncing this whole doctrine.<sup>1000</sup> When the scandal breaks, many will be terrified. They will not join us but will not adhere to the new doctrine either. At least they will begin to have doubts and become more critical. My position as a Catholic leader will be over. But I had better open fire and start the battle while I still have soldiers than wait until everything around me has become infected and gangrenous.”<sup>1001</sup>

I knew perfectly well that the book would create an epic scandal, and it was, as I said, a kamikaze undertaking: I would destroy the opponent but also be destroyed.

It would, therefore, be an act of self-immolation.<sup>1002</sup> But at least the warning against progressivism that this gesture would produce would be bound to slow down the momentum of the infiltration of Catholic Action.<sup>1003</sup>

#### 4. Preparing the Book and Warning Colleagues of the Coming Backlash

I started writing the book in 1941 but only finished it in 1942.

The first thing I did was to send for a collection of pontifical documents from Leo XIII up to and including Pius XI (the reigning pope being Pius XII)<sup>1004</sup> published by the French publisher Bonne Presse to study them. I also had to read many publications about the progressive movement.<sup>1005</sup>

That took many months, and I did it in the greatest secrecy. In the book, I quoted over four hundred pontifical documents to show the errors of that

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<sup>999</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1000</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1001</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>1002</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1003</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>1004</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1005</sup> SD 7/2/88.

movement.

To write the book, I decided to spend a month in Santos.<sup>1006</sup>

My handwriting has been a disaster all my life, and I could not write for any time. So, I knew I would have to take someone to whom I could dictate the book.

I invited Dr. José Carlos Castilho de Andrade,<sup>1007</sup> in those days, the deserted beach had none of the moral nuisances of today.<sup>1008</sup>

Castilho stayed at the Atlantic Hotel, and I stayed at Hotel Santos.

There, I dictated to Dr. Castilho the text of *In Defense of Catholic Action*, which he annotated with that correctness, patience, meticulousness, and sobriety of approach well remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him.<sup>1009</sup>

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The most difficult part was realizing our intention to try to extinguish evil but to do so while causing the least possible resentment and division in Catholic circles.

For this, it was necessary to conduct the fight on the level of ideas, referring to people as little as possible. The only opponents we mentioned were those who had published material on the subject.

If I had mentioned actual people and events in my book, indicating names and places, they would have accused me, at that time, of a “lack of charity.”<sup>1010</sup>

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<sup>1006</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1007</sup> The book *A Man, A Life Work, an Epic Saga*, José Carlos Castilho de Andrade (1924-1988) is described in the following way: “A lawyer and a steadfast and enthusiastic Catholic activist since his youth, he was editorial secretary of the *Legionário*, promoter and director of the magazine *Catolicismo* and a founding member of the TFP. A man of great personal dignity and full of zeal for the cause of the Church, endowed with unusual qualities of clarity and precision equal to his outstanding legal knowledge, he masterfully exercised in an exemplary manner the position of deputy managing director of the National Financial Administrative Board until his edifying death.”

On more than one occasion, Dr. Plínio praised him publicly. In an article for the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* (July 1, 1973), he refers to him as “José Carlos Castilho de Andrade, a lifetime friend and brilliant director of the TFP.” In his *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, he calls him, “The eminent lawyer, writer and editor José Carlos Castilho de Andrade, who imparted to the articles and texts of *Catolicismo* unsurpassed brilliance and perfection.”

<sup>1008</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1009</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>1010</sup> *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*, op. cit.

I also needed to warn those closest to me that the house might fall so they would know how to protect themselves against debris that might crash onto their heads and stand firm.

It was a shock for them: the house would fall! I needed to make my companions aware of the conspiracy that was going on—a conspiracy of men of the altar, which two years ago would have been a “blasphemy” even to imagine. The atmosphere would not have permitted a general meeting, so I had to talk to each one separately. It would take time until everyone realized what the situation was.<sup>1011</sup>

I had to do three things simultaneously: read the pontifical documents on which I wanted to base my arguments in the book, gather the facts that would furnish incontrovertible proof of the alleged errors, and finally, make time to talk to my closest friends and collaborators to show them the extent to which the progressive errors had penetrated sacrosanct Catholic circles, the City of God, the Holy Catholic Church.

Some of my first companions in arms in the Catholic Movement were afraid and fled.

But a handful remained faithful. This handful would be the future seed of the Catolicismo group and, later, of the TFP.<sup>1012</sup>

## 5. The Book’s Revision and the Need for a Preface by the Nuncio

When I finished the book, I looked up the priests on whom I could count: Father Mayer, Father Sigaud and three Jesuits: Father Walter Mariaux (whom, as I have already said, I met during this battle), Father Cesare Dainese and Father Louis Riou, provincial of the Jesuits in São Paulo.

To Canon Mayer and Father Sigaud, I said:

“Here is the book. Will you do me the favor of reading it and giving me your opinion on whether or not it should be published?”

After they had both reviewed it,<sup>1013</sup> I sent a copy to Father Dainese:

“Father Dainese, I want to publish this book; let me know your thoughts.”

Sometime later, he sent the book back from Rio de Janeiro.<sup>1014</sup>

I leafed through it and found a strip of paper with a comment written in ink: “Remarkably accurate book from a doctrinal point of view, highly original even as regards very controversial issues, and wonderfully appropriate,

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<sup>1011</sup> Lunch EANS 8/4/87.

<sup>1012</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>1013</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1014</sup> SD 6/16/73.

providential, very topical,” but without any reference to the book’s subject matter.<sup>1015</sup>

I made an appointment with Father Dainese and told him:

“Father Dainese, I have not the slightest illusion as regards the scandal that this book will create, and I am well aware that by publishing it, I am effectively liquidating myself. I am willing to sacrifice myself as long as the book is published in a way that will ensure it strikes a blow against progressivism. I don’t want to sacrifice myself in vain.

For this reason, I will only publish this book if the Apostolic Nuncio writes a preface for it. With such a preface, I will publish it. Without it, I will not.”

“Well, I will talk to him.”<sup>1016</sup>

The result was that, soon after, I wrote a letter to the Nuncio, officially requesting the preface.<sup>1017</sup>

## **6. A Cold Reception from Dom Pedrosa and Dom Teodoro Kok**

Since I wished to be as courteous as possible to everyone, I also showed the book to Dom Pedrosa and Dom Teodoro Kok to ask for their opinions.

Sometime later, Dom Teodoro called me:

“You know, we have read your book and are ready to give our opinion. Since Monsignor Mayer is the Vicar General, Dom Pedrosa has said he would prefer to address the issue in the Vicar General's house. He suggests a meeting between us, Monsignor Mayer and you, at Monsignor Mayer’s house.”

At the meeting, the two were pleasant but somewhat distant in their manner. However, they were visibly very nervous, especially Dom Pedrosa.

After some small talk, Dom Pedrosa said, with a pained expression on his face:

“Well, I have read the book; here it is.”

I said: “I would be happy to hear your conclusions.”

Dom Pedrosa: “I have nothing in particular to say.”

And addressing Dom Mayer, Dom Pedrosa says: “You have read it, haven’t you?”

Dom Mayer: “Yes, I have.”

Dom Pedrosa: “Well, Monsignor, it certainly is good.”

I asked, “Is there any point you want me to change?”

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<sup>1015</sup> SD 7/2/88. Fortunately, this textual praise for the book was found in Dr. Plinio’s files.

<sup>1016</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1017</sup> The letter was dated August 4, 1942.

Dom Pedrosa: “Well, let’s say this and that point.”

He mentioned two or three unimportant points, minor corrections that had nothing to do with doctrine. I agreed to them immediately.

Dom Pedrosa finally took the book, put it on a table and said, “Well, then, that’s that.”

Since we were in Dom Mayer’s house, I turned my eyes toward him since I could hardly decide, in another’s house, whether the meeting was over.

Dom Mayer replied, always very positive, categorical and pugnacious: “It’s fine!”

The two stood up, said goodbye, and the meeting was over.<sup>1018</sup>

I want to mention their role in preparing the book and the courtesy and consideration with which I treated them to underline the seriousness of the accusations they raised shortly after.<sup>1019</sup>

The book mightily displeased them, but they did not know what objection to make. It was also apparent that I was fighting against a doctrine unwilling to discuss its principles and to show itself openly.

On that occasion, I also realized the extent to which Dom Pedrosa was committed to the new movement and was no longer prepared to change his mind.<sup>1020</sup>

## **7. Letter and Interview with Dom José and Request for an “Imprimatur”**

One thing was clear: I could not publish this book as president of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action without consulting the archbishop.<sup>1021</sup>

In the afternoon of Monday, December 21, 1942, I sent the manuscript to him, accompanied by a letter explaining my intentions and points of view when I wrote it.<sup>1022</sup>

The book, consisting of 400 pages, was in one of those vast folders.<sup>1023</sup>

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That same day, the Archbishop went to the farm he owned in Santo Amaro and read the book or at least a part of it.<sup>1024</sup>

One person who served the Archbishop and was outraged at what he heard about all the plots and conspiracies to advance the liturgist movement told

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<sup>1018</sup> Dinner EANS 6/19/82.

<sup>1019</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VI) 8/11/54.

<sup>1020</sup> Dinner EANS 6/19/82.

<sup>1021</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1022</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father Dainese, 12/23/42.

<sup>1023</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1024</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father Dainese, 12/23/42.



me that Dom José had been up all night, walking around. In the morning, he found the open file folder with annotations on the first 20 or 30 pages.<sup>1025</sup>

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The next day (Tuesday, December 22), Dom José called me to an urgent meeting at the Palácio São Luis, having looked for me in various places.<sup>1026</sup>

He received me more effusively than ever.<sup>1027</sup> He took the folder with the book in it and said:<sup>1028</sup>

“What a huge book, eh? What dedication to writing such a book!”<sup>1029</sup>

But I noticed that his face was rather red.<sup>1030</sup>

Still, very pleasantly, he praised, more or less vaguely, the effort that the book's writing must have cost me. But he did not say a single word in praise of the book, not even out of politeness.

Then he got down to brass tacks.

He started by saying that he had read the first two chapters of the book, taking advantage of a sleepless night, but that he must tell me at once that he was swamped and would only be able to read it very slowly, which meant that the publication would undoubtedly have to be postponed.

Moreover, he did not think the arguments in the part he had read were clear or well put. The sentences were very long, containing “many ideas,” which made the text cumbersome and challenging to read. Therefore, it would be necessary to “air” the book and change the writing style. And he knew “a doctor” who could take care of it. Did I not want to entrust the book to Dr. So-and-So? He would have liked to help me, but he was swamped.

Also, he noticed a few repetitions in the book and that I insisted excessively on specific concepts. Why did I, for example, insist so much on the fact that there were errors in Catholic Action?

I told him that I was aware that my sentences tended to be rather long and that this was a weakness of mine. However, I would not require the services of the “doctor” to fix the problem. I would ask a friend, Pacheco Sales, to help me.

This response was not what the archbishop had wanted to hear, so he told me that in that case, he would indicate the phrases that required “thinning out.” He would read the book “slowly” and now and then would send me a few pages

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<sup>1025</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1026</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father Dainese, 12/23/42.

<sup>1027</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1028</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1029</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>1030</sup> SD 6/16/73.

with annotations as to what I should delete.

His literary objections were no more than a pretext for making the book as innocuous as possible, and he would do his best to kill it if he could.

I replied to all of this with great cordiality, telling him how much I appreciated the collaboration he was offering me.<sup>1031</sup>

I also said I wanted to sign and publish the book as president of the Board of Catholic Action.

He very kindly said, “All right.”

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Such was his charm and charisma that I left the episcopal palace quite cheerfully,<sup>1032</sup> unaware of the trap into which I had fallen. I went out into São Louis Street toward Consolação Street, and only as I walked through the palace gates did the spell of his presence seem to lift.

I thought, “Oh my God! I’m finished. This cannot possibly end well.”

## 8. Dilemma: The Nuncio’s Intervention Launches the Book

Not knowing how to proceed, I wrote a letter to Father Dainese, asking him to inform the Nuncio of the difficulties that had arisen.<sup>1033</sup>

A few days later, a message from the Nunciature, delivered to the Palácio São Luis, ordered the archbishop to hand over the book for publication just as it was.

The archbishop called Msgr. Mayer and said:

“Mayer, I’ve been taking a look at this book. Let’s get it published. Have you read it?”

“Yes, I have, Your Excellency.”

“Well, if you have read it, the imprimatur can be yours.”

“Certainly.”

A few days later, I received the preface from the Nuncio. It was also dated March 25, 1943.

Msgr. Mayer then drew up the *imprimatur*:

“*De mandato Ecclie. ac Revmi. dd. archiepiscopi Metropolitanani. – Monsignor Antonio de Castro Mayer, Vicarius Generalis.*”<sup>1034</sup>

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<sup>1031</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father Dainese 12/23/42.

<sup>1032</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>1033</sup> The letter to Father Dainese was dated December 23, 1942. The next day, December 24, Dr. Plinio wrote directly to the Nuncio himself, giving an extremely detailed account of the conversation with Dom José, and requesting an intervention to resolve the impasse.

<sup>1034</sup> “By order of His Excellency, the Metropolitan Archbishop – Monsignor Antonio de Castro Mayer, Vicar General.” The imprimatur is dated March 25, 1943, feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady.

After a few days, I received the preface written by the Nuncio. It was also dated March 25, 1943.

I took the preface,<sup>1035</sup> made a copy and locked it in my deepest and most solid drawer.<sup>1036</sup>

### 9. *In Defense of Catholic Action Goes to the Printer*

With the preface of the Nuncio and the *imprimatur* of Dom Mayer, I sent the book to a printing company called Ave Maria,<sup>1037</sup> which was run by two priests of the Heart of Mary Church.<sup>1038</sup> About twenty days or a month later, they delivered the first copies.<sup>1039</sup>

It was an edition of 2,500 copies, something they would consider insignificant today but which was quite large at that time. Besides, I only wanted the book read in Catholic circles to avoid scandalizing non-Catholics.<sup>1040</sup>

That first edition cost me five *contos*, a lot of money at that time. It was all I had in the bank then; nothing was left after I had paid the bill.

The problem was that I was responsible for my parents, who were already quite old. If anything happened to them – any illness or accident – I would not have had the resources to resolve the situation. But I decided to trust in Our Lady and paid for the book.<sup>1041</sup>

### 10. Launching and Spreading the “Bombshell”

Well, I had been sure that the book would cause a scandal, a lot of talk and confusion in the circles contaminated by the errors that I was denouncing. I had made some preparations for the coming fight.<sup>1042</sup>

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At that time, a scandal broke, creating a very favorable situation for the release of my book.

One of the priests of Taubaté, Carlos Ortiz, who later became an apostate, wrote an article in *A Ordem* magazine, edited by Tristão de Athayde, containing several doctrinal inaccuracies.

In reply, Msgr. Rosalvo Costa Rego, who was elected Vicar Capitular upon the death of Dom Sebastião Leme and subsequently appointed Auxiliary

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<sup>1035</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1036</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1037</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1038</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1039</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1040</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>1041</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1042</sup> SD 7/9/88.

Archbishop of Rio, published some instructions in 1943 indirectly condemning the article and pointing out that Dom Leme had been horrified by these liturgical trends before he died.<sup>1043</sup>

It was just one more public scandal of this movement we were fighting against, but it increased people's readiness to read the book.<sup>1044</sup>

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Before publication, I sent the book to my friends. I also wrote a letter to about twenty archbishops and bishops, who were also my friends, accompanied by a copy of the book with a dedication.

The reactions were very positive, some even enthusiastic, and there were many expressions of support.<sup>1045</sup>

In some of these letters, I had to suppress certain expressions that it would have been unwise to use. For example, Dom João Batista Muniz, a Redemptorist, Bishop of Barra, Bahia, said that I had denounced a sort of Protestantism in the larval stage, which he had already observed in action in Juiz de Fora. Out of respect for the Bishop of Juiz de Fora – who later unleashed serious insults in my direction – I did not publish this comment.<sup>1046</sup>

After receiving these letters, I lit the fuse of the bomb.

First, the *Legionário* published a story announcing the imminent release of *In Defense of Catholic Action* with a preface by His Excellency Dom Aloisi

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<sup>1043</sup> The full text of these *Instructions*, published on May 21, 1943, was reproduced in the *Legionário*, No. 564, May 30, 1943. It includes this passage: "These lamentable fallacies and other reckless assertions so frequently encountered nowadays, concerning Sacred Liturgy, weighed very heavily on the spirit of our late Cardinal."

<sup>1044</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1045</sup> The following bishops sent a letter of support: Their Excellences Helvécio Gomes de Oliveira, Archbishop of Mariana; Ático Eusébio da Rocha, Archbishop of Curitiba; João Becker, Archbishop of Porto Alegre; Joaquim Ingues de Oliveira, Archbishop of Florianópolis; Antonio Augusto de Assis, Archbishop-Bishop of Jaboticabal; Otaviano Pereira de Albuquerque, Archbishop-Bishop of Campos; Alberto José Gonçalves, Archbishop-Bishop of Ribeirão Preto; José Maurício da Rocha, Bishop of Bragança; Henrique César Fernandes Mourão, Bishop of Cafelândia; Antonio dos Santos, Bishop of Assis; Frei Luís de Santana, Bishop of Botucatu; Manuel da Silveira D'Elboux, Auxiliary Bishop of Ribeirão Preto; Ernesto de Paula, Bishop of Jacarezinho; Otávio Chagas de Miranda, Bishop of Pouso Alegre; Frei Daniel Hostin, Bishop of Lajes; Juvêncio de Brito, Bishop of Caetité; Francisco de Assis Pires, Bishop of Crato; Florêncio Sisínio Vieira, Bishop of Amargosa; Severino Vieira, Bishop of Piauí; Frei Germano Vega Campón, Bishop-Prelate of Jataí (cf. article "Passing the Test of Time," op. cit.).

Many priests also praised the book. To give one example, Father João Batista Lehmann, S.V.D. of Rio de Janeiro wrote, "Dr. Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira had the felicitous inspiration to place his rich knowledge as an experienced sociologist, his temper as a militant Catholic, his preparedness and unquestionable acumen as an active apologist, his burning love of the Catholic Church at the service of endangered Catholic Action by writing a substantial study on the matter that epitomizes the sphere of Catholic Action....clear and dispassionate language, clear and convincing argumentation, sound doctrine, characterize the work" (cf. *Legionário*, No. 601, February 13, 1944).

<sup>1046</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 5/30/47.

Masella, Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil, and an *imprimatur* by Msgr. de Castro Mayer on behalf of the Metropolitan Archbishop, with the approval and recommendation of such archbishops and bishops.<sup>1047</sup>

We then approached the leading Catholic bookshops in São Paulo because, at that time, Catholic books were only sold in Catholic bookstores, and Catholic bookstores sold only Catholic books. The bookshops belonged, for the most part, to the Catholic Movement. The book went on sale in several of them.<sup>1048</sup> This was in June 1943.

The whole Catholic world rushed to buy the book,<sup>1049</sup> which was read and discussed in Catholic circles all over Brazil. It was an absolute bombshell!<sup>1050</sup>

I sent *In Defense* in a special binding to Dom José Gaspar with a dedication. I also sent copies to Tristão de Athayde and many others in the Catholic Movement. In this way, the postal service carried the “bombshell” everywhere.<sup>1051</sup>

One fine day, a beautiful car stopped in front of my house and delivered a letter from the archbishop,<sup>1052</sup> thanking me for the bound copy and expressing his hopes that a spirit of unity like the early Christians would prevail in the archdiocese.<sup>1053</sup>

## 11. First Backlash

I did not have long to wait for the first adverse reactions.

Tristão de Athayde wrote me a letter in which he complained bitterly, saying that I had, under the pretext of defending Catholic Action, made

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<sup>1047</sup> This announcement was printed on the front page of *Legionário* No. 562, May 16, 1943.

<sup>1048</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>1049</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1050</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>1051</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>1052</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1053</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54. The archbishop’s letter was dated June 25, 1943, and stated, “I have no greater desire than to see all the faithful of my beloved diocese of one heart and one mind, for then we would see, in the archdiocese of São Paulo, the same marvels of charity and feats of holiness that, as we know from the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christians exhibited to the astonished eyes of the heathen.” He adds, “Is it not this apostolate of harmony and fraternal love that we should exercise in a world shaken and attacked by the evil forces of paganism?” He ended by implying that he had not read the book: “I shall read your book very carefully, my dear Dr. Plinio, as soon as the numerous and heavy duties of my pastoral ministry shall afford me some leisure to do so.” In personal notes (almost certainly from the second half of the year 1943), Dr. Plinio recorded the “rumors among people close to His Excellency, describing him as horrified with the way the book was spreading.” At a meeting in the archdiocesan Chancery, in the presence of the Vicars General, the archbishop said to Msgr. Mayer it was a pity the book was written in such long sentences “because otherwise, it could have done a lot of good.”

unwarranted attacks against respectable people. He also lamented that I should have set my name to this unworthy campaign. That was the end of our friendship.

The last time we met was in 1955, at the 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress in Rio. We met unexpectedly at Palácio São Joaquim’s Hall after years of no contact.

He was very pleasant:

“Oh! Plinio, how are you?”

“Dr. Alceu, and how are you?”

We hardly stopped to speak to each other; we just shook hands in passing, and I never saw him again. That friendship was over.<sup>1054</sup>

Dom Cabral and others began to say that the book should have been called “*The Defenseless Catholic Action*.”<sup>1055</sup>

The backlash occurred in three separate stages. It failed in the first and second but achieved complete success in the third.

## 12. Threats of Condemnation that Never Materialized

The first stage consisted of threats.

I still remember that, on the way back from a trip to Minas, my friend José de Azeredo Santos (who would later become known as a polemicist of indomitable logic and coherence), then still relatively young, laughing as he told us:

“I have been talking to Frei BC, who told me that a commission of theologians had been set up to refute Plinio’s book. ‘He will be sorry’ – said Frei BC – ‘that he ever thought of it.’”

We decided to wait for the refutation. We are still waiting.

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As I write these lines, I cannot help but remember a letter from a highly distinguished and respectable personage who thanked me for the copy I had sent him and warned me that he would soon publish a denunciation of the errors contained in it. No such denunciation was ever published.<sup>1056</sup>

The one exception was the reply of the Bishop of Uberaba Dom Alexandre do Amaral. I disagreed with his arguments, but I was impressed by the frankness with which he affirmed his beliefs.<sup>1057</sup>

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<sup>1054</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>1055</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1056</sup> “Passing the Test of Time,” cit.

<sup>1057</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat – An Appeal to the Silent Bishops*, Ed. Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1977. Dom Alexandre do Amaral tried to refute *In Defense of Catholic Action*

### 13. A Whispering Campaign Also Fails

When it became clear that the threats of refutation would be in vain, it was time for the second stage: a whisper campaign.

The book contained lots of errors. No one could say what they were, but they certainly existed. No one said anything about a refutation anymore. There was just the insistent reaffirmation of the same inaccurate accusation: “There are errors, there are errors, it is full of errors.”

Poor *In Defense of Catholic Action*: there was nothing they did not allege against it. It was even said to be the work of a cobbler working outside his profession: a layman’s book, trying to lay down the law on subjects that required a thorough knowledge of theology and canon law.

Others claimed that a layperson would never have been able to write such work; they attributed it to Msgr. Mayer or Father Sigaud.<sup>1058</sup>

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An unpleasant coincidence contributed to souring the environment.

When I published *In Defense*, I was utterly unaware that Dom Cabral, Archbishop of Belo Horizonte, had prepared a pastoral letter on the 25th anniversary of his episcopal consecration in which he took a position entirely opposed to that held in my book.<sup>1059</sup> It was an incredibly audacious pastoral letter in which he ardently defended most of the existing errors of Catholic Action.<sup>1060</sup>

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by claiming that the predominant preoccupation in the book seemed to be a “negative concern with destroying error” without considering any “positive elements,” added to the fact that “Plinio has committed many errors, in addition to the superficiality with which he has chosen to deal with such serious issues.” According to the Prelate, the book “documents very well...the lack of the most elementary knowledge of the doctrine of the C.A. on the part of its enterprising author.”

Conversely, in 1949, less than ten years later, Dr. Plinio received a letter from the Secretariat of State of the Holy See, on behalf of Pius XII, saying, “His Holiness rejoices with you for having explained and defended Catholic Action, which you know in its entirety and hold in high esteem, with penetration and clarity.”

Dr. Plinio replied to the criticism of Dom Alexandre do Amaral, refuting all his objections in a respectful manner but in minute detail, in a typewritten document of about forty pages delivered to the prelate.

<sup>1058</sup> “Passing the Test of Time,” op. cit. In Belo Horizonte, some even stooped to the use of calumny. Father Dainese wrote Dr. Plinio from there, saying, “The book has raised quite a stir here: they are even spreading the rumor that the author ‘was’ Catholic but is now simply an ‘apostate,’ who does not to go to church any more, etc.” (cf. letter from Father Dainese to Dr. Plinio, July 9, 1943).

<sup>1059</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1060</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

This pastoral letter was published more or less at the same time as *In Defense*.<sup>1061</sup>

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As soon as this whispering campaign had died down, the events that marked the third stage were upon us, and these finally managed to inflict all the damage that the other attempts had failed to produce.

## Chapter VII

# The Svend Kok Affair

### 1. Background history

A special section of Catholic Action, known as the JUC—Catholic University Youth—was the first Catholic Action branch in São Paulo, founded when Dom José was still an auxiliary bishop.

The office of ecclesiastical assistant had been handed over to Dom Pedrosa. At my suggestion, the first president was José Pedro Galvão de Sousa, who Franco Montoro later followed. The vice president was Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra.

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<sup>1061</sup> According to a letter dated November 3, 1943 from Father Dainese, then residing in Belo Horizonte, to Msgr. Mayer, Dom Cabral was beside himself with indignation:

“On October 21, I was called to the episcopal residence by the archbishop [Dom Cabral]. Among other things, he spoke to me about the book by Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *In Defense of Catholic Action*. The archbishop expressed overt criticism and opposition concerning this work, in particular concerning the following points: 1) Dr. Plinio’s is a ‘negative’ book: it harms the C.A. rather than favoring or defending it... 2) It is, therefore, a counter-productive book: It is like writing a book in defense of the priesthood, but focusing on highlighting its difficulties, the miseries and the scandals of bad priests... 3) With reference to the statement of Pius XI that the C.A. apostolate is part of the priestly ministry, the archbishop asserts that he has found five passages in which the Pope affirms this statement. Now, Dr. Plinio maintains that the Pope cannot have meant this to refer to participation in the strict sense, because that would be heresy. From this, the archbishop concludes that Dr. Plinio is effectively describing as heretical a statement of the Pope himself. 4) The Archbishop is also of the opinion that since Dr. Plinio is no more than a simple layman, he cannot set himself up as judge and censor of bishops or even of the C.A., which falls under the immediate supervision of the Episcopate. 5) Finally, His Excellency pointed out that Dr. Plinio has made a list of ‘heretical’ bishops, which included the name of the archbishop of Belo Horizonte. ...

“As Your Excellency must surely be aware, the book of Dr. Plinio has given rise to extremely heated arguments here. Many people are deeply scandalized: they don’t know what to think, because, on the one hand, the book has been virtually banned from the seminary and C.A. (the President of JFC actually went so far as to call all leaders and forbid them to read the book), and, on the other hand, the book has appeared under the aegis and with the approval of the Pope’s representative in Brazil.”



In our group, in addition to Paulo Barros, there were several other members of the JUC—José Fernando de Camargo, José Gustavo de Souza Queiroz, and others.

As I have already pointed out, Dom Pedrosa's opinions were viscerally opposed to ours, although he did not reveal them too clearly. There was friction between him and us all during his time as ecclesiastical assistant of the JUC.

I sincerely esteemed Dom Pedrosa and always treated him with all the consideration one would give to another.

As president of Catholic Action, I never published anything without submitting it to him and asking for his opinion. I did this out of respect, without the slightest obligation to do so, because he was the ecclesiastical assistant of a section, and I was president of the Archdiocesan Board.

I remember that at a time when the misunderstandings between him and myself were looming very large indeed, and some intrigues were going on, Dom Pedrosa, Dom Teodoro Kok, and I agreed that none of us would ever take any action that might discredit either of the others without first warning the other and making an attempt to see whether one could resolve the misunderstanding amicably.

That was what had led me, for example, to ask for both their opinions on *In Defense* before I published it.

## 2. Confidences During a Trip to Campinas

One day, as I was going to Campinas to lecture the Salesians, I asked Dom Pedrosa whether I could bring Dom Teodoro Kok.

On the trip, we talked like old friends and companions of the Congregation of St. Cecilia about the whole situation, based on the friendship that he obviously still felt for me and also based on the fact that he told me about many liturgical abuses that he had observed at St. Anselm's College in Rome, where he had gone for his studies.

So I told him about some of my impressions and even related some facts regarding the progress of liturgism here in Brazil, referring to Dom José's support for this movement.

We arrived in Campinas, where I lectured and spent the night. The following day, I met Svend Kok and asked him, without really expecting an answer, whether he had slept well.

He replied:

“I could not sleep at all after what you told me! I was so impressed by what I heard about the situation that I did not fall asleep. Are there bishops today whose doctrine is opposed to that of the Pope? To me, this is inconceivable; I cannot understand it.”

He said this not as one objecting to my position but as someone deploring the situation.

We talked a bit more about it and then, traveling back to São Paulo by train, spoke about other things.<sup>1062</sup>

## 3. Scandal at a Meeting of Clergymen

Shortly after, a Catholic Action study week for the regular and secular clergy of São Paulo, presided over by the archbishop, Dom José Gaspar, was

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<sup>1062</sup> Canon Mayer, in a letter to the Nuncio (of May 12, 1945), added that Dr. Plinio had been talking about the same problem with Dom Pedrosa, trying to alert him to the pernicious influence exerted by Father Ramon Ortiz. The relevant excerpt from his letter reads as follows:

“Your Excellency is surely aware of all the support that the archbishop is providing to Father Ramon Ortiz and the other priests of Taubaté. These priests are constantly agitating to promote liturgism, seeking to penetrate all Catholic circles. Lately, Father Ramón has acquired great influence over Dom Paulo Pedrosa, who brought him to Itanhaem to spend the holiday with the university students. Dom Paulo has formerly also invited Father Calazans there and has also asked Father Carlos Ortiz to preach a retreat for the JUC.

“Dr. Plinio was always a good friend of Dom Paulo Pedrosa, as well as of Dom Teodoro Kok. For this reason, he sought to explain to them both the drawbacks of having such priests in such close contact with the students. Of course, the two monks argued that if such priests were dangerous, the archbishop would hardly be supporting them. Dr. Plinio then told these two priests, in the strictest confidence, what he thought about the archbishop. Both of them – and especially Dom Paulo – are very trusting. They were very much alarmed at the statement that the archbishop is aware of the errors of those priests and yet supports them” (Letter from Canon Mayer to the Nuncio, of May 12, 1945).

held on the ground floor of a building next to the church of the Third Order of St. Francis. All the Vicars General were present, as were all the clergy and many priests from outside the archdiocese.<sup>1063</sup>

This study week for the clergy was held at the very moment when my book and Dom Cabral's pastoral letter were causing all that uproar: controversy was in the air because of the effervescence of the two documents.

Dom Cabral's pastoral letter was anonymously placed in the boardroom during the first session. When the priests entered, they saw one on each chair.

Imagine my surprise when I learned that on the second day of this event, Dom Teodoro Kok had risen and, without naming names but very obviously alluding to us, had made a speech denouncing us as conspirators against Dom José Gaspar.

He referred to prominent members of Catholic Action, persons trusted by Dom José Gaspar, who had claimed that there were bishops who held erroneous doctrines on Catholic Action:<sup>1064</sup>

“I will not even tell you the names of the bishops they have accused because this would cause horror to many of them here. But I have come here to protest against the insolence of these elements, who dare to imagine that a Catholic bishop can fall into error in matters of doctrine.<sup>1065</sup> These people judge everything entirely by their concepts, which demonstrates a lack of humility.”

And he repeated: “To accuse a bishop of errors in matters of doctrine...this is unheard of.”

After Dom Teodoro Kok had finished, there was a scandal in that room, a tremendous thing because, at that time, they took it for granted that a bishop could not err.

Dom José had known in advance that this blow was coming. He was presiding over the session and watching the explosion, which he had planned as the subsequent events demonstrated. At his right hand, Msgr. Mayer was a victim because speaking of us was talking about him.

But then, Msgr. Mayer stood up and said:

“We have to be clear about fundamental principles. Dom Teodoro has said that a bishop can never commit an error of doctrine. This room is full of people who have studied theology, and everyone knows that a bishop is fallible. Everyone here must acknowledge this principle. We cannot accept the doctrine of the infallibility of bishops.”

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<sup>1063</sup> The Week of Studies had two sessions, each for a different group of participants: the first took place from May 25-28 and the second from June 8-11, 1943 (cf. *Legionário* No. 565, June 6, 1943).

<sup>1064</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1065</sup> SD 6/16/73.

Dom Teodoro had also claimed that a layperson was never entitled to criticize a bishop. And Dom Mayer countered:

“I disagree. There are cases where a layman can and even should criticize a bishop. That is according to good doctrine and must also be sustained.”

Since he had a reputation as a great theologian, the impact of his intervention and resulting confusion were such that Msgr. Mayer came out of the session with even more sympathy, although opinions were very much against me and the other Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action members.

Here, you can see the Dom Mayer of the good times in all his glory: loyalty, courage, intelligence, and a wholehearted fighting spirit. Daniel had jumped into the lion’s den and pulled the lion's mustache.

Dom José had not expected that intervention from Dom Mayer and ended the session with a few platitudes.

#### **4. Msgr. Mayer Demands to See Dom Teodoro Kok’s New Speech in Advance**

Dom Teodoro had announced that he would continue to speak the next day. After the session, Msgr. Mayer descended from the dais, turned to Dom Teodoro and said:

“Teodoro, if you want to speak again tomorrow, you must show me your speech in advance because you are not the kind of man one can trust to speak without first finding out what he will say.”

Dom Teodoro stammered a reply, seething with fury.

Dom Mayer’s courage went so far as to tell Dom José that he had forbidden Dom Teodoro from giving any more speeches without first submitting a draft to him.

#### **5. “A Deeply Harmful Blow”**

We learned later, from a person close to the archbishop, what had happened in the episcopal Palace that day after the meeting.

Dom José had arrived, looking extremely worried. He called Father Ramon Ortiz, who was present and had witnessed the scene. They paced through the palace's gardens for a long time. After lunch, Dom José left.

The atmosphere was tense inside the Palace. They were not happy with the result of their little plot, but the low blow they had delivered caused us untold harm.

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Dom Teodoro eventually did submit his speech to Dom Mayer. At the next session, he read the text that Dom Mayer had approved. It was a pretty

nondescript speech.

Dom Mayer and Dom José never referred to the incident again. They exchanged comments on other points, which was the same as not commenting. The matter was left hanging, and the incident was considered closed.

## Chapter VIII

# Reprisals Begin

### 1. Backtracking and Coldness

Then, reprisals started.

I was invited to give a speech in Campinas. A few days later, I got a letter from the bishop there, stating that this speech had been postponed indefinitely.

From that day, I noticed several priests' behavior toward me had changed completely. In almost all the ecclesiastical circles of São Paulo – among the priests, that is (the laity did not react to this) – my approval rate, if it had been at eighty before, was now down to eight or less. It was a dizzying slump.<sup>1066</sup>

Several bishops who had supported the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*, seeing that young and influential bishops had turned against us, also began to backtrack.<sup>1067</sup>

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There were some notable exceptions.

Father Louis Riou, the Provincial of the Jesuits, adopted a decidedly favorable attitude to the book, and many Jesuits remained firmly on our side.

However, many others turned against us, and most withdrew from me. This also created controversy among the Jesuits.

In addition to Father Riou, Father Dainese, Father Arlindo Vieira, and, to some extent, Father Joseph Achótegui continued to support me. Father Mariaux's attitude merits some more comprehensive comments. I will come back to him later.<sup>1068</sup>

A good number of bishops and priests of São Paulo and the interior of Brazil remained on our side.

Of course, we also retained the support of the members of the *Legionário* group and the two priests who later became bishops: Monsignor Antonio de

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<sup>1066</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1067</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>1068</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

Castro Mayer, then just a simple secular priest, and a young member of the Society of the Divine Word from Minas Gerais, Father Geraldo de Proença Sigaud.<sup>1069</sup>

## 2. Defamation and Orders from Above

From that moment, our group's situation changed, as we had foreseen: We had been at the top, honored and respected; now, we were at the bottom of the heap. It was a very cruel situation.<sup>1070</sup>

I was then thirty-five years old.<sup>1071</sup>

A tremendous wave of slander against me washed through the Archdiocese of São Paulo and Catholic circles all over Brazil.

I received no more invitations to anything. Like that of an exile, my name seemed to have been buried and forgotten. In twenty days, my situation had changed completely; I repeat, I had known and predicted it would.<sup>1072</sup>

An unofficial order was issued that I should no longer be invited to speak at any, absolutely any, Catholic meeting. I had been one of the most solicited speakers in São Paulo and frequently in other cities.

Sometime before I was ostracized, the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* had held a survey to find out who was the most popular speaker in São Paulo. They published a list of five or ten names, and the second name on the list for São Paulo was mine.

You do not pass from a position as the second most popular speaker of São Paulo to that of a man who is never invited to speak in public at Catholic events without strong and decisive orders.

These orders were fulfilled to the letter and in every detail, except on two or three occasions when I was invited to speak at ceremonies at the Catholic University and accepted. However, the situation differed: the invitation did not depend on secret orders from the archdiocesan Chancery since the University was an autonomous entity.

Two or three times, I was also invited to speak at graduation ceremonies, and there was nothing that the Chancery could do about that either. I accepted these minuscule action opportunities because I did not want people to say that I

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<sup>1069</sup> SD 6/18/88.

<sup>1070</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1071</sup> SD 1/4/95.

<sup>1072</sup> SD 6/16/73.

had become an *émigré à l'intérieur*.<sup>1073</sup> So, I accepted all my invitations; **I did not do it because no one asked.**<sup>1074</sup> ???

These invitations indicated a “subcinericius” popularity – a term derived from the Latin word *cinis*, *-eris*, meaning ashes. “Subcinericius” refers to what is beneath the ashes.<sup>1075</sup>

As of today, this situation has not changed.<sup>1076</sup>

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An exception at this time was the city of Santos.

A friend of ours there, Reinaldo Cruz, a militant Catholic, approached us about this period of ostracism.

He was a great enthusiast of our activities, a first-rate promoter, and a close friend of our Santos representative, Dr. Antonio Ablas Filho. He organized a series of lectures for me in a huge downtown hall called Humanitária, which was packed every time.<sup>1077</sup> All newspapers in Santos wrote about the lectures.

He also invited me to participate in radio shows (there was no TV then).

The Bishop of Santos, Dom Idílio José Soares, always came to my lectures and was very kind. I visited him several times to thank him for that attention.

The situation was paradoxical: We sank everywhere in São Paulo, yet we were extraordinarily popular in Santos!<sup>1078</sup>

### 3. Dismissed as President of Catholic Action

I had spent a few days of rest with the Legionário group at a very nice farm the Jesuits had in Itaici. This is the same place where they later erected a huge building where they now hold National Bishops’ Conference meetings.<sup>1079</sup>

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<sup>1073</sup> In the political language of the July monarchy in France in the 1830s, the term “*émigré à l'intérieur*” referred to the noble Legitimists who left their Parisian homes and went to live at their castles in the interior of France. They refused to participate in political life as a way of protesting against the ascension to the throne of the Duke of Orleans, which they rightly considered a revolutionary usurper.

<sup>1074</sup> SD 1/4/95.

<sup>1075</sup> Tea ESB 3/7/95.

<sup>1076</sup> SD 1/4/95.

<sup>1077</sup> The name designates the Humanitarian Society of Commerce Employees conference hall, founded in Santos in 1879.

<sup>1078</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>1079</sup> At that time, Itaici, in the municipality of Indaiatuba-SP, was still an old farm that had belonged to Jorge Tibiriçá Piratininga, Governor of the State of São Paulo and grandfather of Dr. Eduardo de Barros Brotero, a future member of the *Catolicismo* group and TFP founder.



As we walked in the park,<sup>1080</sup> I received a call from Monsignor Mayer saying he received a letter from Dom José informing us he wished us to leave our positions on the Board of Catholic Action when our mandate was over.<sup>1081</sup>

#### 4. Economic Pressures

Shortly after, I received another communication.

I had been counseling for the archdiocesan Chancery from the time of Dom Duarte under two legal services contracts.

Dom José, through Monsignor Consentino, sent me the following message:

“The archbishop would like to advise Dr. Plinio that his services as counsel to the Chancery will only be required until the end of this month. At the end of the month, the Chancery will terminate his contracts for legal services.”<sup>1082</sup>

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A short time later, another measure came indirectly: inexplicably, the state government issued a decree – we were in a dictatorship – closing the University College where I had life tenure.

I learned later that Dom José Gaspar had requested the school's closure from the governor, Ademar de Barros, who was his close friend.

The decree stipulated that the College would be dissolved and the teachers appointed to chairs in secondary schools in the capital or interior. If they did not want to accept the appointment offered, they could take retirement, receiving a pension proportional to their tenure.

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<sup>1080</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>1081</sup> In the aforementioned notes kept by Dr. Plinio during the second half of 1943, we find, in addition to his dismissal from the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action, the following record of other resolutions taken by Dom José Gaspar at this time:

“1. He took the directorship of JUC and JOC (both male) away from Msgr. Mayer, to remove Dom Paulo Pedrosa, Dom Teodoro Kok and Father Eduardo Roberto, Salesian, the first two being the ecclesiastical assistants of JUC, and the latter the ecclesiastical assistant of JOC, from the jurisdiction of Msgr. Mayer;

“2. He began directing all matters concerning Catholic Action himself by holding personal meetings with the ecclesiastical assistants;

“3. He publicly manifested his displeasure with the *Legionário*, ordering the Chancery and the episcopal Palace to withhold news from the *Legionário* that was distributed to all the newspapers so that of all the morning papers of São Paulo, only the *Legionário* would be prevented from publishing such items;

“4. He sought to avoid any interference from Msgr. Mayer in the Federation of the Marian Congregations, declaring himself the director of the same after the death of Father Cursino.”

<sup>1082</sup> According to a record found among Dr. Plinio's papers, the contract was terminated on August 18, 1943.

Since I was still young, opting for retirement would have meant receiving no more than one-third of my salary. The results of these two measures practically relegated me to poverty.<sup>1083</sup>

Note that the man who acted in this way [Dom José Gaspar] was the one who preached endless tolerance and kindness to all the enemies of the Church...<sup>1084</sup>

## 5. Boycott of the Book in Bookstores

Meanwhile, *In Defesa* was popping up everywhere in Catholic circles, creating exclamations and conversations wherever they read it. Suddenly, however, the Legionário group members responsible for distributing the copies to the bookstores began telling me that many refused to continue selling the book, claiming it contained an attack on the archbishop.

Only the *Livraria Catedral* continued to sell the book. I did not know the owner, but I sent him a message congratulating him on his courage. This man kept selling the book for as long as readers in São Paulo were interested in buying it.<sup>1085</sup>

## Chapter IX

# Dom José Gaspar's Tragic Death

## 1. An Unexpected Tragedy

I was very worried about this whole situation when they called me on the phone during a lecture at Roosevelt High School about a highly urgent matter.

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<sup>1083</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54. Given this situation, Dr. Plinio found himself obliged to teach at the President Roosevelt State High School on São Joaquim Street in the Liberdade district of São Paulo. The students there greatly appreciated him. Upon being informed they would no longer be taking classes with Dr. Plinio for administrative reasons, a group of students organized a petition asking for him to continue teaching the class.

<sup>1084</sup> Quick word 8/23/91.

<sup>1085</sup> SD 7/9/88.

It was José N. Cesare Lessa, an editor of the *Legionário*, who told me, in a hollow voice:<sup>1086</sup>

“Plinio, I wanted to let you know there is a rumor that the plane on which Dom José Gaspar was traveling to Rio de Janeiro has crashed and that he is dead, along with Cásper Libero, Msgr. Alberto Pequeno, his secretary, Father Nelson Vieira, and the entire crew.”<sup>1087</sup>

This news was a huge shock.<sup>1088</sup> No one could have foreseen such a disaster.<sup>1089</sup>

I went back to my class, but I found it impossible to concentrate; the news of the plane crash reverberated in my head, and I could think of nothing else.

I dismissed the students and took a taxi. As we went by the VASP Airlines offices, I saw a crowd gathering in front of the window.

When I came closer, I could see a poster that said: “We regret to inform you of the deaths of Dom José Gaspar, Mr. Cásper Libero, and others.”

I made the taxi stop for a minute to read the poster and then ordered the driver to take me to my law office in the city.<sup>1090</sup> I closed the door and lay down on the couch. I found myself shaking from the shock, and for the only time in my life, I took a tranquilizer called *Água das Carmelitas*.<sup>1091</sup>

## 2. Premonition of a Premature Death

One of the reasons I was so struck was the memory of a scene with the archbishop that had taken place sometime before.

During a ceremony at the Chancery, the archbishop and I stood, discussing matters connected with the Catholic Movement. He mentioned something, and then, I do not know why, he said: “In the few years of life left to me, I hope still to do such-and-such a thing.”<sup>1092</sup>

He was looking casually at the ground, but when saying that, he lifted his eyes and looked at me. Our eyes met, and suddenly, I had a very strong

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<sup>1086</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1087</sup> Amid dense fog, the VASP Airlines pilot made a first unsuccessful attempt to land; during the second attempt, the plane’s right wing struck a Naval Academy building on Villegagnon Island, adjacent to Santos Dumont Airport. Three passengers were rescued alive by Navy cadets; eighteen people died in the crash. The accident occurred at 9:05 PM on August 27, 1943 (cf. *Legionário*, No. 577, August 29, 1943).

<sup>1088</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1089</sup> Phone call with the United States 2/17/95.

<sup>1090</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1091</sup> Quick word 8/23/91. *Carmelites’ Water* is also known as *Melissa Water*.

<sup>1092</sup> SD 6/16/73.

premonition that he was right – that an early death would be his fate.<sup>1093</sup>

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Despite all our disagreements and all the unpleasantness, I accorded him all the funeral honors that anyone could have expected. We even published a special issue of the *Legionário* in his honor.<sup>1094</sup>

### 3. Death in the Middle of a Campaign Against Us

After Dom José's death, we learned that he was so committed to the fight against us and had put together such a formidable campaign to harm us that he had scheduled visits to all the bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of São Paulo, with the specific aim of recommending that they not invite us to anything and that they ostracize us completely.

We also learned that he had gone to Rio de Janeiro to take documents allegedly harmful to us to the Nunciature to destroy our credibility with the Nuncio.

They also found a little notebook of his that a priest who was a friend of ours had the opportunity to inspect. It contained the agenda of the meetings he had set up for those days in Rio, including almost all our friends there.

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In this campaign against us, he had several disappointments.

He had sent a circular to his fellow bishops informing them that I had left the presidency of the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Action.

The bishops sent a very trivial and bureaucratic response, thanking him for the information without any of the eager questions he had expected: “Why? Please send more information.” Some bishops he visited had received him none too cordially.

The old Bishop of Ribeirão Preto, Dom Alberto José Gonçalves, went so far as to tell him:

“Your Excellency, you are young, and I am old. Watch out! The path you are following is the path of heresy.”

Most Rev. Manuel da Silveira d’Elboux, the auxiliary bishop, also told Dom José some very uncomfortable truths.

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<sup>1093</sup> Phone call with the United States 2/17/95.

<sup>1094</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

On a visit to Dom Cintra,<sup>1095</sup> then rector of the seminary and later Bishop of Petrópolis, Dom José asked:

“Cintra, are you also one of those who think I’m a heretic?”

Dom Cintra said:

“No, Your Excellency, I do not think you are a heretic, but I think that you protect the heretics and that, unfortunately, your attitude is quite misguided.”

Speaking about me to Dom Cintra, Dom José also said, “Plinio will have no more reason to live. The only solution for him is to die.”

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All this showed us that although we had sacrificed a brilliant position, we had managed to alert many consciences.

Therefore, despite all our misfortunes, we had, to a certain extent, played the role of Samson. The column had been torn down.<sup>1096</sup> And our dead body, stretched across the enemy’s path, prevented him from marching on. In other words, the sacrifice had not been in vain.<sup>1097</sup>

#### **4. The Gift of Getting Out of the Doldrums, Making the Indifferent Take Notice, and Moving Stagnant Waters**

Toward the end of the 1940s, when attacks against us because of the publication of *In Defense* were at their peak, thanks to some lucky circumstance, I

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<sup>1095</sup> Most Rev. Manoel Pedro da Cunha Cintra (1907-1999) was Rector of the Central Seminary of the Immaculate Conception of Ipiranga and Apostolic Visitor to Brazilian Seminaries. In 1948, he was elected the first Bishop of the Diocese of Petrópolis, a post he kept until his resignation in 1984.

<sup>1096</sup> The episode referred to here is from Holy Scripture. Samson, having been captured by the Philistines as a result of the treachery of a woman, is blinded in both eyes:

“And the princes of the Philistines assembled, to offer great sacrifices to Dagon, their god, and to make merry, saying: Our god hath delivered our enemy Samson into our hands. And the people, also seeing this, praised their god and said the same: Our god hath delivered our adversary into our hands, him that destroyed our country and killed very many. And rejoicing in their feasts, they commanded Samson to be called and play before them when they had now taken their good cheer. Being brought out of prison, he played before them, and they made him stand between two pillars. And he said to the lad that guided his steps: Suffer me to touch the pillars which support the whole house, let me lean upon them, and rest a little. Now, the house was full of men and women, and all the princes of the Philistines were there. Moreover, about three thousand persons of both sexes from the roof and the higher part of the house were beholding Samson’s play. But he called upon the Lord, saying: O Lord God, remember me, and restore to me now my former strength, O my God, that I may revenge myself on my enemies, and for the loss of my two eyes I may take one revenge. And laying hold on both the pillars on which the house rested, and holding the one with his right hand, and the other with his left, He said: Let me die with the Philistines. And when he had strongly shaken the pillars, the house fell upon all the princes, and the rest of the multitude that was there: and he killed many more at his death, than he had killed before in his life” (Judges, 16:23-30);

<http://www.drbo.org/chapter/07016.htm>.

<sup>1097</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

was invited to lecture at the Catholic University of Porto Alegre.

I was received frostily by the archbishop, Dom Vicente Scherer,<sup>1098</sup> but with great interest by the Jesuits there. The latter were facing internal tensions and belonged to the camp within the Society of Jesus that supported me.

Accordingly, they managed to get me invited to lecture in São Leopoldo, about an hour from Porto Alegre and where there is a large Jesuit seminary.

Fr. Cândido Santini, a Jesuit priest in São Leopoldo published a book criticizing Catholic Action, which started a whispering campaign against him. He was marginalized and transferred to São Leopoldo's Central Seminary to work as a teacher.

I do not remember it was before or after the lecture, but the priests invited me to their refectory to have a bite to eat, and there I met Father Cândido Santini.

We had never met but I greeted him very warmly as you greet someone person with whom you share important ideas, and we sat down.

When we were alone in the refectory, Father Santini, who was likely waiting for a moment when he was unobserved, said to me without roundabouts: "You have the gift to get out of the doldrums, make the indifferent sit up and move stagnant waters."

He said it as a persecuted and oppressed person in a very unpleasant situation who saw an opportunity to let off some steam with someone who could understand him. His only chance to say those words was between the exit of a priest and the entry of another. He was visibly trying to cheer me up.

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Father Reus lived and died in this same seminary. Although he was my contemporary, I never met him.<sup>1099</sup>

Father Reus was much older than I was, and I only learned about him shortly before his death. They showed me a photograph of him after he passed away. If I am not greatly mistaken, that priest was a great saint.

I have an indirect relic in my box of relics—a piece of cloth that touched him. I kiss each of my relics daily and that of Father Reuss with particular piety.

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<sup>1098</sup> Dom Alfredo Vicente Scherer (1903-1996) was Archbishop of Porto Alegre from 1946 to 1981. During the 1930 Revolution, he accompanied the revolutionary troops of Getúlio Vargas as their chaplain. On March 29, 1969, Paul VI made him a cardinal.

<sup>1099</sup> Father Johann Baptist Reus was born on July 10, 1868, in the German city of Pottenstein. In 1883, he became a Jesuit priest, and in 1900, came to Brazil. He died in the odor of sanctity on July 21, 1947, in São Leopoldo-RS. His beatification process, opened in 1958, was interrupted in 1974 partly due to the resistance of Cardinal Dom Vicente Scherer, who sent a letter to Paul VI advising against the beatification. Later, in 1993, Cardinal Scherer changed his mind and judged it better to add his support to a letter from twenty-six Argentine bishops asking for Father Reuss' beatification (cf. <http://www.derradeirasgracas.com>, title: Padre Reus).

People continually visit his grave in São Leopoldo's cemetery to take flowers and ask for his intercession.<sup>1100</sup> Whenever any of our members go to Rio Grande do Sul, I recommend that they visit his grave.<sup>1101</sup>

## Chapter X

# The Vacant Archbishop's Chair: A Period of Respite

### 1. Monsignor Monteiro as Vicar Capitular

After the death of Dom José Gaspar, the archdiocese was vacant. Msgr. José Maria Monteiro was appointed Vicar Capitular.<sup>1102</sup>

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<sup>1100</sup> Quick word 6/12/82.

<sup>1101</sup> Little Dispatch 12/9/93.

<sup>1102</sup> SD 7/9/88. The Vicar Capitular, also known as the Diocesan Administrator, is appointed to govern a diocese temporarily during a vacancy in the episcopal see (when the bishop has died, resigned, or been transferred).

Msgr. Monteiro invited Canon Mayer to be pro-Vicar General and asked him to continue as the Board of Catholic Action ecclesiastical assistant.<sup>1103</sup> He also permitted us to remain on the Archdiocesan Board until a new archbishop was appointed.

With this, repressive measures against us also diminished.<sup>1104</sup>

I did not lose my contracts for legal services to the archdiocesan Chancery, and we had a few months of tranquility.<sup>1105</sup>

The situation was prolonged *ad interim*, during which time my book continued to circulate, and the controversy surrounding Catholic Action continued to simmer.

## 2. Disagreements about Maritain

During Dom José's tenure, the *Legionário* started a controversy about Maritain, which continued when the seat became vacant.<sup>1106</sup>

Maritain's books were widely read in Brazil, and his fans enthusiastically accepted their main errors: Rejection of the Jesuits and all they stood for, separation of Church and State, an interfaith and secular conception of a "new Christendom," socialism, "*politique de la main tendue*" (policy of the extended hand), etc.

It was easy to see that the errors concerning Catholic Action and the liturgy prepared people's minds to receive many of Maritain's theses, such as his hatred for the Jesuits and interconfessionalism. His tendency toward pantheism favored the acceptance of socialism and communism.<sup>1107</sup>

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<sup>1103</sup> The Vicar General is the principal deputy of the bishop in a diocese. He assists the bishop in administrating the diocese and has executive power over the entire diocese.

<sup>1104</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1105</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1106</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54.

<sup>1107</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948. The first article that started this controversy (published in No. 586, October 31, 1943) was titled "Jacques Maritain's Doctrine and Pontifical Documents." Its author, Father Arlindo Vieira, S.J., analyzed various concepts expounded by Maritain in his work *Les droits de l'homme*.

Father Arlindo Vieira drew a parallel between the French writer's heterodox theories and the doctrines taught by Pius IX, Leo XIII and St. Pius X, pointing out the irreconcilable differences between Maritain's positions on the role of Church and State in the contemporary world and the Church's infallible teaching on these points.

As expected, many people objected to the article, but very few objections addressed the case's merits. The vast majority attacked the preliminaries: "Father Arlindo's *a priori* attitude is unfair, unfortunate and detrimental to the interests of the Church; Maritain's honor as a Catholic has been attacked; the teachings of the greatest Christian philosopher of our time have been called into question" and so on.

None analyzed the priest's arguments. For example, in its November 14, 1943, issue, *O Diário Católico* of Belo Horizonte printed an indignant article by Fábio Alves Ribeiro titled "Attacks on Maritain," accusing Father Arlindo Vieira of acting in "bad faith." The article was submitted to the journal by Alceu Amoroso Lima, who thus endorsed this violent attack.



This controversy filled entire columns of the paper and contributed to widening the chasm between us and Tristão de Athayde and his supporters.

### 3. *Mystici Corporis Christi* Reinforces Our Position

Just before Dom José's death, the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, which condemned some of the errors I dealt with in my book, was published. That helped us a lot.

After the archbishop's tragic death, during the seat vacancy period, the *Legionário* spread this encyclical, which considerably strengthened its position.<sup>1108</sup> The encyclical pointed out crucial doctrinal errors about the Church's supernatural and legal elements.<sup>1109</sup>

Our opponents claimed that my book reported nonexistent errors, so the fact that the encyclical denounced the same errors suddenly set my arguments on much firmer ground.

## Chapter XI

# Dom Motta Becomes Archbishop of São Paulo, Pertinaciously Opposes *Legionário*

### 1. Dom Motta's Appointment, the Nuncio's Apprehension

One day, I was walking across the Largo de São Francisco, in São Paulo, worrying about my situation, when I met Paulo Monteiro, Minister in the Third

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Given these reactions, the *Legionário* published an article by José Fernando de Camargo on behalf of the editorial team, saying that when the paper published the work of the illustrious priest, it did not take the press' customary attitude imposing that writers assume exclusive responsibility for all they publish in their names. The *Legionário* stood solidly behind Father Arlindo by providing him with the space for his columns and ensuring his articles were displayed as prominently as the importance of the subject required. Dr. José Fernando's article was published under the suggestive title "Maritain and the 'Dogma' of His Infallibility" and was printed in *Legionário*, no. 590, November 28, 1943. Father Arlindo Vieira presented his rebuttal to the attacks against him in the same issue.

<sup>1108</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VII) 8/12/54. This Pius XII's encyclical was published on June 29, 1943, and Dom José Gaspar's death occurred almost two months later, on August 27, 1943.

<sup>1109</sup> "Veneration and Sadness of the Mourning Church," *Catolicismo*, No. 95, November 1958.

Order of St. Francis, a lay position equivalent to that of a prior in the Third Order of Carmelites.

He called me over and said:

“Dr. Plinio, I have heard from a reliable source that Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta, Archbishop of Maranhão, will be appointed Archbishop of São Paulo. He is a close friend of Dom Cabral and is coming to São Paulo to implement the policies of the archbishop of Belo Horizonte here. It has already been decided that the first blow will be against you.”

I remember answering, “Mr. Monteiro, we are in Our Lady’s hands. She will do or permit what she thinks is best. We will carry on with our lives.”

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Shortly after, I went to Barra do Pirai to give a speech at the Eucharistic Congress.<sup>1110</sup>

I found myself in an almost funny situation because Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, Dom Leme’s successor in Rio, presided over the table. He sat in the middle, with Tristão on his right and me on his left. Tristão and I were speakers at the Congress.<sup>1111</sup>

From Barra do Pirai, I went to Rio de Janeiro and planned to go to Friburgo, where I was invited to lecture at the Jesuits' seminary.

While resting in Rio around noon, I received a phone call from Dr. Pacheco Sales in São Paulo: “Dom Carmelo is the new archbishop of São Paulo!”<sup>1112</sup>

I knew he had been one of Dom José Gaspar's closest friends. I thought the Nuncio knew who and what was coming.

Some days later, Father Dainese told me he had seen the Nuncio pacing up and down and told him:<sup>1113</sup> “The archbishop coming to São Paulo is Dr. Plinio’s personal enemy. He is coming to destroy Dr. Plinio and his group. It’s sad, but there is nothing anyone can do. Poor Dr. Plinio, poor Dr. Plinio.”<sup>1114</sup>

I was so shocked and upset that night in Nova Friburgo<sup>1115</sup> that I ran a fever of about one hundred and four degrees; such was the moral suffering the news caused me.<sup>1116</sup> I gave my lecture and, having served God, I returned to São

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<sup>1110</sup> This Eucharistic Congress, held from August 16-20, 1944, gathered ecclesiastical dignitaries from all over Brazil. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Plinio spoke on “The Eucharist and the Priesthood” (cf. *Legionário*, No. 628, 8/20/44).

<sup>1111</sup> Relations between Dr. Plinio and Tristão de Athayde were strained due to the publication of *In Defense of Catholic Action* and the ensuing controversy.

<sup>1112</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1113</sup> Dinner EANS 4/8/87.

<sup>1114</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>1115</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1116</sup> SD 4/8/89.

Paulo to await developments.

I telegraphed Dom Carmelo, congratulating him.

He sent me an extremely amiable response, which I published in the *Legionário*. It was addressed to me as President of the Archdiocesan Board and called me a “courageous Catholic leader” and other things in the same vein.<sup>1117</sup>

To this day, I do not know why he sent me this telegram.<sup>1118</sup>

## 2. Honorable Invitation from the Nuncio as a Consolation Prize

A few months later, Father Dainese invited me to lecture at the Municipal Theater during a solemn session of the Federation of Marian Congregations of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>1119</sup>

An invitation to speak at Rio’s Municipal Theater was considered a great honor, even though I was relatively young.

It was apparent that Father Dainese had procured this invitation for me as an act of kindness after all our struggles.<sup>1120</sup> Behind his initiative was the Nuncio, who wished me to appear at the Municipal Theater because he wanted to flatter and encourage me a little.<sup>1121</sup>

Arriving at the theater, I saw a colossal table of honor placed there. At that table were Father Riou, the Apostolic Nuncio Dom Aloisi Masella, Father Dainese and many political figures and intellectuals, including the minister of Agriculture of the Getúlio Vargas government, Dr. Apolonio Sales.

They called me to the table, played some music, and after two other speakers, it was my turn. In that speech, I planted countless barbs into the flesh of the progressive faction.

I glanced at the Nuncio. His face was as impassive as ever. I looked at Apolonio Sales, who was smiling. I looked at Father Dainese; he, too, was impassive.

There was an ovation when I finished that impassioned and long

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<sup>1117</sup> Dom Carlos Carmelo was still in Maranhão when he sent his telegram on September 14, 1944, in which he said: “To the valiant President of Catholic Action and Director of the *Legionário*, a grateful embrace and blessing, Archbishop Carlos Carmelo.”

<sup>1118</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1119</sup> This session was held on November 29, 1944, to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Dom Vital Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira, the great bishop and martyr of Pernambuco, protagonist of the *Religious Question* that had shaken the Empire in the nineteenth century (cf. *Legionário*, No. 645, December 17, 1944).

<sup>1120</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>1121</sup> Dinner EANS 4/8/87.

speech.<sup>1122</sup> Apolonio Sales even left his seat to hug me.<sup>1123</sup>

### 3. Pastoral Greeting Praises Getúlio, Orders *Legionário* to Be Quiet

After that, things happened very quickly.

Dom Carlos Carmelo traveled from Maranhão to Rio de Janeiro on a Brazilian Air Force (FAB) plane with the full support of Getúlio Vargas.<sup>1124</sup>

He issued his first pastoral letter even before coming to São Paulo. In one of its passages, he extolled Getúlio as the man who had introduced social legislation.<sup>1125</sup>

The pastoral letter contained praise for Getúlio Vargas and a shot against us. From beginning to end, this document may be qualified as a formal indictment of the *Legionário*.<sup>1126</sup>

Then I learned, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Dom Paulo Pedrosa, Prior of the Benedictine Monastery, had taken a plane to Maranhão to set Dom Carmelo against us even more thoroughly. Nor did I doubt that this pastoral letter resulted from Dom Pedrosa's maneuvering.<sup>1127</sup>

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<sup>1122</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>1123</sup> SD 4/8/89.

<sup>1124</sup> Appointed Archbishop of São Paulo on August 13, 1944, he took over by proxy on September 7 but only arrived in São Paulo on November 16. The installation ceremony was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of the same month (cf. *Legionário*, No. 641, 11/19/44).

<sup>1125</sup> Below are the laudatory words to the president contained in that Pastoral Letter “given and passed at the presbytery of the Parish Church of São João Batista da Lagoa in Rio de Janeiro” on October 29, 1944, Feast of Christ the King: “To the distinguished President of the Republic, Dr. Getúlio Vargas, our respectful greetings both in our capacity as a Brazilian citizen and as a bishop of the Church of God. We, the Catholics of Brazil, cannot fail to proclaim with sincere gratitude the praiseworthy works of your government that touch us more closely: the exemplary and Christian labor legislation,” etc. (cf. *Legionário*, No. 641, 11/19/44).

<sup>1126</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1127</sup> SD 4/8/89. This information was confirmed, decades later, by Dom Polycarpo Amstalden, O.S.B., director of the College of São Bento in the 1930s and ‘40s. According to him, “Dom Pedrosa, abbot of the Monastery of São Bento, warned Dom Motta about the ‘problem’ of Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira and the group linked to his book *In Defense of Catholic Action* (cf. Frei José Ariovaldo da Silva, O.F.M., *O movimento litúrgico no Brasil* [The Liturgical Movement in Brazil], p. 352).

In a letter to the Nuncio, Dom Aloisi Masella, Canon Mayer referred to the volte-face of Dom Paulo Pedrosa, who had been a good friend and later became a bitter enemy of Dr. Plínio. He complained that Dom Pedrosa “appeared to consider it his life’s work to stir up scandals against us” (Letter of September 9, 1944).

In another letter to the Nuncio, also dated September 9, 1944, Canon Mayer pointed to a possible cause of that change: “Since the brutal break with us on the occasion of the Catholic Action study week for the clergy in 1943, the ever-closer alliance between Dom Paulo [Pedrosa] and Fathers Ramón Ortiz and Benedito Calazans is a public and notorious fact. Father Ramón Ortiz has given several lectures to the Jucistas of Dom Paulo Pedrosa, and Fr. Benedito Calazans has been appointed Ecclesiastical Assistant of the JUC at the Polytechnic School by Dom Paulo; the fact that he was ultimately forced to resign from this position was only due to the alarm felt by the Vicar Capitular in the face of the repeated complaints against him raised by zealous parish priests of archdiocese, and to a scandalous sermon preached by his colleague, Father Carlos Ortiz” (doc. cit., of September 9, 1944).

The gist of the Pastoral Letter of Dom Carmelo was this: Catholics should not be divided. Controversies are the work of the devil and are always bad. Truth without charity does not help anyone. And charity should prevail over the truth. To implement this doctrine, he condemned, censured, reproached, reprovved and disagreed with all polemics that had hitherto existed between Catholics.<sup>1128</sup>

Having launched some pretty severe invective against those who caused controversy,<sup>1129</sup> he issued a formal order: all polemics must cease immediately,<sup>1130</sup> and one must observe an *armistice* (his expression) until the Episcopal Commission of Catholic Action has had time to evaluate the rumors and accusations circulating about the organization.<sup>1131</sup>

Shortly after, Dom Carmelo banned my book from being used or even mentioned within Catholic Action. He issued the same order to Marian Congregations and other religious associations. His pressure was such that not even Catholic bookstores dared to sell the book, despite the approval of so many bishops and the preface given by the Nuncio, Dom Aloisi Masella.<sup>1132</sup>

In this way, Dom Carmelo put us in the most humiliating position a man can find himself in: we were like the accused about to be judged.

Without saying it clearly, the archbishop implied that he would launch a veritable criminal investigation against us to enable him, once he had collected all the evidence against us, to crush those he was denouncing.<sup>1133</sup>

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<sup>1128</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1129</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father Arlindo Vieira 12/31/44.

<sup>1130</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1131</sup> SD 7/16/88. The *Legionário*, No. 641, of November 19, 1944, published this pastoral greeting in its entirety; the following passages are some of the highlights of that address: "The most frivolous pretexts may serve for those with the evil intent of creating discord. Even among Catholics of our country, the seed of the evil of discord has been thrown among the wheat in the field of Christ.... Catholics who permit themselves to be radicalized by disputes and doctrinal or personal partisanship are attacking the very life of the Church.... Let everyone, in all internal dissensions, ... restrict themselves to the matters within their competence and their duty of state, without creating obstacles for fulfilling the functions and duties of others...At present, let all Catholics refrain from anything that may distract and divide. ... Let us occupy and concern ourselves with the real and objective life in the Faith, that is, with its efficient practice, more than with doctrinal speculations, which are pure theory.... *Let there be a full and absolute armistice between the warring factions! We do not give this as a permanent guideline but only as an emergency measure until the momentous matters in question have been judged by the Episcopal Commission of Catholic Action.* ... Let Catholic Action be recognized as an institution officially incorporated into our pastoral ministry" (emphasis added).

<sup>1132</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga SJ, 4/30/48.

<sup>1133</sup> Dinner 12/31/93.

I wrote an article in the *Legionário* titled “Armistice” (the word used by the archbishop), commenting on his pastoral greeting and saying more or less the following: “What a wise pastoral letter! Finally, it promises a decision. We have never desired anything but a decision; we will now be silent because we have the prospect of a decision. And we will wholeheartedly accept this decision.”<sup>1134</sup>

I sent this article to the archbishop along with a very respectful letter. There was no answer.

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I visited him in the days following his inauguration. He received me very pleasantly, even making me sit on the sofa beside him.

Soon after, Canon Mayer, Father Sigaud and I, in our capacity as directors of the male branch of Catholic Action, made another visit to Dom Carlos Carmelo. Once again, he received us in the friendliest way.

#### 4. The Archbishop’s Hostile and Violent Attitudes

A few days later, Canon Mayer organized a tribute to the archbishop from the organization of Female Catholic Youth. Several hundred young ladies from various cities and families across the social spectrum were present, all members of Catholic Action.

Dom Carlos Carmelo arrived in a terrible mood. He had not wanted to come, and it cost considerable effort to make him show himself. He made a speech of accusations against Canon Mayer without mentioning him directly.

On this occasion, he described himself as a very upright person who hated subterfuge and people who speak ill of others and that his doctrine was peace, peace, peace; he had come here to preach love.

He ended by saying he was like a train engine going down the tracks<sup>1135</sup> that would crush every obstacle and brook no reply from anyone. He would tear

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<sup>1134</sup> In the same issue, the *Legionário* published not only the pastoral letter of Dom Carlos Carmelo but also Dr. Plinio’s article “Armistice,” the latter very respectful and dignified, but at the same time giving proof of considerable audacity, since he said:

“His Excellency has promised us a judgment of the Episcopal Commission on the ‘momentous matters’ relating to C.A. This is, indeed, a golden promise. Every act of the Magisterium of the Church is a jewel. And for that, His Excellency...has called for an ‘armistice.’ The *Legionário* enters into this ‘armistice’ not only in obedience to the august order but wholeheartedly.... A distinguished priest...advised me to keep silent concerning C.A. issues...I answered him that, to my mind, peace in the stagnation of ambiguity would be ruinous for C.A., But peace in sight of a solution to the disputed points is my golden dream....What more could a soul thirsting for the Truth wish for? The statement of the Episcopal Commission will be a real watershed... From the authority of the Episcopal Commission...we await the living water of Truth, with the thirsty and scorching craving of the deer ‘ad fontes aquarum’” (“Armistice,” *Legionário*, No. 641, November 19, 1944).

<sup>1135</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/17/93.

anyone who resisted him to shred, just like a locomotive shatters the obstacles in its path.<sup>1136</sup>

He also said that the obsession with the pope should have limits. In his view, the bishop and the pope were precisely on the same level within the hierarchy of Orders; the pope was the judge of the bishops only from the standpoint of the hierarchy of jurisdiction.

This statement was a direct contradiction of Catholic doctrine. The pope is not merely the judge of the bishops. He is the Pastor of Pastors and the one who governs the bishops.

In reply, Canon Mayer astutely limited himself to a speech of thanks. The young ladies clapped and served champagne, and the party was over.

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A short while later, Father Sigaud, whose mother knew Dom Carlos Carmelo very well, visited him at Pius XII Palace.

They met when Father Sigaud walked up an internal palace staircase, and Dom Carlos Carmelo was coming down. They stopped on the landing and had a short conversation.

Father Sigaud explained that he was JEC's General Assistant, had come to present himself to the archbishop, and was working with Canon Mayer.

Dom Carlos Carmelo treated Father Sigaud very coldly. The visit brought no results.

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So was the situation when, after the 1945 clergy retreat, Dom Carlos Carmelo summoned Canon Mayer and rebuked him in the most brutal, passionate and unjust way a man could do to another.<sup>1137</sup>

He said he was very disappointed in Catholic Action, and he absolutely did not want to remain in Canon Mayer's hands. He said he was dismissing Dom Mayer from his position as pro-Vicar General, revoking all his authority, and reducing him to a simple parish priest. Moreover, if he ever heard Canon Mayer declare that a bishop could err, he would suspend him from holy orders.

That was part of the Cardinal's well-laid plan because if Canon Mayer had tried to argue, he would have been able to say, "See? You are proud and insubordinate!"

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<sup>1136</sup> SD 12/15/73.

<sup>1137</sup> The date of this meeting must have been January 13, 1945, because, in a letter to Father Dainese dated January 14<sup>th</sup>, Canon Mayer said he had been ordered to visit the Archbishop "yesterday": "I was called to the palace yesterday by His Excellency the archbishop, and to my great surprise and chagrin...he told me that complaints had been made against me about which he would question me," since it was his desire "to avenge the memory of his predecessor."

Since Canon Mayer made no reply, observing the most exemplary silence, he added:

“There is something else: I have heard they gave the *Imprimatur* for Dr. Plinio’s book without Dom José Gaspar’s authorization. I want proof that he has given authorization.”

Canon Mayer replied:

“There is not usually ‘proof’ in such cases because the Chancery has no written form the archbishop would use when issuing an ‘*Imprimatur ex commissione*.’”

But we had the evidence, as Dom José Gaspar had seen my book and a manuscript with the archbishop's hand annotating its first pages.

Dom Carlos Carmelo obviously knew about this because he said:

“I have also heard that you have one of the original drafts of Dr. Plinio’s book, with annotations on the first few pages by Dom José himself. I want to see it to compare the handwriting.”

In other words, he was calling us forgers. Fortunately, Canon Mayer was clever enough to remain silent and not to say a word.

Finally, the archbishop said:

“Well, you have two parishes to choose from: you will either go to [Freguesia do] Ó or become pastor of Belenzinho. Make your choice.”

Canon Mayer ended up going to the parish of São José do Belém.<sup>1138</sup>

Canon Mayer spoke to me about the draft of the book that was reviewed and annotated by Dom José. I told him:

“Do not send the original draft of the book to Dom Carlos Carmelo. I will not take that lying down if he starts talking about forgery. What I will do is to tell him to send me written instructions to submit these documents. And if he does, I will appeal to the Holy See.”

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<sup>1138</sup> In a letter to the Nuncio, Dom Aloisi Masella (dated January 14, 1945), Canon Mayer recounts this scene: “When called into the presence of the archbishop for a private meeting, I realized immediately that I was facing a judge who was condemning me *in pectus* without even hearing me, and that he had called me only to accuse, humiliate and punish me; he was obviously not willing to grant me an opportunity of explaining, calmly and with filial confidence, what my conscience was inspiring me to say in my defense. The only thing I was able to do during the conversation was to get in a few quick words here and there in my defense, received with doubt and mistrust... Finally, [I was] asked to draft a document answering two questions that His Excellency asked me during the interview; apparently, this document will be sent to Your Excellency. I was also told that if I made any accusation against Dom José in this document, canonical proceedings would start against me. ... Finally, the archbishop told me that he was assuming the direction of C. A., which meant that I was dismissed from my post. He then ordered me to accept a parish, offering me two to choose from: Freguesia do Ó and São José do Belém. I replied that this was a matter for His Excellency but was told immediately that this was no answer and that I had to make a positive choice. I said that I had health problems that prevented me from being as positive as His Excellency would have wished. He then gave me a deadline within a few days and ordered me to choose on or before the said date.” Canon Mayer was appointed pastor of São José do Belém parish on January 25, 1945.



Canon Mayer did not deliver the documents, and the archbishop did not repeat his request.

During the interview with Canon Mayer, the archbishop threatened to bring a canonical action against us, accusing us of slandering Dom José Gaspar by saying that he had committed doctrinal errors.

He also claimed that Canon Mayer had fraudulently obtained his appointment as Vicar General, which was a lie.

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Two or three days later, the Metropolitan Chancery published an edict dissolving all the boards of Catholic Action and appointing new board members.<sup>1139</sup>

In this way, all the young people of Catholic Action cooperating in the fight against liturgism and myself were removed from their positions.

We were also carefully kept at a distance from all essential Catholic initiatives: the Catholic Electoral League, the Catholic University, etc. It was civil death for all of us in this whole field.

We were thus deprived of the means to end the grave danger posed by liturgism.<sup>1140</sup>

All this added to an environment of terror in São Paulo such that virtually all the good felt silent, and only the bad were free to move.

This terrorism reached such a point that when Canon Mayer was elevated to the episcopate by the Holy See in 1948, one of the auxiliary bishops of São Paulo, a devoted agent of His Eminence, prohibited the former companions of Catholic Action from paying their respects to the new bishop under the pretext that this would be “an affront” to the Cardinal.<sup>1141</sup>

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When Dom Carlos Carmelo was created a cardinal (he was appointed archbishop of São Paulo in 1944 and made a cardinal in 1946), I was in Santos and unsure what to do. The prestige of a cardinal was such that since I was still the director of the *Legionário*, I would look bad if I failed to pay homage to him.<sup>1142</sup>

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<sup>1139</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1140</sup> Dr. Plínio’s letter to Nuncio Aloisi Masella 1/1/46.

<sup>1141</sup> Dr. Plínio’s letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J., 4/30/48.

<sup>1142</sup> Quick word 6/30/92. This embarkment took place at Roosevelt Station on January 22, 1946. The archbishop left to Rio on a special train accompanied by a retinue of bishops, priests and representatives of the state government. There he embarked on a ship to Rome, where he participated in the Consistory of February 18, 1946 (cf. *Legionário*, No. 703, 1/27/46).

I wrote him a congratulatory letter and justified my failure to appear in person at the station to bid him farewell.<sup>1143</sup>

### 5. A Series of Disasters

Under the weight of these events, we were pushed forcibly out of Catholic Action, thoroughly humiliated and discredited. We were replaced by precisely those innovators dismissed from their functions within Catholic Action primarily for their deviations. They all returned to the positions they had held before. The priests and laypeople who took over were enthusiasts of the new orientation.

All this coincided with a series of unfortunate events for us.

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Dom Aloisi Masella had lived in Brazil for nineteen years without being made a cardinal. Suddenly, mysteriously, things started moving. He received his cardinal's hat and left the country.<sup>1144</sup>

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Another unfortunate event was the death of José Gustavo de Souza Queiroz, one of the members of the *Legionário* group, whose illness had flared up again, carrying him off after a year.<sup>1145</sup>

Soon after came the news that Father Sigaud would be transferred to Spain.

Before leaving the country, Father Sigaud still rendered us a signal service.

Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, who received the cardinal's hat along with Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta and the Nuncio, Dom Aloisi

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<sup>1143</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Most Rev. Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta 1/24/46.

<sup>1144</sup> He traveled on the ship *Duque de Caxias*, placed at his disposal by the Brazilian Navy, along with the archbishops of Rio and São Paulo, on January 22, 1946. The three of them were raised simultaneously to the dignity of cardinals by Pius XII in the consistory of February 18, 1946. The new Nuncio to replace Dom Masella was Dom Carlo Chiarlo (1881-1964), who remained in Brazil from 1946 to 1954, being elevated to cardinal by Pope John XXIII in 1958.

<sup>1145</sup> He died on March 8, 1946, at the age of 31, from tuberculosis. He had joined the Marian Congregation of Santa Cecilia at a very early age and became a member of the *Legionário* group. A scion of one of the oldest and most distinguished families of São Paulo, he had a truly aristocratic and very pleasant way of relating to people and had, without ever falling into vulgar familiarity, made sincere and devoted friends in all walks of life. He was also of exemplary purity and had a true Catholic ultramontane mindset in the fullest sense of the word (cf. *Legionário*, No. 710, March 17, 1946).

Masella, was returning from Europe.

A few hours before departing, Father Sigaud attended a session where Dom Jaime Câmara promulgated the new statutes of Catholic Action.

Father Sigaud heard things during this session that showed these statutes' slippery side. He passed us this information, which became very useful when they attempted to implement these statutes in Brazil, making a *tabula rasa* of the encyclical *Bis saeculari die* of September 27, 1948.

During this session, as Father Sigaud was passing by, Dom Jaime asked him:

“Who are you?”

It was a surprising question because Father Sigaud was an illustrious priest already very well known.

“I am Geraldo de Proença Sigaud, Your Eminence, a priest of the Society of the Divine Word, now going as a missionary to Spain.”

The cardinal looked at him and said:

“It seems I have already heard your name somewhere.”

“I am honored,” said Dom Sigaud.

On the eve of Father Sigaud's departure, we had a small farewell get-together amid the deepest mourning. I accompanied him to Rio de Janeiro to say goodbye.<sup>1146</sup>

I even remember the place where I took leave of him with enormous sadness: it was a bus stop on the Rio-Juiz de Fora line, near the church of São Francisco de Paula, in the square of the same name. His ship to Europe was delayed, and he would take advantage of these two or three days to visit a friend in Juiz de Fora.

I could not stay in Rio, so I embraced him. As I returned, I thought, “A chapter in my life has closed with Father Sigaud's departure. He is going to Europe, and it is over.”

## 6. A Threat of Canonical Action Makes Church Crisis Clearer

As I mentioned, Cardinal Carlos Carmelo threatened us with a canonical lawsuit.

I was entitled to a sabbatical from the State High School where I taught, and fearing this threat might materialize at any time; I decided to take six months off to read the collections of *A Ordem* magazine, *O Diário* of Belo Horizonte, *Correio Católico* of Uberaba, and other publications of the progressive current to extract propositions I might use in my defense because they contained many errors.<sup>1147</sup>

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<sup>1146</sup> Father Sigaud departed from São Paulo on March 13, 1946 (cf. *Legionário*, No. 711, 3/24/46).

<sup>1147</sup> Magazines such as *Palavra* [Word], of Belém do Pará; *Idade Nova* [New Age], of Porto Alegre; *Lampadário* [Chandelier], of Juiz de Fora; *Presença*, of Salvador, and others served the innovators' current.

Given the slippery language the progressives liked to employ, many of these propositions were doubtful, and I needed to show them to the ecclesiastical censors.

Before departing for Spain, Father Sigaud often visited downtown São Paulo to shop for his journey and came to my house for lunch. I used to show him the stack of documents I was accumulating. He began reading that material and detecting errors. One day, he said:

“You know, Plinio, I don’t think this is what needs to be done. It is not a question of finding a little mistake here or there. It is necessary to deepen the study of these errors and find these people’s hidden doctrine. Once having identified this doctrine, we will know precisely which heresy is behind all this.”

The book *In Defense of Catholic Action* pointed out and explained the erroneous teaching about Catholic Action but did not focus on the errors underlying liturgism. It mentioned just a few errors prevailing there.

Father Sigaud reviewed these publications and found the first data to explain this issue.

Canon Mayer, Dr. Pacheco and I found the subject very interesting, so I asked Dr. Pacheco to prepare a study based on the authors most cited by the innovators: Dom Anselm Stolz, OSB, and Father Romano Guardini.<sup>1148</sup>

By reading these authors, Dr. Pacheco drew a perfect liturgist doctrine outline. He was also preparing a book to refute Maritain's theses, a work that was very useful when he analyzed Romano Guardini's writings.

Based on these studies, we could formulate the necessary arguments in our defense if they started canonical proceedings against us.

On the other hand, we began to see more clearly than ever the size and

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<sup>1148</sup> Anselm Stolz (1900-1942), a German Benedictine, was a professor at the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm in Rome. To give an idea of his works’ pantheistic inspiration, in *Théologie de la Mystique* (Éditions des Bénédictins d’Amay, Chevetogne, Belgium, 1939), he maintained that in the beginning was the Abyss, the eternal Silence, which we call the Father, the primordial and unfathomable source of the divine being, who rests in itself, locked into its own being in absolute indeterminacy [sic]. The divine being is concretized, determined, becoming conscious of itself in the Second Person, the Son (cf. The study by Father Benigno de Brito Costa titled *Sintese esquemática da doutrina e da prática do liturgicismo moderno* [Schematic Summary of the Doctrine and Practice of Modern Liturgism] 1950, drawn up for the use of Dom Mayer on his journey to Rome in 1950).

Romano Guardini (1885-1968) was a priest, theologian and philosopher of Italian origin who settled in Germany, where his family moved when he was one year old. He stood shoulder to shoulder with progressive theologians such as Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. He is considered one of the greatest protagonists of the liturgist and ecumenical movements, and progressive Protestants and Catholics appreciated his doctrine. In 1965, he refused Paul VI’s bid to make him a cardinal. He was a professor at Tübingen and then in Munich, where one of his students was a young Joseph Ratzinger, the future Benedict XVI.

extent of the heretical plot we were fighting, which worked within the Church to introduce a false religion into the very heart of the true Religion.

This was a comfort to us and gave us renewed strength to resist.<sup>1149</sup>

## 7. Focal Points of Opposition to the Book

My book's primary opponents were Dom Carlos Carmelo, archbishop of São Paulo and Dom Antonio Cabral, archbishop of Belo Horizonte.<sup>1150</sup>

I heard Dom Cabral had ordered copies of *In Defense* burned at a Catholic Action meeting.<sup>1151</sup>

## 8. Catholic Action's Episcopal Commission Meets, Fails to Respond to Our Request for a Canonical Trial

During that time, I read in the papers that they would hold a meeting of Catholic Action's Episcopal Commission.<sup>1152</sup>

This was the event the Archbishop of São Paulo had announced a year earlier, at which they would raise controversial issues about Catholic Action. It seemed beyond doubt that my book would be the subject of the Commission's investigation and conclusions.

I wrote Dom Carlos Carmelo a letter telling him I had written my book based entirely on the Church's infallible teaching and papal documents and was willing to defend those truths with my life if need be.

However, if I were wrong in my interpretation of the Roman Pontiff's teachings, I would likewise be willing to accept as false and pernicious everything that seemed genuine and good to my private and fallible judgment. In that case, with God's grace, I would publicly and unreservedly retract all my

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<sup>1149</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1150</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1151</sup> SD 6/16/73. One can gauge Dom Cabral's bitterness toward the book from his undated letter to Dr. Plinio: "...*In Defense of Catholic Action* had better be called A Disguised Attack against Catholic Action...."

It should be added that in Porto Alegre, the archdiocese headed by Archbishop and later Cardinal Vicente Scherer, a well-organized campaign was waged against the book, as reported by Father Dainese in a letter dated June 4, 1944: "In that state, a campaign on a large scale against our ideas, against your book and against what they call the 'intransigent' and 'fanatic' group has been started. The movement is very well coordinated (I wonder who could be behind it?)"

<sup>1152</sup> This meeting was held at the archbishop's São Joaquim Palace in Rio de Janeiro on September 23, 1945, presided over by Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara and attended by the Brazilian archbishops and bishops engaged in mobilizing Catholic Action. On the agenda was a discussion of the reform of the organization's statutes (cf. *Legionário*, No. 686, 9/30/45).

statements and take the same pride in this humility as do children of the world in receiving prizes and accolades.

I added that I was firmly resolved to render the archbishop all the obedience I owed him by divine institution and under ecclesiastical law to the precise extent the Holy Church demanded. This also applied to the Venerable Episcopal Commission, which is about to meet.<sup>1153</sup>

The message was delivered to the chancery by hand with a statement of solidarity with this position paper signed by *Legionário*'s other editors and writers.<sup>1154</sup>

We received no response, and my positions were not judged. We did not know the reasons for this silence.<sup>1155</sup>

Afterward, they informed me that the Episcopal Commission had decided to appoint a subcommittee of priests to draw up a "recommended" list of books on Catholic Action. My book would be excluded from this list, which would be their "answer" to it.<sup>1156</sup>

## 9. Another Letter Asking to be Judged. Dom Cabral's Melodrama Buries the Issue

Months later, the papers began to report a meeting of Brazilian Bishops in Rio de Janeiro, in which they would deal with the Catholic Action issue.<sup>1157</sup>

I did not hesitate and wrote Dom José Maurício da Rocha, the bishop of Bragança Paulista, a letter asking him to read a letter I addressed to the national bishops at their plenary meeting. I requested Dr. Paulo Barros to take the letter there for me.

Dom José Maurício was a very good friend of mine from the heyday of the Catholic Movement, and our friendship continued through my fall from grace.<sup>1158</sup> He was a decisive man from Alagoas with plenty of backbone. Tall and white-haired, he always wore a skullcap and was very traditional, maintaining all the episcopal pomp in his diocese.<sup>1159</sup> He wore a ring with one of the most beautiful rubies I have ever seen. He would offer us that ring to kiss

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<sup>1153</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcellos Motta, 9/22/45 (adapted).

<sup>1154</sup> The letter was dated September 22, 1945, the day before the meeting of Catholic Action's Episcopal Commission.

<sup>1155</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, SJ, 10/10/46.

<sup>1156</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Father Sigaud 12/16/46.

<sup>1157</sup> This meeting was held on the last day of May or in early June.

<sup>1158</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1159</sup> SD 7/16/88.

whenever we spoke to him.<sup>1160</sup>

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I explained my appeal. The Holy See had still not approved my book, and I was afraid our opponents would indirectly try to forbid it at the bishops' meeting.<sup>1161</sup>

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On the eve of the bishops' meeting, once everything was arranged with Dom José Mauricio, I asked Dr. Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra to go to Rio and organize the distribution of the circular letter (dated May 31, 1946) to all the bishops present.

Dr. Paulo worked miracles. He obtained the addresses of all the bishops from the cardinal's palace, took a car and distributed the letter to all, talking to several of them.

My letter was very respectful in tone but an extraordinary challenge.<sup>1162</sup> Enclosed with it was a separate sheet with a list of the theses sustained in my book.

In that letter, I recalled that the book had aroused the most diverse reactions, including approval letters from many bishops and priests of the secular and regular clergy. When Dom Carlos Carmelo requested that discussions and polemics cease, the *Legionário* took this as an order and refrained from any reference to the matters that had so exercised our minds.

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<sup>1160</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>1161</sup> A letter from the Jesuit Father João de Castro e Costa, a former teacher of Dr. Plinio at São Luís School, later confirmed this fear was well founded. Writing from Rome, where he worked at the Brazilian Pius High School, he told Dr. Plinio:

"I thought I should bring your book to the notice of the higher authorities and, therefore, took it to the Secretary of State, Monsignor Lombardi, a great friend of mine, well informed about the situation in Brazil and already aware of the stir that had been created there by the book. About fifteen days later, he called me and asked me my opinion, saying that the book had been examined, I believe by two other monsignors. ... I received the two copies, the parchment and the letter [material sent by Dr. Plinio to be offered to the Pope and the Secretary of State]. I returned to Monsignor Lombardi, who undertook the delivery of it all, as indeed he did. Later, he called to tell me to write to you [Dr. Plinio], to console and encourage you. I asked for some official recognition. He did not want to give that, as a letter from the Secretary of State would offend many people, especially the bishops. Shortly after, I received an alarming letter from Monsignor Librelotto [the head chaplain of the Brazilian Air Force in World War II] telling me that there were rumors that the book would be condemned by the National Commission [of Brazilian Bishops]. I returned to the charge and Mons. L. [Lombardi] told me that that would be absurd: the book is orthodox and, what is more, was approved by the pope's representative. I insisted again that the Secretary should send, if not approval, then at least a word" (Letter from Father João de Castro e Costa to Dr. Plinio, of September 7, 1946).

<sup>1162</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

However, protected by our forced silence, our opponents freely discussed and promoted their theses in their news media, often with sarcastic and bitter references to our positions.

I said we were presenting once again, this time to the entire national Episcopate, the assurance made earlier to Dom Carmelo: If any of my book's proposals book contradicted Catholic doctrine, I would accept with docility all corrections the infallible doctrine of the Church of God might determine and receive them with all the submissiveness required by canon law.

I finished by saying that I desired and asked only one thing for the sake of Our Lord Jesus Christ's infinitely precious blood: That they shed light on these questions as soon as possible, dissipate darkness and confusion, and stamp out all errors even if, as a result of human frailty, the darkness, confusion, and errors turned out to be my own.<sup>1163</sup>

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In addition to this circular letter to the episcopate, I sent a letter to friendly bishops who had praised *In Defense*, making another appeal: If there was any doubt, what could be simpler than to request Rome to decide the issue? I would willingly lend my support to all those who asked for such a decision. After all, if I was right, I could only profit. If I was wrong, what better could I ask for than to have my errors corrected?

That was precisely what the opponents of my book did not want to do. I asked them in vain to specify the point, page or text where they had found me to be in error. They generally stuck to vague accusations and inaccurate statements, which provided no basis for exchanging ideas.<sup>1164</sup>

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The day of the bishop's meeting arrived.

Dom José Maurício da Rocha – a man who spoke loudly, with a northeastern accent, an easy expression and a slightly supercilious air – stood up and said:

“My dear brothers in the episcopate, I bring you good news. Here I have this letter. It is an act of complete submission by Professor Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira. He only asks to be judged. Let us judge him.”

I heard all this later from Dom José Maurício himself.<sup>1165</sup>

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<sup>1163</sup> Dr. Plínio's circular letter to the bishops gathered in Rio 5/31/46 (adapted).

<sup>1164</sup> Dr. Plínio's circular letter to the bishops gathered in Rio 5/31/46 (adapted).

<sup>1056</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to friendly bishops with his circular letter to the Episcopate, 5/31/46 (adapted).

<sup>1165</sup> SD 4/7/79.



Dom Jaime was livid.<sup>1166</sup> Dom Carmelo, red-faced, did not say a word but put on an annoyed and furious face.<sup>1167</sup>

The Archbishop of Belo Horizonte, a far shrewder and more wily man, began to cry. They asked him:

“Why is Your Excellency crying?”

“Because I am the one who will be judged.”

“But why would Your Excellency be judged?”

“Have Your Excellencies not understood what is happening here?<sup>1168</sup> Dr. Plinio, with this letter, has turned the situation upside down. He was in the dock, and we were the judges. Now, the one on trial will be me because I condemned this book.<sup>1169</sup> And for me, an archbishop of thirty years’ service, to be judged is an insult to my old age.”

In other words, since I, Dom Cabral, condemned, the person I condemned is not entitled to justice. Why? Because I am an old archbishop with thirty years of service! Where is the notion of justice in this reasoning?<sup>1170</sup>

The Bishop of Ribeirão Preto (Dom Manuel da Silveira d’Elboux) tried to defend my book during the session.

However, no vote was held. Dom Cabral insisted that my circular letter should not be answered, and Cardinal Jaime de Barros Câmara, who chaired the session, never even put it to the vote, declaring the question settled *ex auctoritate propria*.

So, my circular letter went unanswered.<sup>1171</sup>

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Afterward, I received letters from several bishops congratulating me and manifesting solidarity with me. One was the Bishop of Barra (Bahia), Dom João Batista Muniz,<sup>1172</sup> who praised my “edifying attitude.”<sup>1173</sup> I did not publish any of them.<sup>1174</sup>

The Episcopate upheld the decision not to judge anything.<sup>1175</sup>

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<sup>1166</sup> SD 11/4/72.

<sup>1167</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father João de Castro e Costa SJ, 10/10/46.

<sup>1168</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1169</sup> Quick word with Canadians 8/17/93.

<sup>1170</sup> SD 11/4//72.

<sup>1171</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 10/10/46.

<sup>1172</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1173</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1174</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1175</sup> Just before Dom Masella returned to Rome to receive his cardinal’s hat, Dr. Plinio wrote him a letter saying:

“Your Eminence is aware of what I think about the seriousness of the risk these problems expose the Church in Brazil. I do not see C.A.’s ‘liturgism’ and excesses as mere

What did these letters achieve? – Very much.

I still possessed my letter to the Episcopate and had letters from several bishops assuring me of their full support.

So, I had evidence that I had asked for judgment, and they refused. Their fear of judging me was proof that I was right.

While this part of history has never been made public, I have the documentation, which will be available for future historians.<sup>1176</sup>

## 10. Isolation and Ostracism

While all this was happening, I noticed a growing discouragement among our non-member allies. This meant the ultramontane movement we had built up with “blood, sweat, and tears” was falling apart.<sup>1177</sup> Each day, I could feel isolation and indifference around us.<sup>1178</sup>

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exaggerations by certain cliques of hotheaded laypeople. The evil has put down much deeper roots and threatens Brazil’s fidelity to the Church of Rome.

“While still free to act, I fought against these errors with all my might. For over a year, however, the pastoral letter written by His Excellency, the archbishop while he was in Maranhão has imposed silence on me. Your Eminence will have verified in the issues of *Legionário* published afterward how perfectly I have obeyed this order. ...

“No one can deny that the errors I mentioned do exist. My book appeared well before the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, yet it denounced the same errors that later stirred the Supreme Pontiff’s paternal solicitude. How do I explain my ‘prophetic’ attitude? Was I predicting the future?

“The only point that can be called into question is whether my arguments concerning C.A. were right or wrong. If I am right, they should acknowledge it for the sake of the truth, the preservation of souls, and the exaltation of the Church. If I am wrong, they should likewise say so for the same reasons. I cannot understand this silence in which the perpetrators of error so obstinately persist and from which only they can profit.

“I have already made this offer to others, and I am now leaving it in Your Eminence’s hands: I have been informed that certain members of our Venerable Episcopate believe that I fell into error in my book. ... Therefore, let them denounce my work to the Supreme Pontiff. I will even write a letter to accompany the complaint. In it, I will undertake to retract what I have written, destroy the edition’s remaining copies, and do public penance in any way the Holy Father’s justice may demand if I am found to have been in error in what I wrote” (Letter to Dom Benedetto Aloisi Masella, January 1, 1946).

<sup>1176</sup> SD 4/7/79.

<sup>1177</sup> Famous words from a speech by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill calling on the English to confront head-on the hardships of the war against Nazi Germany.

<sup>1178</sup> In a letter to his former teacher at São Luis High School, Father Castro e Costa, Dr. Plinio described where he found himself: “My situation is as painful as can be. The bishops of the most important sees treat me with open hostility. In Rio, Belo Horizonte, and particularly in São Paulo, I am officially held to be a wolf in sheep’s clothing, which must be kept away from the flock. My name, however insignificant, has been deleted from all lectures, meetings and events. I am still the director of the *Legionário*, a paper the authority pretends not to exist. ... All this resonates strongly within Catholic circles, where I now appear to be viewed as a dubious character by many of those who once held me in high regard. In society in general,

Previously, a *Legionário* employee returned with stacks of letters when he went to the post office to check our mailbox. But now, there were days when we received no more than one or two, and there was one week when we did not get any. This was a first in the paper's history.

As far as I was concerned, nothing could have been more lamentable or straightforward to explain. The progressivist adversary had conquered all key positions.<sup>1179</sup>

Our opponents had influence, key posts, magazines, newspapers, official support, and large publishing houses to print anything they wished to publish. No victory could have been more apparent, complete, absolute, or seemingly permanent.

No defeat could have been more complete, thunderous, and public than ours. Tarré and feathered, we were outcasts, and there was no sign this would ever change.

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During all this, the archbishop of Belo Horizonte was holding conferences of Catholic Action, surrounded by twenty to thirty archbishops and bishops. The presence of the cardinal archbishop of São Paulo lent dignity to these events, which were attended by delegations of laypeople from all over Brazil coming to learn the new doctrines and spread them throughout the country.

Tristão de Athayde was free to come to São Paulo and speak against us with Dom Motta's prestigious official support. We stood in the pillory,<sup>1180</sup> reduced to silence.<sup>1181</sup> That was the cardinal's idea of an "armistice."

Our former supporters would be pushed into a corner or gather there spontaneously. The ranks of those fighting for orthodoxy were destroyed by the only force capable of defeating them: that of obedience.<sup>1182</sup>

We found ourselves in a situation where we had to say, like Corneille's *Le Cid*:<sup>1183</sup> "*et le combat cessa faute de combattants*" – The battle stopped because there were no more fighters.<sup>1184</sup>

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this ostracism is becoming more and more noticeable, although hardly anyone knows the real cause. As a result, I am exposed to suspicions that may even reflect on my honor" (Letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, October 10, 1946).

<sup>1179</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Dom Sigaud, 8/8/47.

<sup>1180</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 10/16/47.

<sup>1181</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Dom Sigaud, 8/8/47.

<sup>1182</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 10/16/47.

<sup>1183</sup> Pierre Corneille, *Le Cid*, Act IV, scene 3.

<sup>1184</sup> Dr. Plínio's letter to Dom Sigaud 8/8/47.

However, my greatest suffering at that time was because the whole “*delendus Plinius*” campaign was not a personal vendetta but the means they deemed necessary to overcome one of the obstacles hindering a thorough modification of people’s religious mentality in Brazil.

That was where all this was tending, and the steps taken were large and firm. Many people saw the danger and quaked in their boots, but almost no one was willing to act. Most key positions were in the hands of the “others.” Inarticulate, disheartened and inactive, the supporters of orthodoxy closed their eyes to the problem’s full extent or cried quietly if they saw it.<sup>1185</sup>

### 11. The Game of “Moderates” in Brazil and the Vatican

To complete this picture of desolation, some sought to present liturgists as people who had erred but whom we had violently and unexpectedly attacked. They were the ones humiliated, persecuted and trampled upon while we triumphed.<sup>1186</sup>

So, they sent out information about Brazil based on half-truths or downright falsehoods. Their correspondents in Rome received and distributed this information and could choose the right time to present it because of their proximity to the Holy Father.

They sought to create the impression that liturgists’ deviations were a futile, fleeting, weak and rootless trend in some sectors of Catholic public opinion.

With this false impression, they aimed to inspire equally erroneous tactics. Indeed, temporizing seemed the best policy to adopt with a superficial movement of eager and excited young men and women.

That fed the idea that the most ardent supporters of liturgism were unconvinced by its teachings but went along out of sympathy or based on personal circumstances such as friendship, relationships, etc.

As a result, the polemics raised here by the opponents of liturgism shocked the sensitive souls of the liturgist coryphaei, who then, for this and no other reason, held even more steadfastly to their opinions.

Therefore, all the polemics here were harmful, and it would have been

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<sup>1185</sup> In this battle, as Dr. Plinio said in a letter to Father João de Castro e Costa dated October 16, 1947, “I pawned everything I had: name, position, time, energy, friendships. ... I did not start this fight for personal gain, nor did I let myself be carried away by the desire to hold positions, enjoy influence, have a career. I would have taken the opposite side if these had been my motives. Dom Cabral and Dom Carmelo did for Alceu and their lay followers what none of the bishops who applauded and supported me ever did for me. This is an easily verifiable fact. If I let myself be carried away by the desire for fame and prestige, it would be enough, even today, for me to change my stance on doctrine, and my detractors with open arms would welcome me.”

<sup>1186</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father João de Castro e Costa SJ, 10/16/47.

better if they had never occurred. So, the elements most obedient to the Holy See, most faithful to doctrine, who could have been most effective in limiting the spread of the errors, were made to look like foolish zealots who should have neither prestige nor office since they would only hinder the solution of the problem.

Therefore, the Holy See should thoroughly mistrust these people rather than give them the means to engage in the salutary fight against error.

Who then should have the trust of the Vatican and all the key positions? Obviously, the “*moderates*” mainly were those who had kept on the sidelines of the controversy for reasons that had little to do with true prudence. In most cases, they lacked sufficient Catholic vigilance to recognize the error and to repudiate it or the necessary self-denial to take upon themselves the terrible difficulties and embarrassments that such resistance would have caused them.

Within this false picture, it would not be hard to present the facts in such a way as to ensure that the errors imputed to the liturgists would be seen as insufficiently grave or widespread to warrant a book like *In Defense of Catholic Action* or a newspaper campaign such as that conducted by the *Legionário* against them.

Their fundamental strategy to solve the problem was inertia, compromise and indulgence toward liturgism.<sup>1187</sup>

In practice, this led to a curious consequence: to proceed with “justice” and “prudence,” it was considered necessary to punish the supporters of sound doctrine for their arrogance and comfort the propagandists of the wrong doctrine for the annoyance caused by the former.

One way or another, some of those who sent information to the Vatican shared this state of mind.<sup>1188</sup> Therefore, it was unsurprising that even our friends, being so far away from the situation in Brazil, should have believed at least some of this information.<sup>1189</sup>

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<sup>1187</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>1188</sup> It was quite noticeable at that time that within the Vatican itself, opposing forces were represented by leaders of the camps who worked for or against the new trend. The former had modernist tendencies, and the latter were heirs to St. Pius X's strong opposition to that current. The game played by these opposing forces, full of vicissitudes and subtleties, was still unknown to the public but was unfortunately reflected in the Holy See's often unclear positions facing the rising tide of progressivism.

Dr. Plinio appealed to the good offices of Father Louis Riou, who was in Rome, asking him in a letter to try to undo this false impression: “I think it would be important to dispel some misunderstandings that are obviously prevalent in Rome and that originate with some informants here in Brazil who are either very artful or else very naive and are disseminated there by other elements no less cunning or naive. These informants pass on the image of the adherents of the liturgist movement as candid cherubs who cling to their errors because they have been a bit ‘*malmenés*’ but who will infallibly correct these errors if only the Holy See abstains from condemning them” (cf. Letter to Father Louis Riou, June 16, 1947).

<sup>1189</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father João de Castro e Costa SJ, 10/16/47.

The danger inherent in such biased information was that it was intended to induce Rome to temporize and abstain from taking action against the liturgist movement because of a fear of the effects of a fight in Brazil. It was also intended to represent the crisis not as the struggle of two opposing tendencies – truth and error – but of three: those who held a radical position, those who held the opposite radical position, and the “sensible” and “moderate” who would be able to constitute a “prudent” and “zealous” center, clever and tactful, and could bring everything to a satisfactory conclusion.

What the proponents of this position seemed unwilling to admit was that the liturgist movement was, consciously or not, a real organization that spread the information that served it, defamed and attacked anyone who opposed it, erected walls of silence around the other side and was implementing a methodical and admirably structured plan to conquer, one by one, all the key positions of religious life in Brazil.

In this scenario, it was pretty impossible to admit what we knew all too well: that liturgists could count on the services of people fully dedicated to their cause who played the role of “moderates” only to climb into key positions and extend their “impartial” protection to the most radical elements.<sup>1190</sup>

This point was critical to them because the invariable choice of a “moderate” candidate permitted many hidden supporters of the liturgist cause to move up through the hierarchy. Those who failed to see through this game would be led to put unlimited trust in all “moderate” elements, who would, *a priori*, be considered as “neutral,” “serene,” and “irreproachable.”

This would make it impossible to prevent the infiltration of what might be called crypto-liturgism in our midst. It also meant that exponents of this *crypto-liturgism* would inevitably reach the highest positions.

In this way, Rome would be induced to adopt a policy of inaction,

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<sup>1190</sup> In a letter to Dom Sigaud, Dr. Plinio expressed his concern: “Our opponents have realized this with infernal cunning. Therefore, while maintaining Canon Mayer and all of us in a position of absolute ostracism, they are now inaugurating a policy of pseudo-reconciliation to give our friends the illusion that the situation is resolving itself.”

In the same letter, Dr. Plinio refers to this state of mind as prevailing during a study week of Catholic Action held in Campinas between October 20 and 27, 1947 (see *Legionário*, No. 781, July 27, 1947): “Canon [“X”] told us that all the speeches were to be ‘moderate’ from a doctrinal point of view. They spoke passionately about the Rosary, exercises of devotion, etc., deceiving the gullible. ... They are slowly regaining an atmosphere of false tranquility. ... It all appears quite orthodox. The good delude themselves and unwarily accept the poison distilled in the meetings, study circles, etc. And this to the point that Cardinal Caggiano [Bishop of Rosario, Argentina, who was present at the event; he later became Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires] stated that he had read my book and that, without ruling on the doctrine, he found himself unable to believe that such errors had ever existed: this is typical of their new tactic.... Everything happens, then, as if there had never been a Canon Mayer, a Father Sigaud, a Plinio, a *Legionário*, a book *In Defense of Catholic Action* in Brazil” (Letter to Dom Sigaud, August 8, 1947).

refusing to permit anyone to act, and thus unwittingly provide the liturgist movement with all the freedom and key positions it aspired to.<sup>1191</sup>

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Assuming it to be true that the victims were on the left and the aggressors on the right, the “therapy” recommended for the “Brazilian case” was bound to be extremely dangerous. Indeed, if one side was to be shot down, or at least left indefinitely to be trampled underfoot by the “Left,” and the other to be consoled, comforted and caressed, the day on which the error would finally have its wings and claws clipped would never arrive. To a great extent, this is what was happening in Brazil.<sup>1192</sup>

Meanwhile, Catholic Action—the pseudo-Catholic Action, I should say—expanded, swallowing up the best young people, deforming them at will and contaminating their minds. It laid the groundwork within the Catholic laity for the incubation of the errors that, not many years later, would bear their fruits of gall and wormwood.

Catholic Action circles continued to be dominated by the influence of Alceu Amoroso Lima. He left the direction of the National Board but continued to publish his opinions, address all matters as he thought best, and advertise his ideas up and down the country.

Cardinal Jaime Câmara thought he should be treated with “charity.” The result of this charity was that in the eyes of the general public, Dr. Alceu had enormous prestige and was free to do all the harm he wanted.<sup>1193</sup>

In any case, this was his inevitable policy concerning the innovators. Whenever informed of their apparent excesses, he limited himself to bemoaning them and recommending “charity.” However, he never hesitated to intervene when it was a question of preventing orthodox elements from attacking the innovators.

All this meant that the innovators could do what they wanted, anywhere and anytime. A good example of this conduct was the following: when it was

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<sup>1191</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>1192</sup> In a subsequent letter, addressed to a professor at the Gregorian University and an adviser of Pius XII, the Jesuit Father Robert Leiber, the draft of which Dr. Plinio helped to draw up, Dom Mayer expressed this concern: “Father Leiber, you are a historian: remember the courteous but superficial attitude of the Jansenists with regard to the pontifical documents, and you will understand what is happening in Brazil.... Our people do not fully understand doctrinal documents and tend to consider the orientation of those in the highest and most trusted positions as authorized and approved by Rome. Public opinion is heavily influenced by the fact that the bishops most recently appointed or transferred to more important sees are, for the most part, friendly to the new trend.... All this creates an environment that is discouraging to the best people. And this discouragement is, in my opinion, the most serious aspect of the whole situation” (letter from Dom Mayer to Father Leiber, July 1, 1952).

<sup>1193</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 10/16/47.

time to replace Alceu Amoroso Lima (who had been in office for more than ten years) as the director of Catholic Action, as well as other members of the National Board, he appointed a disciple and collaborator of Dr. Alceu, as well as others of the same orientation.

We thus faced a paradox: while some saw this *liturgist* crisis, the hypertrophy of Catholic Action, and the wave of *'Maritainism'* as no more than a dispute belonging to sacristies, I realized without a shadow of doubt that it was a latent hydra, a monster of the same size and importance as Protestantism had been. Protestantism, too, initially seemed like a "quarrel between friars." Only later did they realize the actual scope of the problem.<sup>1194</sup>

## Chapter XII

### Seeds of New Life Inside the Catacombs

#### 1. A Small Group's Discreet Resistance

After our "kamikaze" move, we became a small group of six people who resisted, not by making speeches against the bishops who had identified themselves with the errors of Catholic Action but by living in our way, as our consciences dictated.

We did not disobey them, but above all, we obeyed the Church while they did things contrary to Catholic maxims. And our presence, minuscule as it was, had its weight within the whole, as I realized one day when I was discussing legal issues with an auxiliary bishop in São Paulo. Suddenly, he paused and said:

"You know that the cardinal is pleased with your conduct? That's because you stood aside without opposing him and remained discreet, not trying to set people against him."

I replied:

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<sup>1194</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 10/16/47.



“I am glad to learn that the cardinal does justice to my sense of order and discipline.”

He went on:

“Yes, but the cardinal has a complaint. He knows that your conduct is entirely correct, but you appear in public with your friends, going to restaurants, taking walks, and everyone says, ‘See, there is Plinio’s group.’ This represents a little cell of opposition. You stand firm in your principles and will not change. But the cardinal would give you anything to dissolve this group.”

I answered:

“Ah! Your Excellency, this is a different matter. He is asking me to renounce my principles and my friends. As to renouncing my principles, I will never do that. As for my friends, I certainly will not allow anyone to force me to renounce friendships unrelated to the affairs of the Church. These are my private friends; we meet in our homes or rent a small house; we are not a religious association. I will accept no interference with my private life as long as there are no objections to it on the grounds of morality or good doctrine. Should there be such an objection, I will be the obedient son of the Church. But this is not the case. Whatever the monetary price of this arrangement, I cannot possibly accept it.”<sup>1195</sup>

Despite this recognition, the cardinal asked the state government not to appoint me as a professor at an official University, which they had been about to do.<sup>1196</sup>

## **2. Picking up Pieces of the Shipwreck: Various Trends**

Within our isolation, we took what we had been able to salvage from the disaster and tried to weave another flag or even a whole standard with the loose threads from our torn flag.

From the small fragments remaining here and there, we tried to reconnect with several old friends, but they avoided us, frightened and panicked when they realized the sanctions imposed on us.

In addition to being frightened, some of these also cruelly doubted us when they heard those who had taken this hostile attitude toward us speak in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And they told themselves about me: “He was not what we imagined.”

Others understood our position, but unfortunately, they allowed a vile and cowardly fear to direct their actions.

It was not unusual for me to meet an acquaintance in downtown São Paulo who would embrace me and whisper in my ear: “Plinio, you are doing

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<sup>1195</sup> Italy Dispatch 3/26/92.

<sup>1196</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 10/10/46.

well; do not give up,” meaning, “Plinio, keep putting your neck on the line to see if you can save the cause close to my heart; as for myself, I am making no commitment to you beyond a quick embrace and whispered praise.”

After all, it was at least a kind of half-hearted sympathy, a speck of light in the darkness, and it might manifest itself favorably in a future critical situation.<sup>1197</sup>

### 3. Support Points for Future Struggles

In this catacomb-like environment, we did not forget the external struggle. As far as that was concerned, we built on our minimal support and conserved as much as possible.

One of these was our relationship with Father Mariaux, who knew Father Leiber,<sup>1198</sup> who, in turn, was close to Pius XII.

Another point of support I have already mentioned was the bishop of Bragança, Dom José Maurício da Rocha.

There were several other such points. Eventually, new life began to sprout from these points of support.<sup>1199</sup>

## Chapter XIII

# The Small Group

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<sup>1197</sup> SD 4/14/79.

<sup>1198</sup> Father Robert Leiber (1887-1967), German Jesuit, professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University. He was also personal assistant and private secretary to Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, between 1924 and 1958. He worked as a Vatican diplomat in secret contacts with the German resistance against Nazism. He helped the Austrian writer and diplomat Ludwig von Pastor prepare his famous work, *History of the Popes*.

<sup>1199</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

# Is Structured and Consolidates

## 1. The Need to Survive the Shipwreck

It was clear to us that, sooner or later, we would lose the *Legionário*. The problem was: Where would we meet if this happened? The group had to survive.<sup>1200</sup>

In 1946, we were still relatively young. The oldest of us, Dr. José de Azeredo Santos, was thirty-nine and the youngest, twenty-two. We were a small group consisting of no more than ten persons:<sup>1201</sup> Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg, Professor Fernando Furquim de Almeida, Dr. José de Azeredo Santos, Drs. José Benedito Pacheco Sales, Dr. José Carlos Castilho de Andrade, Dr. José Fernando de Camargo, Dr. José Gonzaga Arruda, José Gustavo de Souza Queiroz (who, unfortunately, would die soon after), Dr. Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra, and, of course, myself.<sup>1202</sup>

In Santos, Dr. Antonio Ablas Filho was one of the city's best surgeons. He was two or three years younger than me, or perhaps my age. A devoted father, Commander of the Holy See and Professor of Forensic Medicine at the Law School of Santos, he was very close to us.<sup>1203</sup>

## 2. The Martim Francisco Street Headquarters

We rented the house's ground floor at 665 Martim Francisco Street to gather.

Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg had inherited some money from his father, who had just died. The others were earning monthly salaries so everyone could help with the seat's upkeep.

We bought some furniture, furnished the place modestly but pleasantly and tastefully, and set up our headquarters there.<sup>1204</sup>

No one would evict us since the Martim Francisco Street seat was a rented house. The group would have dispersed if it did not have that place to meet. Having ensured our survival, we made the place into a catacomb where we could live and breathe.

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<sup>1200</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1201</sup> Symposium 1/24/91.

<sup>1202</sup> *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*, op. cit.

<sup>1203</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>1204</sup> SD 9/9/88.

One day, one of us saw the cardinal's secretary pass very slowly in a car and carefully observe the house. Maybe he wanted to see what the lion's den was like.<sup>1205</sup>

### 3. Daily Meetings: Cohesion in Thinking, Feeling, and Acting

This group was so small that it was content to occupy the ground floor of that little house.<sup>1206</sup> There were only three rooms, a kitchen, and a tiny backyard.<sup>1207</sup>

It was a terrible thing to leave the direction and leadership of a Catholic movement spread throughout Brazil and find oneself reduced to a little something like that,<sup>1208</sup> but we would meet there every evening without exception.

We would recall our sacrificing glories of bygone days without pride or bitterness. We would carefully and sadly analyze the relentless deterioration of the religious situation, study doctrine together and enjoy a fraternal and cordial conviviality.

In this way, Providence created the ideal conditions for uniting us.

This gave rise to such a deepening of our cohesion in thinking, feeling and acting as we could ever have imagined. The seed, hidden in the earth, was beginning to germinate.

On our side, in precious and discreet solidarity, a group of young women who had fought with us in Catholic Action against the rise of progressivism were ostracized with us.<sup>1209</sup>

They were the former leaders of the female branch of Catholic Action, who organized themselves in a group guided by Canon Mayer and lived lives different from those of religious associations so we would not lose their collaboration; they later rendered invaluable services to us.<sup>1210</sup>

### 4. Life at the Seat: The TFP Germinates

We all worked for a living, so the seat usually remained empty during the day.<sup>1211</sup> But in the evening, after dinner, we all headed for the seat on Martim

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<sup>1205</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1206</sup> Symposium 1/24/91.

<sup>1207</sup> SD 7/9/88.

<sup>1208</sup> Quick word 1/16/91.

<sup>1209</sup> "The TFP Is Born," *Folha de S. Paulo* 2/22/69.

<sup>1210</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1211</sup> Symposium 1/24/91.

Francisco Street.

When we arrived, it was our habit to visit a small oratory we set up in a back room, with a statue of Our Lady Help of Christians now in the chapel of our seat on 341 Maranhão Street. She had accompanied us from the earliest days of *Legionário*.

After prayers, we returned to the living room to discuss various subjects.

We usually started by discussing practical topics related to running the place or the echoes of what we had heard about the progressive heresy march raging in São Paulo.

We also talked about more or less critical news about national or international politics.

Finally, when the conversations became much more elevated, we delved into subjects of a more intellectual character and addressed fundamental questions. We were all beginners, and several subjects that had become very out of date aroused a genuine interest in us.<sup>1212</sup>

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At a certain point, Professor Fernando Furquim de Almeida began to study the history of Louis Veuillot,<sup>1213</sup> the indefatigable champion of Catholic journalism in France.<sup>1214</sup> He showed us that the disputes between ultramontanes and liberal Catholics in nineteenth-century Europe had been very similar to the conflict between us and the archdiocese.

The liberals had Montalambert on their side and the ultramontanes Louis Veuillot. For us, this was an encouragement in some way.

Professor Furquim studied the history of nineteenth-century Catholics and revealed other names and movements: De Maistre, Balmes, De Bonald, Donoso Cortés, Carlism in Spain, the *Amicizia Cristiana* of Pio Bruno Lanteri and others. All this was a breath of fresh air for us because it made us realize that we were part of a particular tradition of struggle for the Church.<sup>1215</sup>

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I took it upon myself to increase my devotion to Our Lady as much as possible so that I would comment at length upon St. Louis de Montfort and his spirituality.

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<sup>1212</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1213</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>1214</sup> "A Great Step," *Diário de São Paulo*, 3/8/35.

<sup>1215</sup> SD 7/7/73. The first issue of *Legionário* to publish an article by Prof. Fernando Furquim about the matter was that of February 9, 1947. *Catolicismo* took up the topic from its first issue and published a long series of those historical articles primarily under the pen name Bertrand de Poulengy, later signed with the author's own name from issue No. 13, January 1952.

We also spent a lot of time discussing the French Revolution<sup>1216</sup> since we considered it, if well studied, the great parable of the history of the decadent Christian West. As such, it was an emblematic event that contained lessons applicable to all centuries.

I showed them how today's political situations were, in some ways, reflections and repetitions of analogous situations in the French Revolution, and I encouraged them to consider the revolutionary process in history.<sup>1217</sup>

Unfortunately, Dr. Pacheco Sales turned away from our group in the late 1950s. He made detailed studies of the issue of organic society and the point of balance between individualism and socialism. His presentation of these was nothing short of brilliant, as he was talented and very good at developing his subject.

Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg and Dr. José Carlos Castilho de Andrade were still very young. They rendered small services because they were not yet ready to make the intellectual contributions they later made to the group.

At eleven-thirty at night, we would hasten out to get ice cream or something to eat before midnight because the Eucharistic fast started at midnight if you wanted to go to Communion the next day. We would pay the bill at midnight and sleep at our various homes.<sup>1218</sup>

In this way, our internal life gradually began to take shape on a new basis.

We agreed to meet regularly on Friday nights to discuss selected news items from a compilation of newspaper clippings annotated by ourselves, a tradition we started at the *Legionário*.<sup>1219</sup> We would go to Belenzinho and meet at Dom Mayer's house. Later, in our group and the TFP, this became known as the *Clippings' Meeting*.<sup>1220</sup>

The *Clippings' Meetings* intended to analyze national and international events based on news items in light of the principles set out in the essay *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*.<sup>1221</sup>

When São Paulo began to adopt the five-day workweek,<sup>1222</sup> on Saturday

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<sup>1216</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1217</sup> Normal Meeting 7/9/71.

<sup>1218</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1219</sup> SD 4/8/89 & Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1220</sup> SD 4/8/89.

<sup>1221</sup> *Warriors of the Virgin: the Reply of Authenticity – TFP without Secrets*, Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 1985, p.160, note 7.

<sup>1222</sup> The workweek in Brazil used to be from Monday through Saturday with Sunday being the only day of rest. With the *English week*, first applied in Rio de Janeiro in 1945, this rest period began on Saturday afternoon.

afternoons, we made it a habit to visit exhibits, take car trips or pursue entertainment that would provide some distraction.

So, over time, a structure institutionalizing our group's internal life appeared. It was the first foreshadowing of the structure of what would later become the TFP. Our Lady favored this structure.<sup>1223</sup>

## 5. The Genesis of the Documentation Service

Inevitably, our work focused on our struggle.

At the headquarters on Martim Francisco Street, we installed a small section where we could read the newspapers and progressive magazines published in Brazil.

For months and months, I read this Catholic documentation reflecting the positions of the liturgist movement and kept finding new doctrinal errors.<sup>1224</sup>

I found much more interesting and illustrative material about the direction of the progressive revolution within the Church in these Brazilian publications of the Liturgical Movement and Catholic Action than in the major European newspapers and magazines.

There was a reason for this. The secular priests who had studied in Rome or other major European cities returned to Brazil with their heads stuffed full of new ideas. Most of them maintained correspondence with centers of the same kind of thought in the old continent and would receive books and publications from there that were not publicly available here.

In other words, they constantly received the latest, most audacious material, which they would print in their little magazines and newsletters to train their progressive groups.

The exact process was repeated with religious priests within the various religious orders, including the Society of Jesus. All these orders included some priests who had graduated from one of the ecclesiastical universities maintained by their respective orders in Europe. They returned with the poisoned barb firmly implanted in their minds and, using the channels at the disposal of these orders in Brazil, spread what they had learned in Europe.

Several lay people also received this material from the clergy and published articles spreading progressivist ideas in the local newsletter of the religious order, the parish or the city.

I read and annotated all this.<sup>1225</sup>

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<sup>1223</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1224</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>1225</sup> RR 2/3/90.

## 6. Photo Service, “Shooting at the Moon”

Then, Drs. José Fernando de Camargo, José Carlos Castilho de Andrade, and Adolpho Lindenberg photographed the selected documents in a lab we had installed in the backroom of the Martim Francisco Street headquarters.

At that time, there were none of the subtleties of today’s photography. They developed the photographs on vast sheets of paper, which we had to save money to buy.

I commented on them<sup>1226</sup> and we sent them to the Vatican’s highest authorities, including Pope Pius XII, through people whom we knew very little but were willing to render us this service. Dr. Paulo used to say that we were “shooting at the moon.”<sup>1227</sup>

Did this work? It did!<sup>1228</sup> But in our catacomb, we did not receive any response.<sup>1229</sup>

I received proof that it had worked on my trip to Rome in 1950 when I found that the Holy See had paid close attention to the material we had sent.<sup>1230</sup>

We used to send the material via Father Dainese, Father Mariaux, Father Castro e Costa,<sup>1231</sup> and through other channels that opened up over time.<sup>1232</sup>

In 1950, Father Mariaux gave me a letter of introduction to Father Leiber, the Pope’s confessor, who had received these documents. I will come back to my audience with Father Leiber later. He told me, “Your documents are stored here,” and let me understand that he had submitted them to Pius XII.

Several contacts at the Vatican confirmed that the documents we had sent him were all circulated.

Thus, on the house’s ground floor on Martim Francisco St., everything appeared to be “locked in,” but – and this was always the way of Providence for us – there was a pipe leading out into the purest air. From there, documents went to Pius XII’s desk.

This explains, to a large extent, the subsequent appointments of Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud as bishops, the letter of approval for my book, and some other things.<sup>1233</sup>

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<sup>1226</sup> SD 4/7/79.

<sup>1227</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54 & SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1228</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1229</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1230</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1231</sup> Father João de Castro e Costa, a Jesuit priest, was Dr. Plinio’s teacher of Religion at São Luis School and corresponded with him. At that time, he was Rector of the Pius Brazilian College in Rome.

<sup>1232</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1233</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.



## 7. “The Most Beautiful Time of Our Lives”

Without any awareness of all this, the members of our group shared the same ideas, ideals, hopes, mentality and, above all, the same Roman Catholic and Apostolic Faith. For this reason, we all felt very united.<sup>1234</sup>

We knew we were alone, rowing against the tide, but we went on, hoping against all hope.<sup>1235</sup>

Looking back at those years, I realize it was the most beautiful period of our lives. We did many seemingly absurd things, but it was all we could do, and all these things later brought spectacular results.

It was a time of tremendous trial but also one of perseverance.<sup>1236</sup> The first seeds of the TFP were sown on the ground floor of the little house on Martin Francisco St.<sup>1237</sup>

## Chapter XIV

# Rehabilitation, Turnaround, And Counter-Offensive

### 1. Father Sigaud Is Appointed Bishop of Jacarezinho

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<sup>1234</sup> Lecture for New Volunteers 2/26/95.

<sup>1235</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1236</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (VIII) 8/13/54.

<sup>1237</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense* 6/8/68.

After this flood of disasters, auspicious events began to happen.<sup>1238</sup>

I still remember one day in January 1947<sup>1239</sup> when I could report to my friends that, according to a piece of news heard on the radio, Pius XII had appointed Father Sigaud Bishop of Jacarezinho.

—What? Our joy was great, but our doubt was even greater.<sup>1240</sup>

He had been removed from São Paulo in reply to pressure from Cardinal Motta and sent by his superiors to Navarra in Spain as a missionary. And now he was to become a bishop!?<sup>1241</sup>

My doubts were mainly because, in general, the appointment of a bishop would be reported in the newspapers, while Dom Sigaud's appointment was reported only on the radio. I thought there might have been some misunderstanding.

We made a phone call to Navarra to verify this news.

At that time, a connection to Europe was complicated and costly, and we had little money.

Dom Sigaud came to the phone. He did not know who was speaking. The operator only told him it was a call from Brazil.

I shouted into the phone:

“Father Sigaud! Father Sigaud!”

And I heard from afar:

“Who's that?”

“This is Plinio speaking!”

“Ah! Plinio. How are you doing?”

I was in a hurry for fear that the connection might drop at any moment, so I asked him straight away:

“I wanted to know if it is true that you were appointed bishop of Jacarezinho!”

“What did you say?”

“Have you been made Bishop of Jacarezinho or not?”

“Yes, I have. I am preparing for my return to Brazil.”<sup>1242</sup>

“Will you then come back?”

“Yes, I will.”<sup>1243</sup>

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<sup>1238</sup> Lunch EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>1239</sup> While the Holy See appointed Dom Sigaud as Bishop of Jacarezinho on October 29, 1946, the news reached Dr. Plinio only in mid-November and made the front page of *Legionário*, No. 745, 11/17/46.

<sup>1240</sup> “The TFP Is Born,” cit.

<sup>1241</sup> Tea ESB 3/7/95.

<sup>1242</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1243</sup> “The TFP Is Born,” cit.

We were delighted because it was a victory, an endorsement of our book by the Holy See, proof that we had been on the right path.<sup>1244</sup>

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I remember we went to Rio de Janeiro to wait for the ship bringing Dom Sigaud back from Europe.<sup>1245</sup>

From Rio, we accompanied him to São Paulo. His consecration took place just over one month later.<sup>1246</sup>

Dom Sigaud invited the Nuncio, Dom Carlo Chiarlo, to consecrate him because he did not want the cardinal to do it. He desired to have the consecration here in São Paulo, at the Carmelite Basilica.

The Nuncio officiated, assisted by Dom José Maurício da Rocha and Dom Manuel da Silveira d'Elboux.<sup>1247</sup>

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We published the news of this consecration in the newspapers and the *Legionário*.<sup>1248</sup> We wanted to show that ours was not a groupuscule, nor were we demonstrating against anyone. However, we made it very clear that Dom Sigaud's past activities on behalf of Catholic Action, now relegated to penitential oblivion, were not a dubious chapter in his biography but an authentic jewel in his crown.

Dom Sigaud and I concluded that being very clear about this point would be necessary. Otherwise, our enemies would spread the news that the Holy Father had forced him to “recant” and that Dom Sigaud had been obliged to eat

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<sup>1244</sup> SD 6/16/73. After that call, Dr. Plinio wrote to Dom Sigaud informing them of reactions to his appointment in São Paulo:

“Dom Ernesto [de Paula] was delighted: the first thing he did was to telegraph to Dom Attico [the archbishop of Curitiba] congratulating him. As for the Jesuits, it goes without saying: Father Riou, Father Felix, Father Dainese, Father Arlindo Vieira, and Father Santini are exultant. Monsignor João de Azevedo came to São Paulo from Pindamonhangaba to embrace us. Canon Silvio [Matos], Canon Geraldo, and Father Benigno [de Brito] were joyfully beside themselves. At the Ipiranga Seminary, the news exploded among the professors ‘like a bomb,’ as Father Veloso has told me. The joy was great at the Oiseaux (high school) and Santa Monica. I have sent my warmest congratulations to Mère Saint-Ambroise, as you were the first professor from her school to ascend to the episcopate. ... Prince Pedro Henrique was pleased and told me he wanted to come to the consecration. Father Castro e Costa wrote to Father Riou on your appointment from Rome, saying, ‘What a splendid triumph for the *Legionário*.’ The rank and file of the JEC [for whom Father Sigaud had been responsible when he was ecclesiastical assistant] are radiant. In short, there is general rejoicing” (Letter from Dr. Plinio to Dom Sigaud, December 16, 1946).

<sup>1245</sup> He embarked in Barcelona on the ship *Cabo Hornos* on March 4, 1947, and landed in Rio on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the same month, after a year of absence from our country.

<sup>1246</sup> SD 6/17/89. This episcopal consecration took place on May 1, 1947.

<sup>1247</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1248</sup> SD 6/16/73. The news story on the consecration in São Paulo appeared in *Legionário*, No. 769, 4/5/47, and the one on the installation in Jacarezinho appeared in No. 770, May 11 of that same year.

humble pie in Rome.

For this reason, the ceremony's guests were chosen from the best social, intellectual and moral elements of the Catholic laity and São Paulo society.<sup>1249</sup>

In this way, the ceremony was a diplomatic affirmation of a trend's vitality rather than an expression of personal homage.<sup>1250</sup>

In other words, everyone understood this as a sign that the Holy See wanted to rehabilitate us.<sup>1251</sup>

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I went to Jacarezinho with Dom Sigaud to attend his installation ceremonies.<sup>1252</sup> If I remember correctly, I also made a speech on that occasion.<sup>1253</sup>

## 2. Another Great Victory: The Encyclical *Mediator Dei*

In 1947, we had another huge surprise, representing a new and great victory: the publication of Pius XII's encyclical *Mediator Dei*.<sup>1254</sup>

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<sup>1249</sup> The ceremony was graced by the presence of the Governor of São Paulo, Mr. Ademar de Barros, and his secretary, Commander Mario Antunes Maciel Ramos. The speakers were the Governor of Paraná, Mr. Moisés Lupion, H.I.R.H. Prince Pedro Henrique of Orleans-Braganza, Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, and Dr. Lucas Proença Sigaud. From Jacarezinho, there were the mayor, the judge and the police chief. Also present were the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of São Paulo, Monsignor Manuel Macedo Freire, Monsignor Luiz Gonzaga de Almeida, Dom Aidano Ebert, Prior of the Benedictine Monastery of Santos, and, as representatives of the Metropolitan Chapter, Canons Benedito Marcos de Freitas, Antonio de Castro Mayer, Antonio Leme Machado, Luiz Geraldo do Amaral Mello, Francisco Cipulo, and Canon João Pavesio, who officiated as master of ceremonies.

<sup>1250</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father Sigaud 12/16/46.

<sup>1251</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1252</sup> The installation took place on Sunday, May 4, 1947. During a luncheon offered at the Episcopal Palace to authorities and a delegation from São Paulo, Dr. Plinio gave a speech on behalf of that delegation.

<sup>1253</sup> Quick word 1/30/94.

<sup>1254</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54. The Encyclical *Mediator Dei* of November 20, 1947, was further confirmation, on the part of the Holy See, of the distortions introduced in the sacred liturgy.

In one of its passages, Pius XII stressed, "We observe with considerable anxiety and some misgiving that elsewhere certain enthusiasts, over-eager in their search for novelty, are straying beyond the path of sound doctrine and prudence. Not seldom, in fact, they interlard their plans and hopes for a revival of the sacred liturgy with principles which compromise this holiest of causes in theory or practice, and sometimes even taint it with errors touching Catholic faith and ascetical doctrine."

Pius XII also noted the importance of private piety by pointing out that "certain recent theories touching a so-called 'objective' piety...tend to belittle, or pass over in silence, what they call 'subjective' or 'personal' piety." He considered "false, insidious and quite pernicious" the ideas of those who judged that "all other religious exercises not directly connected with the sacred liturgy, and performed outside public worship, should be omitted." He also said, "The fact that the faithful participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice does not mean that they also are endowed with priestly power." He also condemned several other errors of liturgism, which the book *In Defense* had pointed out. *Legionário* hailed this encyclical with jubilation and published it in two parts in its issues 801 and 802, respectively, on December 14 and 21, 1947.

The doctrine the encyclical condemned was so similar to that professed by liturgists in Brazil that I am led to take it for granted that the pope was referring at least in part to the situation in our country when writing it.<sup>1255</sup>

This encyclical was, to some degree, a letter of emancipation that freed us from the shackles we were placed under.

We could finally speak and denounce the error. There was no more “prudence” that could destroy this achievement, no more “armistice” that silenced only one of the sides of the dispute while it left the other to write, whisper and speak freely.<sup>1256</sup>

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I did not think the liturgists would be discouraged or give up their ideas.

And I was not wrong: this encyclical was received coldly by the “left-wing,” published unenthusiastically and often only after considerable delay (*O Diário*, the Catholic paper of Belo Horizonte, waited for more than a month before publishing it), and was shrugged off by the innovators as a document of no particular importance. They also managed to distort its meaning, trumpeting against all evidence that in this encyclical, the pope strongly condemned Brazilians who fought against the liturgical movement and that he wanted the liturgical movement to intensify its efforts even more.<sup>1257</sup>

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For our part, we did what we should do—spread the encyclical.

I wrote an article stating that, since the encyclical settled issues of such fundamental importance for our religious life, Catholics have two primary duties: to seek the Truth and to practice Charity.<sup>1258</sup>

As for the Truth, we must, above all else, fight error and spread sound doctrine. Everything must be sacrificed for this primary duty.

But the truth would triumph by attracting to itself those who erred, and this had to be done with charity.

Therefore, it was necessary to spread the Truth with Charity. And just as it would be wrong to practice charity by suppressing or veiling the truth, it would be equally wrong to spread it in a spirit of pride or vainglory.

There are two entirely different situations in the Church: that of

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<sup>1255</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J., 4/30/48.

<sup>1256</sup> Letter to Father Dainese 12/31/47.

<sup>1257</sup> Dr. Plinio’s letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., 2/2/48. Dr. Plinio expressed this conviction in a letter to Father Dainese: “The liturgist clan will continue to act (publicly? in the shadows? that is the question!), and it will not lose either the powerful protectors that it has had until now or the support of the news organizations and the means of action that it enjoys at present. The question that arises, therefore, is this: What will be the reaction of liturgists?” (Letter of December 31, 1947).

<sup>1258</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

innocence and that of penance. Who would dare to see an innocent person as a proud winner and a penitent as a loser to be held up to opprobrium?

The Church gives no quarter to an unrepentant sinner. However, the doors of the Father's house are thrown wide open for a sinner as soon as he admits his sin, humbly accepts making reparation, and burns in the sight of all the false idols he has adored.

Naturally, no one has the authority to forgive what God does not or confuse the penitent with the impenitent. As we know, the Church loves her penitent children far too much to hurt them with such confusion.

The Church only asks those who have erred to do what the camels had to do to pass through the low gates of cities, known in the East as "the needle's eye," to lay down the burden of their errors and make themselves small through humility. When the Church's forgiveness raises them again, they become giants because nothing makes a man greater than true repentance.

There is no reason why those who erred should feel obliged to keep a shameful silence concerning their mistakes. Instead, they cover themselves with glory by admitting and repudiating them. Nor should anyone treat these errors with a "charitable" silence. That would be essentially contemptuous because it would imply cruelly and insidiously that the stain was still there. Penance utterly destroys the link between the man who erred and his past errors.

The Church loves with motherly love the penitent sinner in open conflict with his past errors: woe betide those who try to use against him what God has forgiven!

Therefore, no one should believe that attacks against an error could humiliate those who admitted and recanted it.<sup>1259</sup>

Dom Sigaud also wrote an article for the *Legionário*, saying the encyclical confirmed the line we took in our apostolate and all accusations in the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*.<sup>1260</sup>

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<sup>1259</sup> *Legionário* No. 801, 12/14/47. Titled "In the Common Father's House," the article was published along with the first part of the encyclical in issue No. 801 of *Legionário*, 12/14/47; its No. 802, of 12/21/47, carried the second and last page of the papal document; and No. 803, of 12/29/47, brought *notes and commentaries* on the Encyclical *Mediator Dei* from which Dr. Plinio stressed excerpts condemning the liturgist-progressive current. That was the "straw" that caused all that followed. That same issue contained Bishop Sigaud's article mentioned below.

<sup>1260</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54. In this article, published under the title "The Encyclical Mediator Dei and a Little History of the Church in Brazil," the prelate said "It is a great consolation to remember, at this point, the masterly book by the director of the *Legionário*, Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, which was a cry of alarm and a cautery. A cry of alarm that prevented thousands of faithful from surrendering, in good faith, to the errors and excesses of liturgism, advancing like a tidal wave." The book had "opened the eyes of many believers already surrounded by the waves of 'liturgism' and led them back to what the Church has identified as the right and traditional path." He finished his article by saying: "We have been witnesses to the events triggered by this book. Today we thank God for this timely warning cry that preserved and saved for the Truth and the Life so many of the sheep of our flock" (art. cit., *Legionário*, No. 803 of December 28, 1947).

### 3. A Week Later, the Cardinal Removes *Legionário* from Dr. Plínio's Hands

The result was that early in the morning of December 31, when Dr. José Carlos Castilho de Andrade, as usual, went to the printers to take care of next week's issue, already in the typesetting phase, he was informed that they took all the necessary material for the production of the paper to the printing shop of the Paulist Fathers and would no longer print the *Legionário* there.

Given the seriousness of that communication, Dr. Castillo informed me about it right away.<sup>1261</sup>

I immediately went to look for Machado, the administrative and financial director of the *Legionário*, but I could not find him.<sup>1262</sup> Canon Mayer eventually located him, much later. He managed to reach him by phone and informed him that he no longer had anything to do with the *Legionário* because the paper was now in the hands of the Curia. As the chief financial officer, he had handed all title deeds over to the cardinal.<sup>1263</sup>

I called the Vicar General, Monsignor Luis Gonzaga de Almeida, to find out whether this measure was due to an order issued by the cardinal. He replied that he knew nothing, that His Eminence was in Belo Horizonte and that he had no information to give.

Next, I telephoned the Metropolitan Chancery and asked to speak to the Chancellor, who was then Monsignor Loureiro. He told me he regretted the incident and was not involved in the affair. All he knew was that the cardinal had instructed Dr. Luis Tolosa de Oliveira e Costa Filho to take all necessary measures to implement His Eminence's wishes regarding the *Legionário*.<sup>1264</sup>

I told Monsignor Loureiro that a sudden closure of the newspaper when we were publishing the Encyclical *Mediator Dei* would only favor the promoters

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<sup>1261</sup> Report to Nuncio Dom Carlo Chiarlo on the loss of *Legionário* 1/30/48.

<sup>1262</sup> Francisco de Paula Monteiro Machado was the financial and accounting director of *Legionário S.A.*, the company that owned the paper. To ensure its independence and fidelity to Catholic thought, it had been decided, back in the 1930s, that most of the shares should remain in the hands of a priest. Dom Duarte had assigned these shares to Canon Antonio de Castro Mayer, who made a will leaving the shares to the incumbent of the archdiocese in the event of his death. Mr. Francisco Monteiro Machado, seen as a good Catholic, being a brother of several Marian congregants, and having personal ties to many other congregants, was considered to merit a degree of trust, which, in many subsequent episodes, was found to have been misplaced. To give him more freedom in the paper's financial management, Canon Mayer transferred his shares to Machado. When clear evidence of irregularities of conduct on the part of Mr. Francisco Machado surfaced, Canon Mayer and Dr. Plínio demanded the dissolution of the company and left the necessary procedures in Machado's hands. The liquidation was long delayed, and before it could be completed, Machado transferred the ownership of the paper to the Chancery. This was the basis for the inexorable sequence of events that followed.

<sup>1263</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1264</sup> Luis Tolosa de Oliveira e Costa Filho was a well-known Catholic and a very close friend of Dom Carlos Carmelo Cardinal Motta.

of error and disparage the director and writers of the *Legionário*, who had been ignominiously expelled from a paper on which they had worked for free for thirteen years.<sup>1265</sup>

Finally, I said:

“Monsignor Loureiro, concerning those who are heretics, this cardinal does not act as a father but as a mother.

“On the other hand, concerning those faithful to the doctrine of the Church, the cardinal does not act as a father or even a stepfather but as an executioner. From the day he set foot in São Paulo until now, not a single one of his gestures was that of a father; he has been nothing but a cruel executioner. This is the truth! And he is closing down the *Legionário* because we are faithful to the doctrine of the Holy See. Tell him so from me.”

Monsignor Loureiro replied: “My friend, I cannot accept that.”<sup>1266</sup>

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That same day, December 31, Dr. Castilho obtained a statement from the head of the print shop. It was clear that the order to confiscate the material was so secretive that not even the printers themselves had known about it. In his official statement, the worker even testified to the time when they had received the originals for typesetting from Dr. Castilho.<sup>1267</sup>

We collected plenty of evidence that would allow us to demonstrate that the *Legionário* was closed down by us. One of the pieces of evidence we had was that the material had already been half-typeset when the plates were removed.

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On the night of December 31, just before 1947 gave way to the year of grace of 1948, I was still having dinner when I received a call from Monsignor Loureiro, who told me that the cardinal had unexpectedly returned from Minas Gerais and wanted me to know that he was at my disposal if I wanted to talk to him. I finished my dinner, took a taxi and left for the Episcopal Palace.

He received me in the presence of Canon Loureiro, saying that he wanted him as a witness to our conversation. And then he told me the following:

“I wanted to tell you that Francisco Monteiro Machado came to me spontaneously to offer me the shares in the paper as the company's liquidator. I also want you to know that I did not give the order to close the newspaper. But since he came to me of his own accord and offered me the paper's ownership,

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<sup>1265</sup> Report to Nuncio Dom Carlo Chiarlo on the loss of *Legionário* 1/30/48.

<sup>1266</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1267</sup> Report to Nuncio Dom Carlo Chiarlo on the loss of *Legionário* 1/30/48.



and since I do not want you to continue as its director, I have dismissed you from it.”

He seemed somewhat shaky. I realized he did not want a fight, neither did we.<sup>1268</sup>

So, I limited myself to saying that I would not oppose his decision but was deeply shocked at how he dismissed me.<sup>1269</sup> I also pointed out to him that the situation created by the transfer of the shares in the *Legionário* was illegal under the country’s laws<sup>1270</sup> since Machado failed to comply with the resolution of the shareholders’ meeting to liquidate *Legionário S. A.*<sup>1271</sup> I also advised him that Dom Carlos Carmelo had better request an impartial lawyer to study the issue.

The cardinal replied that this did not worry him at all. I took my leave after he had wished me a happy New Year.<sup>1272</sup>

One thing was clear: the *Legionário* was taken from our hands because we had published comments on *Mediator Dei* and used the paper to give the encyclical all the publicity it should have.<sup>1273</sup>

Just as these studies and notes were published, Cardinal Motta abruptly decided to brutally take the direction of the paper out of our hands. He handed it to people like Father Enzo Campos Gusso, who agreed with the new ideas.<sup>1274</sup>

The change in *Legionário*’s editorial team completely upended its editorial orientation, style, and appearance. The campaign to publicize the

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<sup>1268</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1269</sup> Report to Nuncio Dom Carlo Chiarlo on the loss of *Legionário* 1/30/48.

<sup>1270</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1271</sup> Report to Nuncio Dom Carlo Chiarlo on the loss of *Legionário* 1/30/48.

<sup>1272</sup> During this conversation, the cardinal also said that he was going to entrust the paper to the Pauline Fathers. Indeed, the issue of February 29, 1948, included an editorial, which announced the beginning of a “new phase” in the existence of the weekly, summarizing this motto at the end of the – unsigned – article: “*incipit vita nova.*” Not a single word was said about Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, who had, with incredible generosity, dedicated fifteen years of his life to the *Legionário* (cf. Roberto de Mattei, *The Crusader of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, *Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira*, cit.).

In this “new phase,” of course, there were no more references to progressivist errors. Dr. Plínio then wrote Dom Sigaud (letter of January 5, 1948), telling him what had happened: “The news I am sending Your Excellency today is very sad. The *Legionário* has been closed down....As far as *Mediator Dei* is concerned, an absolute silence reigns here. Pulpits, tribunes, meetings of associations – silence everywhere.”

<sup>1273</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1274</sup> Canon, and later Monsignor, Enzo Campos Gusso (born 1919), was a friend and confidant of the cardinal, who appointed him as an assistant to certain sections of Catholic Action, especially the JUC. During the period when he exercised this charge, the JUC became notorious for its Communist-progressive orientation in the 1960s, which resulted in the formation of the so-called AP – Popular Action, the Maoist-Leninist character of which led it to armed struggle and terrorism. He was also a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and director of the College of Philosophy, Letters and Sciences of São Bento.

Encyclical *Mediator Dei* ended immediately.<sup>1275</sup>

Some articles began to show a pronounced tendency to the left on social issues, and others vigorously attacked and caricatured old religious customs to insinuate that a new and modern religious era had arrived. Those articles also clearly reflected the penetration of the lax and permissive “modern” mentality that had taken hold of the archdiocese's official mouthpiece.<sup>1276</sup>

#### 4. Canon Mayer Is Appointed Bishop of Campos

During the Carnival of 1948, we took a trip to São Pedro.<sup>1277</sup>

On the way back, while visiting Piracicaba Falls, we discussed our situation with Canon Mayer, in which, from a human perspective, everything seemed lost. We reaffirmed our willingness to go all the way and remain faithful unto death.

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A few days later, back at his parish of Belém, Canon Mayer received a visit from Dom Siqueira, who came to offer his services to help establish him at the parish.<sup>1278</sup>

Canon Mayer made casual small talk with Dom Siqueira but already had in his pocket, at that moment, an invitation to become auxiliary bishop of Campos. He did not tell the prelate anything about this.

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Shortly after, Canon Mayer appeared at my office and started a conversation more or less thus:

“If I were invited to become a bishop, do you think I should accept any diocese in Brazil?”

I felt very sorry for Canon Mayer, thinking, “Poor man, what a question to ask oneself in a miserable situation like ours.” In any case, I providentially replied:

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<sup>1275</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>1276</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J., 1/23/50. Such was the ideological revolution of the paper that at a certain point the Petrópolis magazine *Vozes* published this comment: “About a year ago, in the May-June issue of this magazine, we expressed our surprise at some manifestations of liberalism in the Catholic weekly of São Paulo, the *Legionário*. Today we are experiencing the same astonishment at further manifestations of this spirit that have appeared in the issue of September 10 of that journal” (*Vozes*, September-December 1950).

<sup>1277</sup> The city of São Pedro, located 118 miles from the state capital, São Paulo, is a tourist and health resort.

<sup>1278</sup> Most Rev. Antonio Maria Alves de Siqueira (1906-1993), auxiliary bishop of São Paulo in 1943, bishop coadjutor of the same city in 1957, bishop coadjutor of Campinas with right of succession in 1966, and finally archbishop of Campinas in 1968. He was a close and trusted friend of Dom José Gaspar de Affonseca e Silva and Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcellos Motta.

“Canon Mayer, I think you should draw a line and not accept anything further to the north than the city of Campos. I don’t think that you should go any farther away than that.”

He talked a little more and said goodbye.

I resumed my work and forgot about the conversation.

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Some days later, I arrived at our headquarters on Martim Francisco St. and met Dr. Pacheco, ecstatic:

“*Episcopum habemus!*”

He was so excited that I initially thought they must have appointed some evil priest.

But then he told me:

“Canon Mayer has been made auxiliary bishop of Campos!”

When the other group members arrived, we could not even sit down. We waited for the last arrival and took three taxis straight to Belenzinho. One of us brought along a couple of bottles of wine to celebrate.

Dr. José Fernando de Camargo immediately called *O Estado de S. Paulo*, asking them to publish this news, which came out the next day in the religious section of the paper.<sup>1279</sup> We enjoyed speculating on the effect these tidings would produce at the Pius XII Palace.

Later that morning, we learned that the cardinal had told Canon Enzo Gusso, his secretary, to read the papers and had learned about the appointment this way.

The cardinal was so poorly informed about the appointment that he asked, “Are you sure this is official?”

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Then came the consecration ceremony.<sup>1280</sup>

Dom Mayer was consecrated by the Nuncio, assisted by Dom Sigaud and Dom Ernesto de Paula, and sponsored by Prince Pedro Henrique of Orleans-Braganza.

There was a big celebration; afterward, the Nuncio was friendly.

Things definitely looked up with Dom Mayer’s consecration. This

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<sup>1279</sup> This news was published in the *Movimento Religioso* column on March 18, 1948.

<sup>1280</sup> Pius XII appointed Most Rev. Antonio de Castro Mayer auxiliary bishop with right of succession on March 6, 1948. He was consecrated on May 23 of the same year by the Nuncio, Dom Carlo Chiarlo, whose assistants were respectively Bishops Ernesto de Paula, of Piracicaba, and Geraldo de Proença Sigaud, of Jacarezinho. In 1949, with the death of Bishop Otaviano Pereira de Albuquerque, Dom Mayer became Diocesan Bishop of Campos until his resignation in 1981.

brought enormous encouragement to our little group.<sup>1281</sup>

### 5. Three Documents by Pius XII Confirm *In Defense*

When we published *In Defense*, our opponents created around us an atmosphere in which we appeared as rebels and slanderers of the ecclesiastical authorities and even as heretics. They said that all good Catholics should stay as far away from us as possible.<sup>1282</sup>

But now there were three pontifical documents – *Mystici Corporis Christi*, *Mediator Dei*, and *Bis Saeculari Die* – that defined, refuted and condemned the principal errors I had discussed in the book.

*Mystici Corporis Christi* – The Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* was published on June 29, 1943.<sup>1283</sup>

That happened just before or after a Catholic Action Congress in Belo Horizonte, where one of the resolutions was that if there were doctrinal errors among the faithful, the people who became aware of such alleged errors were to communicate them to the monitoring committees of their respective dioceses. Laypeople were prohibited from fighting errors.

On the other hand, since such monitoring committees neither existed at the time nor were ever created after that, in practice, it was impossible to do anything about the progressive errors due to the lack of bodies with which one could file complaints. The fact that no such committees were ever set up revealed a lack of interest and a clear intention to discourage the faithful from any attempts at combating error.

The innovators, using the immense media networks at their disposal, put out the following messages:

1. Such errors never existed in Brazil;
2. The main concern of the Holy See was to spread devotion to the Mystical Body and not to combat any errors that might exist in other countries on the subject;
3. That meant that anyone who felt alarmed or concerned about such errors was disagreeing with the pope;
4. Moreover, it should be left to the episcopate to deal with such errors;
5. Finally, the priests or laypersons who claimed to combat such errors were showing themselves, by doing so, mistrustful of the authorities, disobedient, proud and eager to provoke discord, etc.

It was in this atmosphere that the encyclical appeared.

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<sup>1281</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1282</sup> Tea 11/10/94.

<sup>1283</sup> “Passing the Test of History,” op. cit.

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The encyclical *Mediator Dei* was published four years later, on November 20, 1947.

It provided a unique opportunity to combat these errors because it reiterated *Mystici Corporis*'s condemnations and broadened scholars' horizons regarding the new errors.

Once again, however, this encyclical was shrouded in silence. The Catholic *O Diário* of Belo Horizonte, the *Correio da Noite*, a Catholic organ of Rio de Janeiro, and other newspapers of the same current went for months without publishing the document, which prevented its text from becoming known while it was still news. When it was finally published, the first interest in the subject had already died down.

The only exception was the *Legionário*, which began to publish the encyclical (the idea was to publish the material in successive issues) with numerous comments to maximize its impact. However, as I have already described, when the first issue containing this material appeared, Cardinal Carlos Carmelo took the paper out of our hands.

Soon, there was no more talk about *Mediator Dei*, buried like *Mystici Corporis Christi*.<sup>1284</sup>

Finally, in 1948, the Apostolic Constitution *Bis Saeculari Die* was published, a fact we must discuss in more detail.

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## 6. Antecedents of *Bis Saeculari Die*'s Publication in Brazil

To understand the stir created by this Apostolic Constitution, we need to describe what happened before it came out.

The proponents of the new mentality had been preaching that all religious associations other than Catholic Action had become obsolete. They claimed that this movement's new legal situation only applied to laity enrolled in Catholic Action associations in the strict sense, i.e., the JFC, JEC, JIC, JOC, JUC, etc. The Church would barely tolerate the Marian Congregations and other religious associations, which should be encouraged to disappear.<sup>1285</sup>

Feeding this trend, Catholic Action leaders unobtrusively did their best to ensure that all those who did not fall in with the progressive movement should

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<sup>1284</sup> Memorandum to Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably of 1948.

<sup>1285</sup> Dom Mayer, already a bishop, confided to Father Leiber, in a letter before his trip to Rome in 1950, that "I personally heard the late archbishop of São Paulo, Dom José Gaspar Affonseca e Silva, as well as several leaders of Catholic Action from other dioceses, say that the Holy Father intended to let the religious associations 'die by starvation.' 'The Holy See is very wise, it does not extinguish these associations, but lets them die a natural death' [Dom José said]."

be dispersed and reduced to silence. In their hands, Catholic Action started to wage trench warfare against all that represented tradition and the right spirit in Brazil.

This is the background to the very special nuance that the problem of relations between Catholic Action and the Marian Congregations took on.

Before *Bis Saeculari Die*, this juridical issue existed between the Marian Congregations and Catholic Action. However, this was of no fundamental interest since Catholic Action was infiltrated so densely with the errors that we pointed out that the innovators' doctrine would completely dominate Brazil's Catholic laity if it succeeded in suppressing the Marian Congregations and other associations imbued with the traditional spirit.

### 7. Archbishop of São Paulo Is Displeased with *Bis Saeculari Die*

On September 27, 1948, Pius XII published the Apostolic Constitution *Bis Saeculari Die*.

This document defined the situation of the Marian Congregations so clearly that it undid all progressive attempts to sacrifice them for the sake of Catholic Action.<sup>1286</sup>

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We received the text of the Constitution from Father Dainese.

We were so enthusiastic that we sent a telegram to the Holy Father in our name congratulating him.

A few days later, to our great surprise, we were told that Cardinal Carlos Carmelo was furious with us.

Why? Contrary to all expectations, Msgr. Montini had telegraphed him, saying that Pius XII had received our telegram and asked the cardinal to thank its signatories on behalf of the Holy See.

The cardinal ordered an investigation to find out who had sent a telegram to the pope on behalf of the Marian Federation without first obtaining his approval. He severely criticized the auxiliary bishop, Dom Siqueira, for permitting such a "serious fault" to be committed in his absence.

When I heard about this, I went to see Msgr. Loureiro and explained to him that the telegram was sent on our behalf and not in the name of the Federation.<sup>1287</sup>

After all was cleared up, it would have been expected to send the text of the papal response to the telegram senders, including myself, since the cardinal

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<sup>1286</sup> Memorandum on the Brazilian progressive crisis on the 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress (Rio, 1955).

<sup>1287</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54.

was ordered to do so by the Holy See. However, they never revealed the text to us.

This fact, which was of no particular importance, gives a good idea of our living atmosphere.<sup>1288</sup>

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The following Sunday, during a Marian rally in Santo André, a Marian congregant who was close to us cited several passages from *Bis Saeculari Die*.

As a result, we were in trouble again because a congregant had dared to quote a papal document about which the Chancery had not officially been informed.

To this, we returned a categorical answer on behalf of the Federation of Marian Congregations stating that the Holy Father has direct jurisdiction over all the faithful and pontifical documents that do not require the Chancery's imprimatur.

#### **8. *Bis Saeculari Die* at Porto Alegre's Eucharistic Congress**

We translated the Apostolic Constitution immediately upon receiving its full text in an issue of *l'Osservatore Romano*.

It was mimeographed, and Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud took it to the south with them and distributed it at the Fifth National Eucharistic Congress in Porto Alegre in 1948. No one there had seen it before.

During this Congress, the Bishop of Uberaba, Dom Alexandre do Amaral, gave a speech in which he applied a restrictive interpretation to *Bis Saeculari Die*. Distorting the meaning of the pope's words, he claimed that the Marian Congregations were part of Catholic Action *lato sensu* and not *strictu sensu*.<sup>1289</sup>

Dom Alexandre do Amaral declared that this Apostolic Constitution only reaffirmed doctrines already mentioned by the Holy Father and would change nothing. So, it should be understood that the pope declared that the Marian Congregations broadly constituted Catholic Action since he had distinguished

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<sup>1288</sup> Report sent by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru, S.J., probably in 1950.

<sup>1289</sup> This speech opened the floodgates for all kinds of distortions and confusion regarding the concept of the term *Catholic Action*; Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer explained this confusion in a document sent to Cardinal Jaime de Barros Câmara on March 19, 1956, concerning the conclusions of the First General Conference of Latin American Bishops held in Rio de Janeiro between July 25 and August 4, 1955. Dom Mayer stated that relations between Catholic Action and other associations set up for apostolic purposes, such as the Marian Congregations, were "fraught with difficulty, due, in no small part, to the fact that the words Catholic Action were used to designate both an abstract concept (collaboration of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate) and one of the many entities embodying that concept (the association called 'Catholic Action'). Hence, the many differences of interpretation among specialists concerning texts referring to Catholic Action."

them from Catholic Action in the strict sense when he was still Secretary of State.

Consequently – concluded His Excellency – the Marian Congregations will continue as they always were, that is to say, mere auxiliaries to Catholic Action.<sup>1290</sup>

### 9. A Marian Rally Coincides with the Eucharistic Congress; Dom Sigaud's Speech

The Marian Congregations happened to organize a rally at the Teatro São Pedro in Porto Alegre during the Eucharistic Congress. Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer and about 30 other bishops from the 70 who had come to the Congress attended this gathering.<sup>1291</sup>

One might have expected that after *Bis Saeculari Die*, the bishops would seize the opportunity to show support for a movement so close to the Roman Pontiff's heart. Far from it! Both cardinals – the one from Rio and the one from São Paulo – were absent. Not even the archbishop of Porto Alegre himself found it necessary to grace the event with his presence.<sup>1292</sup>

During the session, Dom Sigaud gave a speech during which he read several excerpts from *Bis Saeculari Die* with comments underlining the perfect match between the Marian Congregations and Catholic Action. He suggested that the Marian congregants send a telegram to the Holy Father, thanking him for the document.

Many of the bishops present left the room while Dom Sigaud spoke.

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<sup>1290</sup> In this speech, delivered at the 2<sup>nd</sup> solemn session of the Fifth National Eucharistic Congress held in Porto Alegre from October 28 to 31, 1948, the Bishop of Uberaba, faced with the fact that his restrictive ideas on Marian Congregations were now disowned in the new Apostolic Constitution, sought to impose a convoluted interpretation of the text of *Bis Saeculari Die* which did not hinder his progressive position. To this end, he used an old letter written by then-Cardinal Pacelli as Secretary of State of Pius XI concerning Catholic Action and the actual text by Pius XI. He said, "Even now, in the latest papal document, the apostolic constitution on the Marian Congregations, His Holiness made sure to keep intact that line of demarcation between C.A. and its venerable and precious auxiliary associations which he established when, in a luminous letter, he explained the incisive speech by Pius XI of March 30, 1930. Pius XII was then Secretary of State of Pius XI. This speech and this letter remain fully in force." Then, in an attempt to minimize the scope of *Bis Saeculari*, he said: "We cannot deny that the Marian Congregations, like the other associations which engage in a social apostolate, have some features in common with C.A., insofar as the latter is considered, according to the broad definition of Pius XI, 'the apostolate of the faithful who put themselves at the service of the Church and in a certain way help her to fulfill her ministry'" (typed transcript sent to Dr. Plinio by Father Walter Hofer, S.J., professor at Porto Alegre's Colégio Anchieta and its director from 1951 to 1954).

<sup>1291</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54.

<sup>1292</sup> Report sent by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru SJ, probably in 1950.



However, the speech caused immense joy and enthusiasm among the Marian congregants.<sup>1293</sup>

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Soon after Dom Sigaud's speech, Dr. Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra and Dr. José Fernando de Camargo, who were present in Porto Alegre, visited the offices of the *Jornal do Dia* and obtained the publication of the theses approved during the Marian rally.<sup>1294</sup>

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A very lively reaction to Dom Sigaud's speech followed its publication in the paper.

The Archbishop of Porto Alegre, Dom Vicente Scherer, prohibited its disclosure in the Catholic press.<sup>1295</sup>

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<sup>1293</sup> This speech of Dom Sigaud, pronounced on October 30, 1948, triggered a reaction in Rome about a month later, when it received a laudatory mention in the *Osservatore Romano* of December 6 and 7 of the same year: "His Excellency Geraldo de Proença Sigaud, Archbishop of Jacarezinho, gave an inspired speech commenting on the recent Apostolic Constitution *Bis saeculari Die* on the Marian Congregations, which, for its accuracy and fidelity in interpreting the letter and spirit of the pontifical document, deserves a special mention from us."

<sup>1294</sup> In fact, the next day, October 31, 1948, the newspaper published a faithful summary of this speech. It also recorded the presence of thirty-five bishops, presided over by the archbishop Primate of Bahia, who had wanted to honor the event. The paper also highlighted the section in which Dom Sigaud said that "His Holiness gloriously reigning says that the Marian Congregations must be seen as belonging to the same category as other associations dedicated to the apostolate, and states 'pleno jure,' i.e., with full authority, that the Marian Congregations constitute true and legitimate Catholic Action. The paper also printed the list of the theses derived from the Conclusions presented by Dom Sigaud and welcomed with prolonged applause. This text would be distributed later to all the Federations of Marian Congregations of Brazil "for faithful and complete compliance with the Apostolic Constitution."

<sup>1295</sup> Report sent by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru, S.J., probably in 1950. Dom Mayer had received this information from Father Antonio Loebmann, S.J., Rector of the Central Seminary of São Leopoldo, in a letter saying, "I don't know if Your Excellency is already aware that the archbishop of Porto Alegre has banned the publication of Dom Geraldo Sigaud's speech in the newspapers, and that he was also horrified at the publication of the conclusions of the Marian rally" (doc. cit., December 3, 1948).

And in a letter to Dom Sigaud, dated November 3, 1948, the same priest gives appalling details on this meticulous ban: "This morning (Wednesday) the archbishop of Porto Alegre visited our poor Father Jorge Sedelmayer, who is sick in the hospital and who is the director of the Federation of the Marian Congregations, not to thank him for the well-organized and vibrant Marian rally, but to register his strong protest against that rally, strictly prohibiting the publication of any reports or other material concerning the said event here in Porto Alegre, with a particular ban on publishing any of the comments made by Your Excellency regarding the pontifical constitution, as well as on the speech by Senator Apolonio Sales, as being *objectionable and provocative gloating* over a victory obtained!! He also said that it was lucky for us [sic] that he was not present at the rally because he would have protested against the speech of Your Excellency. ... He would also have prevented the publication of the conclusions had he known about them beforehand..." (emphasis in the original).

At the initiative of Father Leme Lopes S.J., a professor at the Catholic University of Rio, the *Jornal do Commercio* (November 6, 1948) published the full text of Dom Sigaud's speech.

Cardinal Jaime Câmara expressed deep disgust at the publication. While saying he did not wish to censor the content of Dom Sigaud's speech, he deplored the allusions it made to the "São Paulo affair." He said the latter could have a demoralizing effect by giving rise to the idea there was a split in the Episcopate.

A dispassionate look at the attitudes of the cardinals and Dom Scherer showed that their aims were fundamentally the same. They wanted to stifle any discussion of Dom Sigaud's speech and affirm the cohesion of the episcopate.

They seemed to fail to define the situation created by Dom Sigaud's speech clearly and to be confused about the appropriate line of conduct. That was apparently behind their wait-and-see attitude, observed both in São Paulo and Rio. They seemed to be waiting for something and, in the meantime, trying to comment as little as possible on the subject and to smother it if they could.

At any rate, during the clergy's meeting, the cardinal did not say a word about the Constitution. He merely read a papal document from the previous year about Catholic Action men, adding, "To comply with the guidelines of this document, this, indeed, is to obey the pope." And there the matter rested.<sup>1296</sup>

## 10. Dom Mayer's Article and Speech

The following month, November 1948, it was Dom Mayer's turn to come to the fore.

On November 22, the newspaper *Santos Jornal* published an article in which, in the light of *Bis Saeculari Die*, he established many concepts that were more or less obscure in the treatises on Catholic Action.

On December 19, he gave a momentous speech in the interior of São Paulo during a Marian rally in Piracicaba: he gave a detailed analysis of *Bis Saeculari Die*, challenging the misconceptions circulating about the document and highlighting the enormous scope of that Apostolic Constitution.<sup>1297</sup>

The speech was enthusiastically received. In Rome, it was published in *Acies Ordinata*, the World Secretariat of Marian Congregations bulletin. In Brazil, it was published in Rio's *Jornal do Commercio* on April 19, 1949, to various reactions.<sup>1298</sup>

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<sup>1296</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Dom Sigaud in 1949 on the immediate effects of *Bis Saeculari Die*.

<sup>1297</sup> Memorandum on the Brazilian progressive crisis on the 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress (Rio, 1955).

<sup>1298</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54. Dom Mayer received laudatory letters from bishops, priests and laypeople from all over Brazil, complimenting him on the clarity of the speech and on his courage. Father Arlindo Vieira, for example, said that "the arguments presented by Your Excellency are unanswerable,

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The cardinal of São Paulo, Dom Carlos Carmelo, replied shortly afterward by publishing a pastoral letter trying to refute the statements of the two bishops and citing Dom Sigaud's speech in Porto Alegre *ad verbum* and Dom Mayer's speech *in genere*.<sup>1299</sup>

### 11. The Translation of *Bis Saeculari Die*

A new problem then appeared in connection with the Marian Federation.

As board members of the Marian Federation of São Paulo, we believed it our duty to spread *Bis Saeculari Die*. So, some of us distributed mimeographed sheets containing a translation of some parts of the document.

The Federation president, Dr. José Amadei, rebuked us for it, saying that we should first obtain permission from the local ecclesiastical authority.<sup>1300</sup>

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Shortly after, another incident occurred.

When we emphasized the importance of publishing the full text of the pontifical document in the Bulletin of the Federation, there was a lack of goodwill and many delays on the part of the Federation's president that would be too long and tedious to narrate here.

A board member even needed to remind the president that under the Code of Canon Law, persons who prevent the divulgation of pontifical documents incur excommunication.<sup>1301</sup>

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although there may be no persuading those who interpret the words of the Pope in their own way" (Letter of May 2, 1949).

<sup>1299</sup> Frei Baptist Blenke, a Carmelite priest and a great friend of the Legionário group, was in Rome at the General House of the Carmelite Order at that time and wrote to Dom Mayer from there in April 1950: "Your Excellency may rest assured. It seems that your attitude was communicated to the Holy Father. The Holy Father is aware of the situation in Brazil; they told him that there was some doubt about *Bis Saeculari*; he replied (quite surprised), 'but how is this possible: I spoke so clearly!' But it would be very appropriate if Your Excellency and Dom Sigaud came to Rome and explained everything to the Holy Father (this is what Father Danti, S.J. said). The Pope likes to hear the bishops and take note of what they say. There was also praise for your attitude; it seems that the Nuncio has also mentioned you to His Holiness" (Letter of Frei Baptist Blenke to Dom Mayer, April 12, 1950).

<sup>1300</sup> Report sent by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru, S.J., probably in 1950. Dom Antonio Alves de Siqueira, appointed in 1948 by the Cardinal of São Paulo to replace the Jesuits in the direction of the Federation of Marian Congregations, and Father Boaventura Cantarelli, a Salvatorian priest who was his right-hand man, said that the translation contained errors, and that they had heard at São Luis Palace that the publication had been made as a provocation to His Eminence (cf. Lecture on Memoirs (X) August 15, 1954). At the same time, people close to the episcopal palace warned the board of the Marian Federation to be very careful in circulating the pontifical document, because it was "causing suffering to our cardinal" (cf. Memorandum for Canon Antonio Leme Machado, probably from 1947).

<sup>1301</sup> Reference to the previous CCL (Pius-Benedictine Code of Canon Law), which was then in force and which had been drawn up under St. Pius X and promulgated by Benedict XV in 1917. Canon 2333 reads:

The text was printed in October 1948, once these difficulties were finally overcome. It included the Apostolic Constitution in its original Latin and an excellent Portuguese translation by Father Augusto Magne, S.J., a well-known Latin scholar.<sup>1302</sup>

The edition, eagerly received by Marian congregants, sold out immediately.

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A second printed edition was being distributed when the Federation president, at a board meeting, said that Father Enzo Gusso, in his capacity as the cardinal's secretary, ordered him to suspend the distribution<sup>1303</sup> and collect all copies of our translation because the cardinal would publish an official version.<sup>1304</sup>

Shortly after, Father Enzo Gusso sent for publication a third edition with a translation substantially identical to the first except for one crucial point that was mistranslated.<sup>1305</sup>

The change was as follows:

In summary, the official Latin text stated that the Marian Congregations are Catholic Action since the pastors recognize them.

However, the cardinal's version said the Marian Congregations are Catholic Action "provided they are incorporated into the ranks of the apostolic militia by the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy and depend on it to start and carry out apostolic work."

This translation handily gave the bishops the power to recognize the Marian Congregations as Catholic Action or to refuse to do so.<sup>1306</sup>

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"Those who have recourse to the civil authorities in order to impede the letters or documents of the Holy See or its Legates, preventing either directly or indirectly their promulgation or execution, as also those who on account of these letters or documents injure or terrify the authors of the same, or others on account of them, fall ipso facto into excommunication reserved in a special way to the Apostolic See."

<sup>1302</sup> Father Augusto Magne (1887-1966), born in the French Languedoc, emigrated to Brazil at 17, joined the seminary of the Society of Jesus here, and became a Brazilian citizen in 1908. He did his higher studies in Rome and received a Ph.D. in theology from the Gregorian University. He was director of the College of Philosophy of Rio's Pontifical Catholic University, a member of the Linguistic Society of Paris and of the Indogermanische Gesellschaft. He wrote five dictionaries on philology and various other works. Apart from French, Portuguese and Latin he knew well Greek, German, English, Italian, Spanish, and the Provençal and Romanian dialects (cf. *Jornal do Brasil*, 7/22/66).

<sup>1303</sup> Report sent by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru SJ, probably in 1950.

<sup>1304</sup> Lecture on *Memoirs (X)* 8/15/54.

<sup>1305</sup> Report sent by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru SJ, probably in 1950.

<sup>1306</sup> A special note for students of this subject: To highlight the difference between the correct translation provided by the Marian Congregations and the modified version approved by the cardinal, we first give the relevant passage from the Latin text, then the translations mentioned:

*Official Latin version:* "Quapropter, cum et ab Ecclesiastica hierarchia inter apostolicae militiae copias excipiantur ab eaque in operibus adoriendis et perficiendis plane pendeant, jure meritoque, ut quondam notavimus, hierarchici apostolatus cooperatrices sunt dicendae."

The Marian congregants refused to distribute this version, which so seriously adulterated the meaning of the pope's words.

Dr. José Fernando de Camargo then presented our Portuguese translation of *Bis Saeculari Die* to Father Bonaventura Cantarelli, who passed it on to Dom Siqueira for consideration.

Dom Siqueira compared the translations—the archdiocese's official one with the tampered-with passage and ours, identical to the one by Poliglotta Vaticana.<sup>1307</sup> He concluded that our translation, published in the Bulletin of the Federation of Marian Congregations, was correct. However, he demanded that we use the version the cardinal proposed in the third edition “out of respect for the cardinal” and ordered that we publish it.<sup>1308</sup> With its changed meaning, this version has never been withdrawn from circulation in Brazil.<sup>1309</sup>

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*Translation by the Federation of Marian Congregations:* “Therefore, since they have been admitted by the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy into the ranks of the apostolic militia and depend on it both concerning the undertaking and to the performance of any apostolic activity, they are—as we have already noted—to be rightly and deservedly considered collaborators of the hierarchical apostolate.” (Translator’s note: this is followed in the original by the “official” Portuguese translation from Poliglotta Vaticana. There is no official English translation. An English translation was published by the American Jesuits in 1957. This text reads: “The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy upon whom the Sodalities of Our Lady fully depend in undertaking and carrying out their work, count them among the forces of the militant apostolate. Sodalities deserve, therefore, by every right – as We have noted on another occasion – to be called cooperators in the apostolate of the Hierarchy.”).

*The modified version approved by the Cardinal:* “Therefore (as we have already noted) they *should* rightly be called cooperators in the hierarchical apostolate *provided they are* received into the ranks of the apostolic militia by the ecclesiastical hierarchy *and remain entirely dependent on the same* in all matters concerning the initiation and performance of their activities” (emphasis added).

So what the Holy Father had authoritatively affirmed to be Catholic Action was now, in the interpretation of His Eminence Cardinal Motta, to be made dependent on the approval of bishops that could be granted or withheld at will. In other words, if the bishop did not want to receive the Marian Congregations into the ranks of the apostolic militia, it would not be Catholic Action.

The whole discussion focuses on the question of how, in the Latin text, the conjunction “cum” followed by subjunctive verbs should be translated: “... *cum excipiantur ... ab eaque ... pendeant.*” In the translation of Cardinal Motta, that “cum” was translated as “*provided that,*” “*as long as.*” However, when followed by a subjunctive verb, the conjunction “cum” introduces a causal proposition and should be translated as “*as*” or “*since*”; this usage dates back to classical times, as indicated by all good grammars of the Latin language (cf. for example, Simone Deléani et Jean-Marie Vermander, *Initiation à la langue latine et à son système — Manuel pour grands débutants, publié sous la direction de Jean Beaujeu, Société d’Édition d’Enseignement Supérieur*, Paris, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., 1975, vol. I pp. 144 & 269). The translation of the Federation of Marian Congregations and that of Poliglotta Vaticana, which are identical on this point, is the correct one.

<sup>1307</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54.

<sup>1308</sup> Report sent by Dr. Plinio to Father Labúru, S.J., probably in 1950.

<sup>1309</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54. A curious fact: on the Vatican website (Vatican.va) recently consulted by us, all the apostolic constitutions issued during the pontificate of Pius XII appear in their original Latin, together with translations into several languages, usually provided by the competent department of the Roman Curia. For *Bis Saeculari Die*, the only existing translation is...the Portuguese one! This appears to indicate that this Apostolic Constitution was of special interest to Brazil. This, in turn, shows the close attention the Holy See paid to the controversy on the subject raised here.

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These disputes during the board meetings of São Paulo's Federation of Marian Congregations were so embarrassing for the opponents of *Bis Saeculari Die* that they absconded with the book of minutes for a long time, making it impossible to record the occurrences during the meetings methodically.

Under the pretext that this would be more convenient when the book was "lost," they just drew up summary minutes at the end of each meeting. These "summaries" omitted all that would have undermined the innovators' position and were worded in such a tendentious manner that the board rejected them.<sup>1310</sup>

## 12. Bishops' Commission Claims Privilege of Interpreting Papal Documents

Shortly after the Fifth Eucharistic Congress in Porto Alegre, the Episcopal Commission for Catholic Action, composed of Cardinals Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcellos Motta and Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, Archbishops Dom Augusto Álvaro da Silva of Salvador and Dom Antonio dos Santos Cabral of Belo Horizonte, and Bishop João da Matha de Andrade Amaral, of Niterói, published a notice dated November 3, 1948, saying that the interpretation of pontifical documents was the sole competence of that Commission.<sup>1311</sup>

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<sup>1310</sup> Dr. Plínio's report to Father Labúru, S.J., probably sent in 1950.

<sup>1311</sup> It was a statement of the utmost importance, as the Episcopal Commission went beyond the limits of its role by claiming exclusive rights over the interpretation of a papal document. In addition, it had no legislative power over the bishops and could only have spoken in their name throughout Brazil if all the Brazilian bishops, without exception, had given their unanimous consent.

The official statement said that the Episcopal Commission of C.A. was officially "ordering" [sic!] the Episcopate to accept that "for the sake of saving the unity of orientation," it was "reserving the right, in all matters relating to the exterior apostolate, to provide the official interpretation of *Bis Saeculari Die* at the national level." Signed on behalf of the Episcopal Commission of Brazilian Catholic Action by its secretary, João da Matha de Andrade Amaral, Bishop of Niterói.

It appears that this document was none too well received in certain Vatican circles, to judge from the information provided by the seminarian Amaury Castanho, the future bishop of Valença (RJ), and afterward of Jundiá (SP), then a student at the Brazilian College in Rome.

In a letter of February 17, 1950, to an unknown recipient, he said that "after the dissensions that arose in connection with that item of the Episcopal Commission of C.A. reserving the right to interpret the Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father, Dom Jorge [Marcos de Oliveira] was charged with consulting the Holy See about what should be done among us. About August last year, the reply was sent to Brazil. About the content of that reply, all we have found out is that '*è stata favorevolissima alle congregazioni*' ["it was extremely favorable to the Marian Congregations']. ... Was it found convenient, in Brazil, not to divulge the reply of the Holy See? It seems that it was because 1) the solution or letter sent by Rome was addressed only to the Episcopate, and 2) it was not favorable to those opposed to [the Apostolic Letter], and so it was immediately buried in the archives. ... Concerning the same matter, Dom Jaime, when in Rome, wanted to get to the bottom of this affair. He asked Cardinal Pizzardo for solutions to his difficulties but did not obtain any answer. Then, Dom Jaime asked the Holy Father himself about it. The Holy Father answered (we only heard this from Don Jaime!) that '*soltanto il Papa ha il diritto di interpretare la lettera apostolica*' ["only the pope has the right to interpret the Apostolic Letter']. Consequently, that item of the Episcopal

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When they heard about the Episcopal Commission's circular letter, Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud, each sent a letter to the secretary, Dom João da Matha de Andrade Amaral, in which they pointed out that the Episcopal Commission did not have the power to impose any particular interpretation of pontifical documents: only the Pope could do that.<sup>1312</sup>

### 13. A Result of These Efforts: *Bis Saeculari Die* Becomes Known Throughout Brazil

I want to mention the final episode of this story.

In Rome in 1950, I presented evidence of the resistance and maneuvers of those seeking to diminish the papal document's effects. Dom Mayer submitted an official report in his capacity as a bishop.

The following year, when Dom Sigaud passed through Rio on his way to Rome, the then Nuncio, Dom Carlo Chiarlo, said to him:

“So, Your Excellency is going to Rome? Many Brazilians have gone there to deliver all kinds of papers to the Secretariat of State. Because of that, I recently received the most significant rebuke of my diplomatic life. I cannot understand why they send such clippings to Rome and not to me here. Why take them to Rome?”

Dom Sigaud heard, took his leave, and everything was in order.<sup>1313</sup>

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Commission was premature. In fact, for several years, the Code [of Canon Law] has left no doubt about who is entitled to interpret a pontifical document!”

<sup>1312</sup> Bishop Mayer, in a letter dated February 18, 1949, said: “This Episcopal Commission has said that it reserves the right to provide an ‘official interpretation’ of the Apostolic Constitution on the national level. Permit me, with all due respect, Your Excellency, to state that I cannot admit the right of the Episcopal Commission to ‘interpret officially’ the word of the Holy Father. The authentic interpretation of the pontifical words belongs exclusively to the Holy See...”

“There can be no doubt that the two principles that must prevail in this matter are: a) the supreme, complete and immediate jurisdiction of the Holy Father over each bishop and each of the faithful; b) the autonomy of the bishop in his own diocese – subject to the canonical provisions regarding the Metropolitan bishop – in the government of his flock concerning powers other than those of the Holy Father or the totality of bodies and institutions which make up the Holy See and which, under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Pontiff, constitute the government of the Church. The first principle, as I have already pointed out, means that in all that relates to acts of the Magisterium or the highest levels of Church government, the situation of the Episcopal Commission is, like that of any bishop, merely obediential. It cannot even give an authentic interpretation of the word of the Pontiff. But – and here I come to the second principle – this obediential function is not exercised over the bishops and faithful as a form of government. In other words, it is not for the Episcopal Commission to give orders to the bishops regarding compliance with determinations issued by the Holy See.”

<sup>1313</sup> Little did the Nuncio know that Dom Sigaud was not merely taking only “some small pieces of paper” to Rome but a substantial report of 123 typewritten pages, to the preparation of which Dr. Plinio had made substantial contributions. The report was dated June 10, 1951.

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While all these efforts ensured that *Bis Saeculari Die* became known in Brazil, this story also highlights the struggles that publishing a papal document here required.<sup>1314</sup>

## Chapter XV

# The Holy See Praises *In Defense*

### 1. Did Canon Enzo Gusso Boycott a Message from the Holy See?

Years before I received the letter from the Holy See praising my book, something serious happened.

Father Veloso<sup>1315</sup> told me he received a letter from Father Castro e Costa, my former teacher at São Luis High School. He was very annoyed because I had not answered a crucial letter he sent me through Canon Enzo Gusso, who accompanied Cardinal Motta to Europe.<sup>1316</sup>

Father Costa and I were good friends and always had a good relationship. He became an ardent defender of my book in Rome.<sup>1317</sup>

When I heard this, I immediately wrote to Father Costa, saying that I had not received the letter he had handed in confidence to Canon Enzo Gusso.<sup>1318</sup>

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<sup>1314</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 15/8/54.

<sup>1315</sup> Father José Francisco Versiani Velloso (1919-1972) was appointed the first Bishop of Itumbiara, Goiás, in 1966 and remained in that post until he died in 1972.

<sup>1316</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1317</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Father Sigaud on 12/16/46.

<sup>1318</sup> In the postscript of this letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., Dr. Plinio says: "Rereading the letter, I see that I omitted the following: Father Enzo admitted to Father Veloso that he received the letter from you, and said that he had posted it, addressed to me, after his return to São Paulo! As you can see, I never received this letter" (Letter to Father João de Castro e Costa, S.J., August 7, 1946).



Father Costa then sent me another letter to the same effect, in which he told me that Msgr. Lombardi, then in charge of Brazilian affairs at the Secretariat of State, ordered him to tell me that the Secretariat had examined my book and found it strictly orthodox. He also said he would not send a letter from the Secretariat of State, as this would offend the Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo and other prelates.<sup>1319</sup> Father Costa asked me to treat the information he provided as strictly confidential.<sup>1320</sup> It should not be published and was given only for the tranquility of my conscience. He expected me to use discretion and not say anything.

By a curious coincidence, the same day I received the second letter from Father Costa, I happened to meet Canon Enzo Gusso on the street. I asked him if he had not received a letter from Father Costa to deliver to me.

He was very embarrassed and said yes, he had received such a letter, put a stamp on it and posted it to me here in São Paulo.

I said:

“You receive a letter in Rome to bring to me, and you put it in the mail here in São Paulo?”

He replied:

“I was not obligated to deliver that letter to your home.”

“But really, and I do not want to argue about this, you only had to call me, and I would have come to get it.”

“Oh! I never thought about that.”

“Because the letter never arrived ... it was lost, but I received a copy.”

Of course, a report was sent to Rome immediately, describing that little scene.

## **2. Conversation with the Jesuit Provincial. Our Documents Are Delivered to the Holy See**

In March 1949, a few days before I received the letter of approval for my book,<sup>1321</sup> Father Arturo Alonso, provincial of the Jesuits, called me.<sup>1322</sup>

To understand Father Arturo Alonso's ideological orientation, know that he appointed Father Cesare Dainese and Father Arlindo Vieira to posts that automatically took them far away from the former *Legionário* group and

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<sup>1319</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1320</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to a prelate, date unknown, certainly from the second half of 1948.

<sup>1321</sup> In a letter of 3/22/49 to Father Riou, who was in Rome, Dr. Plinio says, “A few days have passed since I visited Father Alonso; he told me the Vatican ambiance did not warrant the slightest hope that my book *In Defense of C.A.* would be the object of any assessment or statement by the Holy See. I received the news with resignation but not without sadness. ... You can thus gauge my surprise and joy when, shortly afterward, I received from the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Montini, the letter of which I am enclosing a copy.”

<sup>1322</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

me.<sup>1323</sup>

He had just arrived from Rome, and I found him bedridden with a broken leg. He told me:

“There’s no use continuing to prod the Holy See with the successive reports that you keep sending to Rome, seeking to crucify this poor Provincial of the Society.”<sup>1324</sup>

Opening his arms theatrically as someone being crucified, he said:

“I’ve seen your reports on the pope’s desk.”

For me, to hear that was a great joy. He continued:

“I know you want your book’s approval. Do not insist because the Holy See will never approve it. The Holy See is about to strike a blow favoring the Marian Congregations. You would be very pleased if you knew the nature of this blow, but this will not result in your books’ approval.”<sup>1325</sup>

He explained:

“The attitude the Jesuits have taken of not provoking any fights has transcendental explanations that I cannot give you. For this reason, it will not help you to portray me in your reports as a man who betrays the Church.”

I answered:

“Father Alonso, I lack the authority to tell you what I think of you. You are not my subordinate. But since you have been reading letters addressed to people to whom I am, according to Canon Law, entitled to state my opinions freely, I must say that what you read in them is exactly what I think about you.”

“So, the old Plinio is always the same, just as unforgiving as far as I am concerned?”

“I will be unforgiving toward you as long as you keep up your flexible attitude toward error.”<sup>1326</sup>

“And you believe that you have treated me justly?”

“Father, I ask you: are there any false arguments in these reports? Any misrepresentation of facts? Faulty reasoning? If there are, I am willing to acknowledge my mistake. But *amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*” – “Plato may be our friend, but the truth is more our friend than Plato.” What I mean is, you could be my friend, but I would still care more about the truth than about your friendship.”

“Oh, Dr. Plinio, not everything is logical; many things in life are matters of the heart.”

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<sup>1323</sup> Report presented by Dr. Plinio to Msgr. Valentini in Rome in 1950.

<sup>1324</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1325</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1326</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

“Father, I cannot agree. A heart that opposes logic is worthless. It could only be crooked and misguided. It is either logical or worthless.”<sup>1327</sup>

“Do you not understand that we must settle for the lesser evil when we cannot have it all? The blows you want to strike against your opponents will never yield good results. You want the impossible.”

The conversation went on along those lines for more than an hour. But I found his repeated recommendations that I should not insist on obtaining approval for my book very strange.<sup>1328</sup>

I never saw that man again but was delighted to see that the conduit through which we sent our documents to Rome was working and that Pius XII had sent for him to apply pressure.<sup>1329</sup>

### 3. Monsignor Montini’s Letter of Praise on Behalf of Pius XII

One fine day in March 1949,<sup>1330</sup> Friar Hieronymus Van Hinten, a Carmelite who had become close to us in 1946 or 1947, during the period of our disgrace, called me around lunchtime to tell me:<sup>1331</sup>

“I’ve received a letter from Rome addressed to you. It is from the Holy See’s Secretariat of State and is still sealed. What do you want me to do with it?”

“Open it and read it out to me.”

He read it, and it was a letter of approval from the Holy See for my book *In Defense of Catholic Action*. It was an official letter in Latin, signed by Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini, the head of the Secretariat at the time.

I could hardly believe my ears:

“Friar Hyeronimus,<sup>1332</sup> this is fantastic!”

Translated from the original Latin, it said:

Vatican Palace, February 26, 1949

Illustrious Sir,

Your dedication and filial piety led you to offer the Holy Father the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*, in which you show punctilious care and utmost diligence.

His Holiness rejoices with you for having explained and defended Catholic Action, which you know in its entirety and hold in high esteem, with penetration and

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<sup>1327</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1328</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1329</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1330</sup> SD 11/4//72.

<sup>1331</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1332</sup> Lunch EANS 6/17/82.

clarity, so it has become clear to everyone how opportune it is to study and promote this auxiliary form of the hierarchical apostolate.

With all his heart, the August Pontiff presents his wishes that this work may bear rich and seasoned fruits and that you may reap many great consolations from it.

And as a token that this shall come to pass, he grants you the Apostolic Blessing.

For my part, with due consideration, I remain devotedly yours,

G. B. Montini

Substitute Secretary of State<sup>1333</sup>

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<sup>1333</sup> This letter from the Holy See, with the Secretariat of State's letterhead, was delivered to Dr. Plinio accompanied by another letter from Friar Batista Blenke explaining why he had sent this correspondence through his confrere, Friar Hieronymus (Friar Batista had been the first parish priest of the church, subsequently the basilica, of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Martiniano de Carvalho Street in São Paulo; he later became Procurator General of the Order in Rome).

In his letter to Dr. Plinio, Friar Batista said: "I am pleased to pass on to you the letter the Holy Father has addressed to you through Monsignor Montini. I apologize for sending it this way [through Friar Jerome]; as the above address may be wrong, I thought it more prudent to send it to the Carmelite convent. According to your request, I tried to get the Holy Office's opinion, but it was impossible because this dicastery does not usually give such opinions. I hope the Holy Father's blessing will encourage you to continue your work to make Christ evermore known and loved in Brazil" (Friar Batista Blenke's letter to Dr. Plinio, March 4, 1949).

From a previous letter of Frei Batista to Friar Jerome, dated February 21, 1949, we know that if Frei Batista was not the only one to bring *In Defense* to the Secretariat of State's attention, he was one of those who did so and was given the task of transmitting the Holy See's approval to Dr. Plinio.

In this letter, Friar Batista tells Friar Jerome, "I wrote to you about the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*. Dr. Plinio asked me last year to send the book to the Holy Office and see if there was a possibility of obtaining the opinion of that dicastery. I did try, but it was not possible; Dr. Plinio also told me he had sent the book to Father Costa, S.J., who is at the Brazilian College in Rome, to offer it to the Holy Father and see if there was a possibility of getting something of this kind, but that Father Costa had not replied. I thought there might have been a 'diplomatic' order not to submit the book to the Secretariat of State because, as we know, there has been no lack of 'critical' voices in Brazil. So, I did not immediately want to try and do something about it because, in these matters, it is always necessary to proceed very cautiously. I obtained a lot of information, etc. The situation now is this: the book is already at the Secretariat of State; I am hoping for some response. If there is a reply, i.e., a letter, I will send it to you...Unfortunately, I could not offer the book as it should have been, bound in white leather and inscribed in golden letters; I did not know that. ... Naturally, I suppose there will be some response from the Secretary of State."

Dr. Plinio's thankyou letter to Friar Batista, from which we cite the following passage, is also significant: "I want to express to you, my dear Friar Batista, my most heartfelt thanks for the friendship that has induced you to lend me your invaluable and decisive assistance in this important step of our apostolate. All my friends from the former 'Legionário' group share this gratitude, particularly Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud. I see the fact that I have received this great grace as a sign of the refined kindness of Our Lady to a modest novice of the Carmelite Third Order, via the unique and direct intermediary of the Procurator of our Order" (undated letter, probably of March 1949).

Dr. Plinio also received a very curious letter from Monsignor Pascoal Gomes Librelotto (1901-1967), Major Chaplain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Hunters Battalion of FEB (Brazilian Expeditionary Force), and also First Chaplain of FAB (Brazilian Air Force) (cf. <http://www.sentandoapua.com.br>).

This time, everything became crystal clear. Pius XII praised and recommended the *kamikaze*'s book.<sup>1334</sup>

That huge triumph left our opponents, especially the archbishop of São Paulo, Cardinal Carlos Carmelo, in a very embarrassing situation.

I skipped lunch and took a taxi to the Carmelite monastery to pick up the letter.<sup>1335</sup>

I was delighted and relieved, as though several burdens piled on my back had suddenly lifted.<sup>1336</sup>

At the seat, we prayed to Our Lady as a group, expressing our gratitude for this huge favor.

That night, I organized a dinner for my comrades-in-arms at one of the best restaurants in São Paulo.

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The next day, the first task was to write a news story about it and to distribute it to all newspapers in São Paulo.

Two or three papers published the news, summarizing the letter. It was all we could do in terms of advertising. But it was a sensation! No one had expected this.<sup>1337</sup>

I sent the cardinal a respectful letter through Monsignor Loureiro advising him of receiving the Holy See document and putting myself at his disposal as the least of his humble servants. This letter went unanswered.<sup>1338</sup>

Finally, I sent Monsignor Montini the following letter:

“São Paulo, March 19, 1949.

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In this letter, he describes the private audience, lasting for more than an hour, with Pius XII, during which the book *In Defense of Catholic Action* was discussed:

“In 1944, I went to war as Lt. Col. and First Chaplain of FAB, and, at the request of the Holy Father, I made a report on the religious situation in Brazil on 19 typewritten pages, which I submitted on March 21, 1945, during a private audience that lasted over an hour.

“I wrote a whole chapter on how I understand Catholic Action, which the Holy Father approved with these words: ‘*È proprio così*’ [‘That is exactly how it is’]. In the report, I appealed to the Holy Father to send for and examine your book and that of Father Cândido Santini, S.J., assuring him that if anything in them seemed incorrect, the authors would certainly make the relevant corrections.

“I also wrote that some had condemned your book as false, others had buried it in silence, and some had approved and applauded, and that I, belonging to the last group, had thought it a great work, worthy of being known” (letter of May 18, 1949).

In a letter to Dr. Plinio (September 7, 1946), Father João de Castro e Costa says that Monsignor Librelotto had warned him about rumors that the Episcopal Commission of Brazilian Catholic Action might condemn the *In Defense* book.

<sup>1334</sup> “The TFP Is Born,” op. cit.

<sup>1335</sup> SD 11/4/72.

<sup>1336</sup> Tea 2/26/89.

<sup>1337</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

<sup>1338</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

Your Excellency,

I present to you my heartfelt homage with gratitude and respect, thanking you for the letter with which Your Excellency has honored me to convey the Holy Father's august feelings and goodwill concerning my book *In Defense of Catholic Action*.

I wrote this book to expound the Holy See's wise directives on Catholic Action and defend them against truly dangerous interpretations. Thus, nothing could afford me more profound and heartfelt satisfaction than knowing that the Sovereign Pontiff honored my book with his august approbation.

I beg Your Excellency to place my most humble and filial gratitude at the feet of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

May God grant me the grace to serve the Holy Father at every moment of my life and shed my blood for him should the occasion arise.

For this, I rely on Your Excellency's prayers, assuring you of my most sincere devotion.

I remain, Your Excellency, yours in Christ, etc.<sup>1339</sup>

#### **4. "Let Whoever is on God's Side Join Us"**

As our situation began to improve, we faced a problem.

It was apparent that a multitude of Catholics still did not have the slightest idea of the dire crisis tearing the Church apart, so they could not have been said to have approved of what was happening.

If we could somehow find a way to act, we might still be able to save a good part of this group. We could extend St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort's invitation to those whom I would call intermediate Catholics: "Whoever is on the side of God, let them join us!"<sup>1340</sup>

But how to do this?

An initial step would have to be a clarion call to make this audience understand that all the ideals that *In Defense of Catholic Action* defended and sustained were still valid and that, newly strengthened, those gathered around the book were offering a chance to restart the battle.

Several measures were taken with this aim in mind.

#### **5. Dr. Ablas Writes Father Helder Câmara**

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<sup>1339</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Monsignor Montini, 3/19/49.

<sup>1340</sup> This convocation by Saint Louis de Montfort is taken from Sacred Scripture where Moses, angry because the people were worshipping the golden calf, said: *Si quis est domini, jungatur mihi* [If any man be on the Lord's side let him join with me] (Ex. 32:26). He was then joined by members of the tribe of Levi, whom Moses commanded to run the idolaters through with the sword. They did so, and Moses told them they had brought a blessing upon themselves.

We took an essential step by declaring war on the progressive camp to make them aware that the battle had begun anew. Here is how it was done:

Dr. Antonio Ablas Filho was president of the Catholic Action of Santos and a good friend of mine. Whenever we were in Santos, we would go to his house every night and have long conversations with him and his wife, Mrs. Julinha Guimarães Ablas. Their children, still very young, would listen to these conversations.

Knowing that he was very loyal to our cause, I did not beat around the bush but asked him straight out:

“Ablas, could you do us a favor? As president of Catholic Action here in Santos, could you write Msgr. Helder Câmara, the ecclesiastical assistant of the National Board of Catholic Action in Rio, wrote an official letter saying that the Holy See approved my book and that Catholic Action would fulfill the Holy Father’s express wishes by officially recommending that its members read it?”

Dr. Ablas liked the idea very much, and within a few days, the letter was in the hands of Msgr. Helder.<sup>1341</sup>

Msgr. Helder did not answer but knew that the counter-offensive was about to be resumed. It was like one of those medieval battles where one side deployed, sang a hymn, and the war began. That was how we threw down the gauntlet.<sup>1342</sup>

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<sup>1341</sup> The Diocesan Board of Santos sent the first letter on March 30, 1949, signed by Dr. Ablas as president and Mr. Italo Sartini as secretary. Since there was no answer, Dr. Ablas sent a second letter, dated June 23, 1949, reiterating the same request, in which he said, “By doing so, this Diocesan Board is solely and exclusively undertaking to comply with the wishes of our Holy Father Pius XII, gloriously reigning, expressed clearly and unmistakably concerning this important and timely work.”

Since he received no reply to this second letter, Dr. Ablas called (on January 20, 1950) Msgr. Helder Câmara, Assistant General of the National Board of Catholic Action, which led to this dialogue:

“Is this Msgr. Helder Câmara?”

“Yes.”

“Praised be Our Lord Jesus Christ!”

“In eternity, Amen.”

“This is Dr. Ablas Filho, president of the Diocesan Board of Catholic Action of Santos. Your blessing, Monsignor.”

“God bless you. What can I do for you?”

“Monsignor, I want to know about those two letters I sent you, one by post, the other through a good friend in Rio.”

“What you ask for in those letters concerns a very delicate question!”

“What’s delicate about it? Isn’t there a letter about it from the Holy Father?”

“I will refer this matter to the Episcopal Commission of C.A. and then get back to you.”

“Yes, Monsignor, I need an answer, because whatever the response, such official letters must, in my opinion, be answered. At least confirm that you have received the letters.”

“Yes sir, I will answer you very soon.”

Dr. Ablas said his goodbyes and asked for his blessing, but nothing came of this call (see the report of January 30, 1950, by Dr. Ablas himself.

<sup>1342</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82.

## 6. *In Defense's* Long-Term Results

*In Defense* was a book whose effect is much more easily gauged today than when it was written. At that time, progressivism, now being promoted loudly and openly everywhere, was still at the whispering stage. The dangers I indicated in it were only the seed of what subsequently took shape, expanded and ultimately brought us to the situation in which we find ourselves today.<sup>1343</sup>

In the comparative lethargy of the religious environment of the time, it was difficult for a Catholic to believe that a movement advertised as a good and normal development of the Church's life could be hatching a heresy. In other words, they presented Catholic Action as a novelty when, in fact, it was a nascent revolution.<sup>1344</sup>

These ideas were introduced simultaneously in seminaries, universities maintained by the State or the Church, the Catholic press, and the boards of significant Catholic associations. They were generally accepted by those people and constituted a vast program of ecclesiastical, political and social transformation advocated by an immense and powerful current, the lay leader of which was Tristão de Athayde.

This current spread its errors sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. Its doctrines were expressed much more clearly in its verbal propaganda than in its writings.<sup>1345</sup>

That is why, at the time, many Catholics found the picture I had drawn exaggerated.

These Catholics believed that after the Counter-Reformation and the definition of the dogma of papal infallibility, there could not possibly be room in the Church to develop a heretical movement. And they stood up against the book.

However, as the Church's internal crisis worsened, it became apparent to countless people that there was a deep-laid plot for a revolution in the Church in the twentieth century and that what I had denounced actually existed.<sup>1346</sup>

The book was opposed because it pierced the conspiracy that imposed this state of affairs in the Catholic Church many decades later.<sup>1347</sup>

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<sup>1343</sup> SD 12/12/85.

<sup>1344</sup> Here Dr. Plinio does not refer to Catholic Action in the meaning defined by the Popes, which *In Defense of Catholic Action* clearly upholds, but to Brazilian Catholic Action, over which progressivist elements had taken control.

<sup>1345</sup> Memorandum on the Brazilian religious crisis during the 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress (Rio, 1955).

<sup>1346</sup> RR 1/15/77.

<sup>1347</sup> RR 10/6/90. In his book, *The Ratzinger Report*, Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Benedict XVI, pointed out the existence of serious errors in the Church. There is a great symmetry between the errors he pointed



## 7. Fighting to Change the Course of History

In this situation, it seemed apparent that the only way to gain ground against the opponent was to fight openly, challenging the tactics of confusion with clear words and definitions.

I am sure that if *In Defense of Catholic Action* had never been published, the heresy that eventually penetrated everything would have been able to establish even deeper roots and take over the country even then.

And if it has spread everywhere, it is also true that its development was hindered and slowed down precisely because it was denounced right at the beginning and faced an obstacle. I am absolutely sure of this.<sup>1348</sup>

Catholic Action was brought from Europe to Brazil to become a nursery for the revolution. They would draw their troops from the Marian Congregations, whose young members were most fervent and enthusiastic. These Catholics were to serve as instruments for the religious revolution, which, in turn, would serve as a nursery for Christian Democrats. Later, they indeed transferred the best members of Catholic Action to the latter, while others supported Communism.

Jacques Maritain strongly influenced this process, which reached its peak during the period from 1940 to 1960.<sup>1349</sup>

These circles led to Catholic leftism, which supported [former president João] Goulart and almost brought Brazil to its knees. They continued their activities in the post-Goulart era in centrist or leftist movements.<sup>1350</sup>

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Therefore, the balance we can strike is that we fought to prevent the course of this revolution. And, with the help of Our Lady, we were able to help change the course of history!<sup>1351</sup>

The image of how things would have turned out had we sat back and done nothing supports this conclusion.<sup>1352</sup>

We owe everything to Our Lady. We can say, however, that we were her

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out and those reported by *In Defense*. The difference is that in *In Defense*, Dr. Plinio detected those errors in their inception and on a national level, and, in *The Ratzinger Report*, Cardinal Ratzinger dealt with those already developed errors on a universal level.

<sup>1348</sup> Tea ENSDP 12/2/91.

<sup>1349</sup> MNF 7/17/87.

<sup>1350</sup> "On An Imaginary Dog," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/15/74.

<sup>1351</sup> Tea ENSDP 2/12/91.

<sup>1352</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 6/8/86.

instruments. We thank her for wanting to use us. But in some way, we responded to grace, so the task was done.<sup>1353</sup>

## Part VI

# From the Catacombs to the Journal *Catolicismo*

### Chapter I

## The Expansion Phase

#### 1. The Growing Need to Combat the Church's Internal Enemies

Our group survived, our ideas gained depth, our doctrinal knowledge broadened, relations with Rome stabilized, and the headquarters' function was defined. The group's standing changed as we acquired a clearly defined position within the Church.<sup>1354</sup>

Our group's misfortunes brought about a transformation of its structure and goals.<sup>1355</sup>

Had we not been expelled from the *Legionário*, our organization would have remained permanently under the guidance of prelates sympathetic to the errors of Catholic Action. Led by such people, we could never have built up an entity aiming at higher goals.

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<sup>1353</sup> Tea ENSDP 12/2/91.

<sup>1354</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1355</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54.

They believed they could finish us off by excluding us, but they set us free. In turn, we feared that being excluded would cause us to cease to exist; instead, we found that we had been released.<sup>1356</sup>

At first, our group aimed at a generic apostolate. This goal changed. While our apostolate originally envisaged conquering Brazil for the Church, we became a group fighting for the conversion of Catholic circles from the inside.<sup>1357</sup>

It was during this period that we created our coat of arms with the rampant lion<sup>1358</sup> on a standard made for us by friendly Dominican nuns.

This original standard included the two keys of the Holy See, a manifestation of our ignorance because we were unaware that only Holy See agencies could use its keys. But I wanted to express this fundamental trait of our Group—dedication to serving the Holy See and defending it against its professed or hidden adversaries—including opponents entrenched in its midst.<sup>1359</sup>

Then was laid the foundation of all the work we do today<sup>1360</sup> — a solid foundation built on tears and suffering.<sup>1361</sup> Providence ordained that the TFP should gradually emerge from a series of tragedies.<sup>1362</sup>

## 2. First Contacts with Like-minded Groups in Other Countries

At that time, we also started to expand our network abroad because a very counter-revolutionary magazine called *La Pensée catholique* had appeared in France. We liked it very much, so we began writing to one of its brightest contributors, Abbé Luc Lefebvre.<sup>1363</sup>

We also discovered the existence of a very good and popular magazine at the time, *Cristiandad*, published in Barcelona, Spain, by a group led by a very intelligent Jesuit priest named Orlandis.<sup>1364</sup>

We started corresponding and building relationships with them, and they helped us expand our contacts even further.<sup>1365</sup>

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<sup>1356</sup> SD 7/4/79.

<sup>1357</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54.

<sup>1358</sup> Meaning, in heraldry, “an animal erected on its hind legs.”

<sup>1359</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>1360</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (IX) 8/14/54.

<sup>1361</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1362</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>1363</sup> Father Luc Lefebvre (1915-1979), a French priest, was the true mentor of this high intellectual caliber quarterly magazine. It was directed by Canon Henri Lusseau, author of the book *L'Histoire du peuple d'Israel*.

<sup>1364</sup> Father Ramón Orlandis i Despuig (1873-1958), a Spanish Jesuit priest, founded the magazine *Cristiandad* in 1944.

<sup>1365</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

### 3. Gratitude for Our Lady's Superabundant Gifts

Considering all these events and developments, I realize they resulted from Our Lady's superabundant gifts.

Had she not gifted us, first of all, and above all, with devotion to her; had she not inspired us with this counter-revolutionary sense which enabled us, from the first, to detect the enemy of sound doctrine and realize the extent of the plot hatched by that enemy, we could never have conceived the [*In Defense*] book that did so much to counteract his plans.

After that, Our Lady crowned the gesture of fidelity that was *In Defense* by calling forth from the ashes of the whole battle triggered by that book, the wonderful flower that is our Group. The flower developed and grew from that moment, and other flowers opened from its stalk.<sup>1366</sup>

## Chapter II

# The Martim Group

### 1. A Difficult Apostolate

We spent five or more years looking for more people to strengthen our movement.<sup>1367</sup> Only a few showed any interest, and only two of those who came became friends of the Group: Dom Pedro Henrique of Orleans-Braganza<sup>1368</sup> and the lawyer Carlos Mazagão, who later left us.<sup>1369</sup>

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<sup>1366</sup> Speech on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *In Defense*, 6/8/68.

<sup>1367</sup> Quick word 5/7/92.

<sup>1368</sup> Prince Pedro Henrique of Orleans-Braganza (1909-1981), a descendant of the Emperors of Brazil and grandson of Princess Isabel, was head of the Imperial House of Brazil. He fully supported Dr. Plinio, and so did two of his sons, Dom Luiz of Orleans-Braganza (the current head of the Imperial House) and Dom Bertrand of Orleans-Braganza.

<sup>1369</sup> SD 7/7/73.

Our numbers were not growing, and we seemed doomed to stagnation.<sup>1370</sup> But then something happened that had a profound impact on our future.<sup>1371</sup>

## 2. At São Luis High School, Elite Congregants, Guided by Father Mariaux

During this period, the friendship between Canon Mayer, Father Mariaux, and myself only strengthened. We liked Father Mariaux very much, and I think Canon Mayer liked him, too, and everything went on very well.

Sometime later, Father Mariaux told me:

“Ah! I now understand why you advised me to come to São Paulo. The students of São Luis High are seeking me out, and my apostolate is beginning to show some results.”

A large group of youths joined that school’s Marian Congregation, some of whom became very distinguished: Plinio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, Luiz Nazareno Teixeira de Assumpção Filho, Sérgio Brotero Lefèvre, Paulo Corrêa de Brito Filho, Celso da Costa Carvalho Vidigal.<sup>1372</sup> These formed the so-called “Martim Francisco Group,”<sup>1373</sup> which was later joined by Eduardo de Barros Brotero, Caio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, and Fábio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira. Sadly, others abandoned this group as time went on.

The Marian Congregation that Father Mariaux created at São Luis High School was exemplary.<sup>1374</sup> He provided an excellent formation to the members, especially concerning three aspects: a strong devotion to Our Lady, a lot of devotion to the Church, and a strong incentive to practice purity, coupled with courage. The young men under his care were courageous, steadfast and valiant fighters.<sup>1375</sup>

## 3. The Schol Faculty’s Opposition

However, contrary to what one might have expected, Father Mariaux encountered strong opposition from almost all the members of the school’s faculty.

He was very outgoing, did not mince his words, and spoke of the priests and the Rector as he pleased. I got the impression that his standing was superior to that of the Rector himself and that he could do so with impunity.

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<sup>1370</sup> Quick word 7/17/94.

<sup>1371</sup> “The TFP Is Born,” op. cit.

<sup>1372</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>1373</sup> SD 7/2/88.

<sup>1374</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1375</sup> SD 4/7/79.

He understood the “politicking” among the students at break time and was perfectly aware of the confrontation between the bad and the good. He would swoop down upon the boys, catching those attempting to incite others to immorality and wickedness, reprimanding them sharply and telling them, “Get out of here! Be quiet! Look, this one’s a good boy. Come here.” He gave prestige to the good and defeated the bad. This way of doing things was rare and difficult to find in the Marian Congregations and Catholic schools.

Of course, the bad boys intensely hated him and found support from other teachers. Out of naiveté or possibly for different reasons, the latter supported the bad boys against Father Mariaux.

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Father Mariaux would describe curious episodes to me. For example, there was an occasion when the bad students organized a strike against the school. There was commotion in the gardens and everywhere, and the priests did not know how to react.

As the spiritual director of the Marian Congregation there, he had a lot of influence over the student congregants. He told me how he placed himself very pointedly within reach of the other priests, who knew that as soon as he asked the assistance of the Marian Congregation members to break the strike, the strike would be over.

However, the Fathers preferred to suffer the consequences of the strike rather than accept Father Mariaux's help, so there was an alliance against him, although he had reason on his side.<sup>1376</sup>

#### **4. Father Mariaux Returns to Europe: Pressure from the Cardinal**

When World War II ended, Father Mariaux came looking for me one day and told me:

“Dr. Plinio, I must tell you something in the strictest confidence. The war has ended, and National Socialism has fallen. While the Nazis were in power, it was impossible to send me to Germany. But now my superiors have decided that I should return to Europe, partly because of the complaints the local archbishop, Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta, has made against me. He says I’m a reactionary; I create opposition against him, so he wants to send me away from São Paulo. There is nothing more to be done. I will be removed.”<sup>1377</sup>

The conflict with Cardinal Motta was because he wanted to encourage only Catholic Action and saw the continued existence of a splendid, flourishing,

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<sup>1376</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1377</sup> Dinner EANS 6/16/82.

first-rate Marian Congregation as a threat to his plans in a diocese from which he wanted to eliminate all Marian Congregations.<sup>1378</sup>

I asked him:

“Father Mariaux, is there anything I can do for you?”

“Yes. Please keep this to yourself. If you get involved, my situation will only worsen. But I want other favors from you.”

“How do you intend to get out of this situation?”

“I have been invited to preach a retreat in Rio de Janeiro, and at this retreat, I shall approach the cardinal archbishop there, Dom Jaime Câmara, and ask him to persuade the Holy See not to remove me.”

I was well acquainted with Dom Jaime Câmara...but I said nothing.

A few days later, he returned from the retreat.

I asked, “Father Mariaux, how was the retreat? And how did your conversation with Dom Jaime go?”

“Well, I talked to Dom Jaime and presented my petition.<sup>1379</sup> And he told me: “Look, Father, do not expect anything from me. The cardinal of São Paulo is implacable, and he has won the match against you in Rome.”<sup>1380</sup>

After some time had passed, Father Mariaux told me:

“I have a problem. These priests here cannot be trusted. I need to hand over these young men to a good priest.”

Dom Mayer was in Campos and thus unavailable. Dom Sigaud was in Jacarezinho, so he, too, was out of the question. Who could be considered a good priest?

“Father Mariaux, there is Fray Hieronymus.”

“Tell me, who is Fray Hieronymus?”

“He is Dutch.”

“Dutch?”

During the war, there had been serious conflicts between Germany and the Netherlands, with faults on both sides. I said:

“Dutch. But he is a very good man; getting to know him would be good for you.”

“Well, let’s see.”

I brought Father Mariaux and Brother Hieronymus together. Father Mariaux saw that Fray Hieronymus was a very orthodox man of considerable intelligence and realized he could give the boys a good education. So, he introduced him to the youths.<sup>1381</sup>

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<sup>1378</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1379</sup> Dinner EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1380</sup> SD 4/14/79.

<sup>1381</sup> SD 11/4/72.

## 5. The Martim Group Membership

A few days later, he called me again:

“Dr. Plinio, the priests of the Society gave me a deadline: after I leave Brazil, my boys have to vacate the places where they hold their meetings. And we need to take refuge somewhere. Would you have room for them at your headquarters?”

I said yes, they could use the rooms on Martim Francisco Street. The next day, some of those youths appeared, bringing the first items they needed to move:<sup>1382</sup> the baton with which Father Mariaux, a very musical man, used to conduct their orchestra, as well as musical scores<sup>1383</sup> and other objects belonging to Father Mariaux.<sup>1384</sup>

The group had about twenty young men. They had very little room, but we had no money to rent rooms elsewhere, so we left the front room for Father Mariaux’s boys, and we, older members, stayed in the back room.

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Father Mariaux prepared his departure, we said our goodbyes, he went on his journey,<sup>1385</sup> and the boys began to meet at the headquarters.

We began to notice that some of them showed an interest in us and were friendly. The others avoided us, but we did not attach any importance to it.<sup>1386</sup>

However, we had to face the problem of overcrowding at the seat. Before he died, José Gustavo de Souza Queiroz had left us an apartment on the sixth floor of Vieira de Carvalho Street, no. 27, in a part of the city that was an excellent address at that time. So, in August 1948, we moved to this apartment and left the headquarters on Martim Francisco Street entirely to Father Mariaux’s youths.<sup>1387</sup>

I invited them all to the Vieira de Carvalho Street headquarters to attend our meetings on certain nights of the week. Afterward, we would all go to Confeitaria Fasano, a confectioner’s store across the street, where we would sit around a large table, talk, eat, and then go home.

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<sup>1382</sup> Dinner EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1383</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1384</sup> Dinner EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1385</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>1386</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1387</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87. From that time on the oldest members of the movement became known as the *Vieira Group*. Later, when we rented a headquarters at 50 Pará Street, they came to be known as the *Pará Group*.



At a certain point, those who were most open to us would ask to join our group and tell the others about it.<sup>1388</sup>

The others went their way, dispersed, and I never heard from them again. The former<sup>1389</sup> came to fight on our side.<sup>1390</sup> They were members of influential São Paulo families<sup>1391</sup> and formed the so-called *Martim Group*.<sup>1392</sup>

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There is no need to explain how much these young men enriched our group. It was a great revitalization for us.

Imagine a group that spends years and years without seeing anyone desirous of joining it, suddenly augmented by a set of ten<sup>1393</sup> excellent members of a Marian Congregation who show great zeal, a lot of goodwill,<sup>1394</sup> who are intelligent and well-connected persons with a future and very closely linked to us spiritually from the outset.<sup>1395</sup> It was a breath of clean and fresh air,<sup>1396</sup> a promise of great things to come.<sup>1397</sup>

It was a reward from Our Lady. She had asked us for perseverance and provided the rest of the capital—her mercy.

This is how those candles about to burn down lit up again, and everything changed.<sup>1398</sup>

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<sup>1388</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1389</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>1390</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>1391</sup> SD 4/14/79.

<sup>1392</sup> The name of the Martim Group derived from its headquarters on 665 Martim Francisco Street. This custom of referring to various internal groups by the name of the street or urban district in which they were headquartered was common practice within the Catolicismo group and later in the TFP.

<sup>1393</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1394</sup> Dispatch with the French 7/25/94.

<sup>1395</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1396</sup> SD 4/8/89.

<sup>1397</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1398</sup> Dispatch with the French 7/25/94.

# Chapter III

## Our Apostolate

### Sees a Phase of Great Expansion

#### 1. Great Opportunities

The support of the Martim Francisco Street group was invaluable for our apostolate.<sup>1399</sup>

Father Mariaux had formed the characters of these young men according to manly principles, which pleased me very much. Many of them were very intelligent; others were not only intelligent but also very efficient.

They all represented our ideals very well and maintained our apostolate at the high level I desired.

The apostolic opportunities presented to us were colossal; we now had men working full-time in our apostolate who could take action.<sup>1400</sup>

#### 2. Launching the *Catolicismo* Monthly

That gave rise to the idea of launching a paper and expanding it throughout Brazil.<sup>1401</sup>

At our request, Dom Mayer founded the monthly newspaper *Catolicismo*, which he had us manage and establish an editorial board. Edited in Campos and printed in São Paulo, it was *Legionário* appearing under another name<sup>1402</sup> and upholding identical positions.<sup>1403</sup>

However, it differed from *Legionário* in a fundamental point: while the latter had just been a newspaper, *Catolicismo* was also a movement.

We initially printed about 5,000 copies. While it was very little for a newspaper, enabling a small group to address 5,000 readers monthly made it a loudspeaker with some effectiveness, albeit reaching a small public.<sup>1404</sup>

We began sending it to subscribers of the old *Legionário*<sup>1405</sup> and supporters throughout Brazil, who immediately subscribed to *Catolicismo*.<sup>1406</sup> We also visited various Marian Congregations to present the journal.

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<sup>1399</sup> SD 11/4/72.

<sup>1400</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>1401</sup> Dinner EANS 4/9/87.

<sup>1402</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1403</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>1404</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>1405</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1406</sup> SD 6/16/73.

# Part VII

## Trips to Europe in 1950 and 1952

### Chapter I

## Plans and Intentions

### 1. First Objective: Make Contact with Holy See Departments

In 1950, I took my first [apostolate] trip to Europe<sup>1407</sup> accompanied by Dr. Pacheco Sales. It lasted three months.<sup>1408</sup>

Dr. Paulo Barros and Dr. Adolpho had gone ahead.<sup>1409</sup> Dom Mayer met us in Paris and traveled with us to Rome.<sup>1410</sup>

No next-generation (Martim Group) member accompanied us on that trip. On the second trip, in 1952, some of the younger ones were more mature and made the trip with us.

What were these trips' main objectives?

Like his predecessors, Pope Pius XII had published encyclicals that restrained the Revolution in various areas.

For us in Brazil, feeling the dramatic situation described by *In Defense of Catholic Action*, Dom Sigaud's and Dom Mayer's appointments as bishops and the letter of praise I received from Pius XII<sup>1278</sup> were signs that the Holy See approved our efforts.<sup>1411</sup>

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<sup>1407</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1408</sup> SD 7/7/73.

<sup>1409</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1410</sup> In a letter to Father José Antonio Labúru Olascoaga, S.J. dated March 25, 1950, Dr. Plinio set out the plan for his trip: "I write you very quickly to let you know that on April 16 I will leave for Europe with three friends, landing in Madrid on the 18<sup>th</sup> and going on to Paris and finally Rome. I will stay for three days in Spain, during which I would be most earnestly committed to meet with you."

<sup>1411</sup> SD 3/22/80.

In those days, I believed there was a counter-revolutionary cell at the Vatican, right at the pinnacle of humanity.<sup>1412</sup>

The idea was to take advantage of some contacts we had established among our correspondents in Europe based on Father Mariaux's advice in the 1940s to try to approach the Vatican's decision-making bodies and obtain from the Holy See for the world and Brazil a more defined counter-revolutionary policy concerning orthodoxy (to prevent the spreading of nascent progressivism) and the fight between the political right and the political left (to advance the Counter-Revolution in the temporal sphere).

Establishing contacts within the Holy See was the most tangible and palpable of all our goals. We prepared the trips to Europe to make the eternal Rome of martyrs and saints our trip's high point and ultimate goal.<sup>1413</sup>

We wanted to meet Vatican counter-revolutionaries, inform them about the errors of the pernicious currents that infiltrated the Catholic movement in Brazil, and obtain suitable measures. Later, I intended to keep in contact with them to set up a counter-revolutionary movement worldwide.<sup>1414</sup>

## **2. Second Goal: Strengthening Ties with European Counter-Revolutionary Movements**

However, to be taken seriously in Rome and lend weight to our presence there, it seemed that we should appear not only with Father Mariaux's letters but also letters of introduction from right-wing European movements never involved with Nazis or Fascists.<sup>1415</sup>

There was a deeper reason also underlying this calculation.

Since I owed much of my convictions to my family's tradition from European sources, I believed it would only be natural to expect these traditions to still be alive there, at least in people with a mentality susceptible to matching ours. I thought our group would be far more likely to develop and expand in Europe than in Brazil.

My second objective was, therefore, to seek out Catholic and right-wing movements in the Old Continent (except, of course, those of Nazis and Fascists) still loyal to the European tradition who would agree with our aims.

I wanted to find out whether there were any leaders in these movements with a soaring vision, great intelligence and capability who shared our beliefs. Under the direction of those leaders, we could form a global coalition of right-wing movements. It seemed natural to me to assume that we would find in

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<sup>1412</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1413</sup> SD 3/22/80.

<sup>1414</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1415</sup> SD 3/22/80.

Europe luminaries able to direct the universal counter-revolutionary movement, so I was also looking for those leaders.<sup>1416</sup>

We decided to start our trip in Spain, Europe's most Catholic country.

After contacting groups in Spain, we would pass through Portugal, visit Fátima, and go on to France to do similar work.

I had received here in Brazil an invitation from Prince Albert of Bavaria to go to Germany, which meant that we would also have access to German traditionalist circles, including the pretender to the throne of Austria, Archduke Otto of Habsburg, who was living in Paris at that time.

That was before entering Italy so we could present ourselves in Rome with a selection of the contacts already made, with our whole chessboard garnished with all the pieces to engage the final battle, the Roman battle.<sup>1417</sup>

Accordingly, these trips had an apostolic purpose and required much work and careful preparation. Everything was thought through and carefully weighed, and I took meticulous notes to ensure I would not forget anything.<sup>1418</sup>

### **3. A Vassal Looking for a Suzerain**

Mind you, I did not go to Europe looking for grassroots to lead.

On the contrary, if my trip had had the desired result, I would have left our movement at the disposal of other leaders—civilian leaders in the temporal sphere and high-ranking Church leaders who could have guided us.

That was what I went looking for.

Therefore, I was like a vassal looking for a suzerain and not like a lord looking for vassals.<sup>1419</sup> I went as a pilgrim searching for remnants of Christendom.

Unfortunately, the results of our pilgrimage were the most bitter and disappointing we could have imagined.<sup>1420</sup>

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<sup>1416</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1417</sup> SD 3/22/80.

<sup>1418</sup> CSN 9/18/93.

<sup>1419</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1420</sup> Quick word EANS 6/11/82.

## Chapter II

# Spain

### 1. “Carlistas,” “Alfonsistas,” Catholic Movements and Personalities

In Spain, we met the most important members of the Carlist movement and had some contact with Alfonsist circles.

The monarchist public of Spain, still powerful at that time, was divided into Carlists and Alfonsists.

The Carlist pretender to the Spanish throne was Prince Xavier of Bourbon-Parma. He resided in Paris (I believe Franco had banned him from entering Spain), and his representative was a man famous in traditionalist circles in Latin America: Don Manuel Fal Conde, a lawyer from the city of Seville.

Later, we met Catholic members of some religious associations.

### 2. Madrid and San Sebastian

I also contacted Don Elias de Tejada Spinola, a professor at the University of Salamanca, whom I met in Brazil.

I had heard about *Cristiandad*, a traditionalist Catholic magazine halfway between Carlism and the specifically Catholic movement.<sup>1421</sup>

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During Dom Sigaud’s boat trip from Navarra, he befriended a colonel in the Spanish army named Manuel Barrera Aguilar.

I sought him out and kept in touch with him in Madrid. We traveled together to San Sebastián, where we attended a Carlist meeting.

### 3. Seville

I also went to Seville. An old adage states, “Those who have not seen Seville have never seen anything truly marvelous.” This is the truth in a very literal sense. Seville is magnificent!<sup>1422</sup>

Two important monuments are the cathedral with the famous Giralda Tower (a tower of extraordinary beauty dating back to the Moorish era) and the Alcázar of Seville with its stunning gardens, which I, unfortunately, did not have time to visit.

If I remember correctly, the Giralda is a colossal tower over eighty meters high. It has no staircase but only a ramp.

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<sup>1421</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1422</sup> SD 3/22/80.

From the outside, the Giralda would be a thick, high wall, uniform and monotonous, if the Moors had not found a way to open up many little windows with embossed designs to make its surface look like a carpet.

The inside of the tower is ugly. What is nice is the succession of views of the cathedral at different heights as you walk up.

I visited the Giralda and the cathedral and walked around the old quarter of Seville, where Don Manuel Fal Conde once lived.

While visiting these monuments, I also saw a tower I had wanted to know since I was a child: the Golden Tower. It is an octagonal tower, every bit as impressive as I had expected, beautifully reflected in the waters of the Guadalquivir River.

Despite the Moorish influence, the city has something deeply Catholic about it, a synthesis between Catholic and Moorish. Even when looking at the Moorish aspects, you do not feel that you are looking at what is Moorish but Sevillian. The city is fully “baptized,” and even its past is Catholic.

Walking through the old quarter, you could feel some residual charms from ancient times along with a sort of poverty-wealth, a particular way of life and being of the upper classes, I found enchanting and opened new horizons for me.

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In Seville, I visited Don Manuel Fal Conde, an aristocratic-looking grey-haired man about sixty years old, very rigid and straight, with crew-cut hair, round and black Andalusian eyes and a dark complexion. Nice and somewhat reserved, he was very welcoming, lively, dignified and kind. His friendliness had nothing in common with the stupid commercial smile of someone trying to sell you a vacuum cleaner. His was the smile of a fighter, looking straight ahead right into your eyes. His very chivalrous attitude conveys this message: “I respect you and expect respect.”

I was pleased to shake his hand,<sup>1423</sup> and we had a long conversation.<sup>1291</sup> I told him I was going to Paris and would likely meet Prince Xavier of Bourbon-Parma, pretender to the Spanish throne, and asked for a letter of introduction. He kindly agreed and gave me a very warm letter.<sup>1424</sup>

He also gave me an introduction to Archduke Otto von Habsburg.

#### 4. Barcelona

We then traveled to Barcelona.<sup>1425</sup>

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<sup>1423</sup> SD 3/29/80 & SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1424</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1425</sup> SD 3/29/80.

During Holy Mass at the Church of the Jesuits, I saw a stunning case with a sword on an altar. I asked what it was, and the person answered matter-of-factly: “It is the sword of St. Ignatius of Loyola that he wore when he was still a nobleman.”

In other words, it was the famous sword he had dedicated to the Virgin Mary at the Shrine of Montserrat, which the Jesuits later possessed.

\*

The Barcelona Cathedral is a lovely Gothic cathedral. At night, it is illuminated from within, allowing visitors to see the colors of the beautiful stained glass windows from the outside.

The cathedral also has an old crucifix just to the right of the entrance. The body of Christ is not very beautiful, but it is large and half-bent.

I asked:

What is this Christ?

“It is the crucifix that was on the flagship of Don John of Austria during the Battle of Lepanto. Pious tradition has it that the movement that bent the body in the way you can see occurred during the battle when a cannonball was about to hit the crucifix; the statue moved to dodge the ball. It was a miracle that filled many fighters with new enthusiasm.”

“Wow!”

Another charming sight is the *Ayuntamiento*, a white marble building that houses the municipal administration. Its patios and views give you the impression of being immersed in a fairy tale. I have never been anywhere where the spirit of the Middle Ages is more palpable than in that building.<sup>1426</sup>

In Barcelona, I also encountered a marvelous dish called *paella*. It consists of an indefinite quantity of rice, olive oil and other seafood. Since I am fond of rice, my enthusiasm for *paella* was boundless.

They also took me to a pier to see the replicas of the *Santa Maria*, *Pinta* and *Niña*, the three galleons in which Christopher Columbus set out to discover America. It is hard to imagine that such tiny nutshells, without any comfort, could ever have been seaworthy! You appreciate the crew's courage, which must have been extraordinary.

## 5. Talks with the *Cristiandad* Group

We also visited the headquarters of *Cristiandad* magazine, which was published in Barcelona by a group with a very similar orientation to ours.

I met Father Ramon Orlandis i Despuig, a Jesuit spiritual director who kept the group together there. He was a very old priest, weakened and bent, but

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<sup>1426</sup> SD 7/28/73.



his eyes showed a young, energetic man who paid attention to everything.<sup>1427</sup> He was a good, intelligent, capable, and clever priest.<sup>1428</sup>

He was from a high nobility family in the Balearic Islands, a branch of which called themselves Orlandis and Habsburg and dated back to when the Habsburgs still ruled over Spain. He had been a counter-revolutionary all his life.<sup>1429</sup>

He soon talked about Teilhard de Chardin and said he spoke against him because he was a Jesuit. *Cristiandad* served as a tool for Father Orlandis to exercise a profoundly healing influence within the Jesuit ranks.<sup>1430</sup>

We struck up a great friendship. Unfortunately, he died two or three years later.

## 6. The Alfonsists: Meeting with Bultó

I wanted to meet an Alfonsista who desired the restoration of the line of Alfonso XIII and not that of Don Carlos de Bourbon, Prince of Asturias, to understand their mentality.

They introduced me to Bultó, a close friend of Don Juan de Borbón y Battenberg, King Juan Carlos's father.

A very cultured and agreeable man, he invited me to lunch in an exclusive club where he met many people. He gave me the impression that he was a true gentleman.

We talked for a long time about Legitimist-line Spaniards and Spanish legitimism.<sup>1431</sup>

## 7. Lengthy Interview with Cardinal Segura y Sáenz

In Spain, they told me about Cardinal Pedro Segura y Sáenz,<sup>1432</sup> the Archbishop of Seville, who they said was a counter-revolutionary. They spoke about him as someone very much *comme il faut*, so I decided to visit him.

I had a letter of introduction to him. When I telephoned, they told me he was in Cuenca, three or four hours from Madrid and would receive me at a given time.

I took an old taxi with rattling mudguards and went to Cuenca alone, where I saw lovely things. That was on a Saturday, July 29, 1950.

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<sup>1427</sup> SD 3/29/80.

<sup>1428</sup> SD 8/25/73.

<sup>1429</sup> SD 3/29/80.

<sup>1430</sup> Notes 7/29/52.

<sup>1431</sup> SD 3/29/80.

<sup>1432</sup> Cardinal Segura was born in Carazo, Burgos Province, in the ancient kingdom of Castile, on December 4, 1880, and died on April 8, 1957, in Madrid, at the age of 76.

I arrived at about four o'clock in the afternoon. Now, all I had to do was find the cardinal's house.

I got out of the car and went into a bakery to ask. I was confronted by a picture unlike anything I'd ever seen there.

An orchestra was in full blast during the working day! The bakery was full of large numbers of men playing dominoes, each with the face of a general directing a battle: busy, entirely focused, and very serious.

I asked for directions to the cardinal's house, and a man told me: "Up this way and then down there."

I called my driver and told him, "Write down these directions because I won't remember them."

They understood each other, and we found the cardinal's house.

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The cardinal observed the ancient protocol to the full extent. They showed me to a small waiting room.

After fifteen minutes, the time required to keep visitors at a respectful distance, I heard the footsteps of someone coming down the stairs. Then, the cardinal entered the room, an elderly man who must have been close to seventy.<sup>1433</sup>

He was a typical Spaniard appearing younger than his actual age. He was not anemic but had a pale complexion and a colorless face. Big eyes, a relatively long face,<sup>1434</sup> tall, dry, with a red skullcap, wearing all the garments proper to a cardinal and a ring with a lovely ruby. I like to admire precious stones and looked at the ruby very closely as he held out his hand to greet me.<sup>1435</sup>

His voice was not loud but very well-modulated and full of inflections. He was courteous but did not hesitate to speak his mind.<sup>1436</sup>

As we sat down, I said:

"I have a letter of introduction to your Eminence from Dom Geraldo de Proença Sigaud."

He said, "Let's see."<sup>1437</sup>

He then went on to speak directly about the problems in Spain.<sup>1438</sup>

After a short while, we conversed quite freely, like old friends. He realized that I was anti-progressive and anti-modernist to the last degree, and he opened up to

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<sup>1433</sup> SD 9/10/87.

<sup>1434</sup> Lunch Alagoas Street 6/5/82.

<sup>1435</sup> SD 10/9/87.

<sup>1436</sup> Lunch Alagoas Street 6/5/82.

<sup>1437</sup> SD 10/9/87.

<sup>1438</sup> CSN 1/21/84.

me.<sup>1439</sup> His aim was obviously to open my eyes to many clerics and hierarchs. From the first to the last, all he did was try to open my eyes.<sup>1440</sup>

He told me about the long-term persecution he suffered, as he had been expelled from Spain by the *rojos* (Reds). He also told me how he confronted the *Caudillo* (Francisco Franco). That was my program: no Reds, no Caudillos!<sup>1441</sup>

\*

His confrontation with the *rojos* occurred the day after the proclamation of the Republic in 1931.

He was on a pastoral visit when a cavalry picket held him up on the road, detained him for twenty-four hours and expelled him from Spain without money, a breviary or any medicines.

That was the beginning of a year of exile in France. He was penniless, drifting from diocese to diocese, and subjected to plenty of humiliations by French clerics.

Religious houses charged him, a cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, for his board and lodging!

He told me he had Pope Pius XI to thank for this year of exile under such conditions.

After he was kicked out, he went to Lourdes and asked for orders from the pope but received no response. A month later, another letter requesting that he be provided, at least, with financial aid also remained unanswered.

At one point, Monsignor Maglione, the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris, visited him to tell him that his situation would be normalized if he resigned the Seat of Toledo.

For a year, he resisted.

At the end of that year, when in Sept-Fons, the famous Trappist abbey, he fell mortally ill. They pitied him.<sup>1442</sup>

A doctor diagnosed the cause of his disease: psychological trauma and wrote to Pius XI, blaming him for the cardinal's situation.

Pius XI reacted to this for fear of scandal and appointed him to the Vatican Curia.

However, a problem remained: as a Curia member, he would have to leave Toledo and ask to resign. In principle, driven by hunger, the poor man agreed to leave Toledo because, as a Curia cardinal, he could not be archbishop of a diocese.

In Rome, Cardinal Pacelli and two other Vatican dignitaries received him at the station and accompanied him to the apartments reserved for cardinals.

Immediately upon his arrival, they told him that Pius XI ordered him to hold a press conference stating that he had abandoned the Archdiocese of Toledo and the Spanish territory of his own free will.

He answered:

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<sup>1439</sup> SD 10/9/87.

<sup>1440</sup> Lunch Alagoas Street 6/5/82.

<sup>1441</sup> SD 10/9/87.

<sup>1442</sup> The abbot of Sept-Fons at that time was Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard (1858-1935), the celebrated author of *The Soul of the Apostolate*, which, as we have seen, deeply marked Dr. Plinio's life.

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“I shall comply with all lawful orders the pope may give me, but he cannot force me to sin. The pope knows this is a lie because he has been informed of every detail of what happened and should not expect me to lie.”

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From time to time, the pope met with the Sacred College to review current events in the Church and the world.

The cardinal told me that in one of these meetings, Pius XI delivered a speech with a superb compliment to him, saying he was the jewel of the Sacred College but adding that the cardinal had resigned from the Archdiocese of Toledo of his own free will...<sup>1443</sup>

After the speech, the protocol called for every cardinal to file past the pope to pay homage. When Cardinal Segura reached Pius XI, the pope asked him:

“Eminence, did you like the speech?”

He replied,

“Except at the point where Your Holiness lied!”

“I lied?”

“You lied! Your Holiness said that I resigned, and Your Holiness knows I did not.”<sup>1444</sup>

Pius XI laughed and said:

“Your Eminence is always implacable.”

\*

As a member of the Curia, he was appointed to all cardinal committees except those dealing with political matters.

At that time, he began to be entirely frank with Pius XI. An example.

The Congregation of Rites, or the Sacraments, had to decide on an extremely grave matter. Pius XI sent word to the congregation saying how he wanted it to vote. Cardinal Segura rose up to protest:

“The pope can decide without consulting us and do the opposite of what we advise, but he cannot force us to give bad advice.”

He then proposed a solution opposite to what Pius XI wanted.

A cardinal objected: “Your Eminence, your solution would have been valid in the times of Pius X, but it is not so now, in the time of Pius XI.”

Cardinal Segura replied: “I vote for Pius X” (who had not yet been canonized).

The next day, Pius XI held an audience. All the cardinals had to account for their votes. When Cardinal Segura saw that those seeking compromise were in the majority, he asked for permission to resign.

Pius XI refused. Cardinal Segura asked permission to resign the Commission’s chairmanship, and again, Pius XI refused.

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<sup>1443</sup> Lunch Alagoas Street 6/5/82 & Notes 7/29/52.

<sup>1444</sup> SD 10/9/87.

\*

Pius XI boasted in his presence that he had never been sick. Cardinal Segura told him in front of others:

“I am deeply sorry to hear this. Your Holiness does not bear the mark of the elect.”

Pius XI said, “No, I am protected by St. Therese of the Child Jesus.”

Cardinal Segura replied:

“With or without her, no one can change theology, and those who God loves will sooner or later experience physical suffering.”

A crash was heard from behind the curtain sometime later during a papal retreat. The pope had collapsed with a massive heart attack.

Cardinal Segura then sent him this message: “Congratulations to Your Holiness because now you have received the mark of the elect.” The pope thanked him.<sup>1445</sup>

Cardinal Segura commented that Pius XI had a very bad temper. However, partly because he felt death approaching and partly because of a premonition, Pius XI once told Cardinal Segura he was the only person who told him the truth.

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The superior of the Mercedarian Order had the privilege, given by various popes, to grant decorations. Pius XI wanted to render the right to award such decorations an exclusive privilege of the Vatican.

After the proceedings had started, Cardinal Segura informed Pope Pius XI that he would vote against the motion.

Pius XI said:

“It does not matter. Your Eminence will do your duty by voting against it, and I will do mine by not taking your vote into account.”

The cardinal voted against the motion, presenting a hundred typewritten pages of argument, effectively proving that earlier popes had granted that right.

A hearing was held to explain the dissenting opinion.

Pius XI: “Your Eminence has not shaken my convictions with your report, and do not think I am prepared to change direction: I shall suppress this privilege.”

The cardinal replied: “Your Holiness can do this, but remember that you shall have to render account to Jesus Christ, whose Vicar you are, concerning the success or failure of your measure. And there, Your Holiness, there will be no appeal.”

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When Mussolini spoke in the Senate, effectively tearing up the Lateran Treaty, Cardinal Segura told Pius XI he had no choice but to break with Fascism and National Socialism clearly.

Pius XI: “Your Eminence is too young and does not know it is necessary to compromise.”

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<sup>1445</sup> Lunch Alagoas Street 6/5/82.

Later, Pius XI decided to condemn National Socialism.<sup>1446</sup>

In his last days, very ill, he asked his physicians for twelve more hours of life to give a speech that would destroy Mussolini, but they said there was no longer enough time.<sup>1447</sup>

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During our conversation, Cardinal Segura also said: “When I was transferred to Seville, Pius XI told me he had no reason to worry for as long as I was in Rome because he knew I would always defend the interests of the Church. After I left, there would be no one to represent the interests of the Church.” Cardinal Segura added that the pope greatly emphasized “no one.”

It was clear that, despite Pius XI’s seemingly “soft spot” for him, Cardinal Segura thought he was a bad pope and clearly stated that Pius XI was the opposite of St. Pius X. During our conversation, he said all this was interesting if one wanted to understand what was happening in the Vatican.<sup>1448</sup>

\*

When Cardinal Segura was Archbishop of Seville, Franco sent word, I believe on the feast day of St. Ferdinand of Castile, that he would attend the celebrations at the cathedral. He demanded to be treated with the same protocol used for the kings of Spain, which meant he would have to be received at the church porch with a canopy to enter with the cardinal.

That would amount to recognizing Franco as king of Spain, and Cardinal Segura said no.

If I remember correctly, Franco sent a message that he would have the cardinal arrested if he were not there with the canopy.

The cardinal answered: “We’ll see about that.”

At the time of the ceremony, Franco arrived with his entourage, cars, outriders and all. He got out of his car and went to greet the Cardinal, who was awaiting him without a canopy.

He asked:

“Your Eminence, where is the canopy for my entrance?”

“In the cupboard.”

“But I told Your Eminence I would only enter the church under the canopy.”

“In that case, the conclusion is obvious: you will not enter. If you can only enter this way, you must stay outside.”

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<sup>1446</sup> Nazism and its racist ideology were condemned in the Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (With Profound Concern) of March 14, 1937.

<sup>1447</sup> Pius XI died on the night of February 10, 1939. He had summoned all the Italian bishops to Rome on the tenth anniversary of the “reconciliation” with the Italian State. An important speech, prepared months in advance, had been planned for this occasion and was meant to be his spiritual testament. In it, he denounced the violation of the Lateran Pacts by the Fascist government and the racial persecution in Germany. This document was not disclosed.

<sup>1448</sup> Lunch Alagoas Street 6/5/82.

“But the point is that I have the right to do so.”

“Your Excellency has no right since such honors do not belong to an acting head of state. Your Excellency is not the king, nor do I recognize you as such. You either enter without further ado, with only myself for company, or you do not enter the cathedral.”

Franco, a Galician, said, “These Castilians are unbearable (the cardinal was a Castilian), but there’s no remedy; let’s go.” He politely walked into the cathedral with the Cardinal.<sup>1449</sup>

I said goodbye to the cardinal after a long conversation. If I remember correctly, our meeting lasted two whole hours. We parted as good friends.

A few years later, I saw the news of his death.<sup>1450</sup>

## 8. The Remnants of Toledo’s Alcazar

During the Spanish Civil War (1936 to 1939), the Alcazar of Toledo was a fortress occupied by truly heroic Spaniards who, along with their families, resisted and refused to surrender. The Communists dug underground galleries beneath the Alcazar to blow it up and set an ultimatum: “If you do not come out tomorrow by such and such a time, we will blow up the Alcazar.”

Those inside the Alcazar could hear picks and other tools digging underground in the basement.

I visited the Alcazar, and they showed me the place in the cloister where people heard Communists working to blow the place up as Holy Mass was being celebrated.

Finally, anticommunist troops saved the Alcazar, and those heroes survived with much acclaim.

I asked<sup>1451</sup> Colonel Barrera, who accompanied me:<sup>1452</sup>

“Is there no association of members who participated in Alcazar’s epic saga?”

“Yes, a brotherhood meets once a year to celebrate a Mass in this place.”<sup>1453</sup>

\*

My trip to Spain left me with the impression that these people had remained so Catholic, valiant, and deserving amid the general decadence that this would be the first place in Europe where I should try to establish a group.

That was the result of my trip to Spain.<sup>1454</sup>

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<sup>1449</sup> Quick word 9/11/94.

<sup>1450</sup> SD 10/9/87.

<sup>1451</sup> SD 10/30/94.

<sup>1452</sup> Tea 7/5/92.

<sup>1453</sup> SD 10/30/94.

<sup>1454</sup> SD 3/29/80.

## Chapter III

# Portugal

### 1. The Father of Jacinta and Francisco

On my trip to Portugal, I remember a meeting with a rough but respectable peasant in a small graveyard at Aljustrel. A manual worker, he worked the soil for so long that his skin became like leather. He was small or medium-height, had small eyes, and had a vivacious manner despite being already quite old. He used a staff and was very talkative. He was none other than the father of Jacinta and Francisco.<sup>1455</sup>

As was customary in those parts, he wore a massive hood that came down almost to the middle of his chest. His staff was a stick cut from a tree.

This man had a soul! I sensed in him a particular joy in facing life's hardships, a typical trait of the Portuguese. This naturalness in the face of adversity, joy and health within hardship and his large clogs were a little reminiscent of the greatness of Vasco de Gama.

I watched and listened as “*ti*” Marto talked. They do not use the word “*tio*” for “uncle” but “*ti*.” He told me about the cemetery, its closing time and other banalities. I was delighted with his enthusiasm in discussing those banalities.<sup>1456</sup>

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<sup>1455</sup> His name was Manuel Pedro Marto (1873-1957).

<sup>1456</sup> CSN 10/20/84.



## 2. Sister Lucia

I visited Sister Lucia at the Carmel of St. Teresa in Coimbra. I only saw part of her face.

The Archbishop of Coimbra, to whom I had applied for permission to visit her, was also present. Before she appeared, he asked me to refrain from questioning her about the visions. I only had time to ask for her prayers and exchange three or four words, and the encounter ended.<sup>1457</sup>

## 3. Braga

We have all heard the expression “as old as Braga’s cathedral.”

I visited the famous See of Braga with Dr. Paulo Barros and Dr. Adolpho.<sup>1458</sup>

At the archbishop’s house were *chinoiseries* (Chinese porcelain) brought back by the Portuguese seafarers. They were so beautiful and of such quality that I almost asked if he would sell me a piece, but I thought it would be very inappropriate and did not.<sup>1459</sup>

# Chapter IV

## France

### 1. Mankind’s Second Motherland

My next destination was France.

The trip to France gave me the most hope for many reasons.<sup>1460</sup>

In a passage of his memoirs, Churchill speaks of France with the impassioned and fervent admiration with which he usually referred to that nation. He points out that the country is divided in two by a furrow containing

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<sup>1457</sup> SD 3/31/73.

<sup>1458</sup> RR 11/19/88.

<sup>1459</sup> Dispatch with the French 7/31/90.

<sup>1460</sup> SD 10/20/73.

the bloodshed during the French Revolution, which has never dried out. France cannot become united for as long as this blood has not dried.<sup>1461</sup>

That is why the struggle between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries there is still intense, and I expected to find the most significant number of counter-revolutionaries in my journey.

I think about France, as St. Pius X, who was not French, wrote: God has given the French people the choicest gifts, graces, and blessings. Something in the French genius and culture makes France a point of reference for all human thought.

Just as the Jews acted as the catalyst for all of Providence's actions in history among the ancient peoples, there was again a chosen people after the Redemption—the French. This is what I think of France. Someone once said it is the second motherland of all men as they learn about French culture and France's role throughout history.<sup>1462</sup>

## 2. Abbé Luc Lefebvre and *Pensée catholique*

I had letters of introduction to several persons in France, both in the Church and civil society.<sup>1463</sup>

Abbé Luc Lefebvre was the first person I visited.

He was the editor of an excellent French right-wing magazine called *Pensée catholique*.

It was an exciting and first-rate magazine, a high-quality intellectual publication with excellent articles on theological and philosophical subjects and frontal attacks on the early harbingers of progressivism.

Abbé Luc Lefebvre's articles were not only perfectly sound theologically but also very funny. He had a quality that the French call *verve*.<sup>1464</sup>

Having already corresponded with him, I called him upon arriving in Paris. He answered the telephone, "Hello, this is Abbé Luc Lefebvre."

I replied similarly: "This is Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira."

He: "Oh! Good morning, Professor. When did you arrive in Paris?"

We agreed to meet at his house in a neighborhood with a beautiful name: Neuilly-sur-Seine.

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<sup>1461</sup> RR 9/21/92.

<sup>1462</sup> SD 10/20/73. St. Pius X, for example, put the following words into the mouth of Our Lord addressing France: "Arise, wash away the stains that have disfigured thee, awaken in thy breast the dormant sentiments and the pact of our alliance and go, first-born daughter of the Church, predestined nation, vessel of election, go as in the past, bear my name before all peoples and before the kings of the earth" (Consistorial Allocution *Vi ringrazio*, of November 29, 1911, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Typis Poliglottis Vaticanis, Rome, 1911, p. 657).

<sup>1463</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1464</sup> SD 10/20/73.

I rang the bell, and a priest in a cassock, with blonde hair in a crew cut like a hummingbird ready to attack, opened the door. Although already quite old, he had a long face and a rosy complexion. His blue eyes held a brilliant expression. But his face's most memorable feature was his monumental nose, less because of its size than its shape. It was unique: a Greek nose with a dent and a large rounded tip.

He gave the impression that intelligence flowed from his eyes down along his nose and ended up on his lips in vibrant words filled with life and interest.

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He received me in his office, where I saw a little desk, a swivel chair and several bookshelves filled with books.

I found him a wonderfully interesting man. At one point, he got up to get a book and used a T-shaped stick to support himself. He told me, "I need this because of an injury sustained in battle during the First World War."<sup>1465</sup>

After that war, he exercised his priestly ministry, studied hard and became a theologian and highly accomplished writer. He went to Rome for most of his theological studies and built a network in high ecclesiastical circles there and in France.<sup>1466</sup>

We had lunch and dinner together several times. I realized that he was a very well-known man in Paris. People would greet him and express their solidarity at every restaurant.<sup>1467</sup>

During our conversations, he told me about things that had happened when he was a seminarian in Rome, stories of St. Pius X, Pius XI, and Pius XII, and stories from behind the scenes of French religious life. He had an in-depth knowledge of all these matters and never stopped talking.

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He had set up a right-wing bookstore called *Librairie Lefebvre* near the Paris university district. As the French right was flattened entirely, he kept its flag flying at some risk to himself. His bookstore, magazine and organization were the most important tools against the advancing tide of progressivism and liberalism, and he helped us meet interesting people.

### 3. The Duke of Lévis-Mirepoix

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<sup>1465</sup> SD 4/26/80.

<sup>1466</sup> SD 10/20/73.

<sup>1467</sup> SD 4/26/80.

Count Regis René de Coniac, a French friend of mine, took me to visit one of France's highest-ranking noblemen, the Duke of Lévis-Mirepoix, president of the French Nobility Association.

A member of the French Academy, he was tall, austere and intelligent, with a face that looked like the knob of a walking stick.

He received me with that grand courtesy of old and invited me to tour several castles in France. It would have been fascinating, but unfortunately, I could not accept and politely declined the invitation.<sup>1468</sup>

#### **4. Admiral Auphan**

Another personality I visited was Gabriel Auphan, a Breton admiral with whom I had a long conversation.

He was Minister of the Navy in the Pétain government and played a prominent role during the war, which included the sinking of the French fleet at Toulon.<sup>1469</sup>

The French had a first-class war fleet. If the Germans managed to capture it, they could attempt to land in England. On the other hand, if England captured the fleet, she could strengthen her forces to land in France and throw out the Nazis.

The Navy leaders were most confused because they did not know whether their duty was to obey Pétain, who had seized power in Paris, or to join a self-professed mini-government established in Bordeaux.

So, the Navy Minister – Admiral Auphan – ordered the Navy to destroy and sink their warships if there was any risk that they might pass into foreign hands.<sup>1470</sup> He was considered one of the leaders of the French right-wing movement.<sup>1471</sup>

#### **5. Meeting with Monsignor Beaussart**

Among my most memorable acquaintances was the Auxiliary Archbishop of Paris, Most Rev. Roger Beaussart.

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<sup>1468</sup> SD 10/20/73.

<sup>1469</sup> At his orders, while he was Secretary of State for the Navy, two Admirals of Toulon, André Marquis and Jean de Laborde, sank the war fleet anchored there during the night of November 26/27, 1942, at the news that the Germans were preparing a coup to take possession of the French warships. As Minister for the Navy in the Vichy government, he and General Weygand mounted a tenacious opposition to the policy of collaboration with the German Nazi government.

<sup>1470</sup> SD 4/26/80.

<sup>1471</sup> Dinner EANS 6/7/82.

While the Archbishop of Paris had left-wing tendencies, Archbishop Beaussart was a right-winger and a friend of Abbé Luc Lefebvre.<sup>1472</sup>

Already advanced in years and very sick, he lived near Notre Dame Cathedral in its rectory, a beautiful little stone castle decorated in an charming way with raspberry-colored velvet and nicely arranged crystal lamps. It might almost have passed for a doll's house.

Archbishop Beaussart was tall,<sup>1473</sup> pugnacious<sup>1474</sup> and energetic, a powerful Frenchman with a stentorian voice. Due to his age, he walked with a cane, slamming it on the ground when discussing things he disagreed with. He would loudly tell the truth about all sorts of things.<sup>1475</sup>

He received us with open arms and became a great friend of ours.

He wanted us to take to Pope Pius XII reports complaining about what was happening in the French religious world, but we could not talk about French affairs in the Vatican, so we dodged the question diplomatically and avoided discussing it.<sup>1476</sup>

The message he asked us to give Pius XII was so inflammatory that I would prefer not to repeat it. He utterly disapproved of the concessions being made.<sup>1477</sup>

## 6. Count "X" and the Plan for a United Europe

In Archbishop Beaussart's waiting room, I met a certain Count "X"<sup>1478</sup> A member of the French Nobility, he came from an old Calvinist-Protestant family that had seen the light and returned to the true faith under pressure from Louis XIV.

He presented himself as a practicing Catholic and a good friend of Archbishop Beaussart; he was about 75 years old, and I was 42.

A very pleasant host, after the introductions, the count invited me to lunch at the Paris Automobile Club, an elite club serving a mediocre lunch.

As usual, when meeting for business reasons or to discuss doctrine, ideology or politics, men tend to take their time sitting down, observing their surroundings, ordering food and wines, and then, by easy stages, passing on to more serious matters.

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<sup>1472</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1473</sup> SD 10/20/73.

<sup>1474</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1475</sup> SD 10/20/73.

<sup>1476</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1477</sup> SD 10/20/73.

<sup>1478</sup> SD 7/28/73.

He praised Pius XII (after I had heard very different views from Archbishop Beaussart) and wanted to tell me about France and Europe.

He also extolled Archduke Otto von Habsburg's abilities in general, calling him "a very intelligent and able man." It only remained for him to tell me that Otto came from a very good family.

The conversation did not seem to be going anywhere when he suddenly said:<sup>1479</sup>

"Well, Professor, as a Catholic leader, I am sure you would not want to waste your time."

I agreed emphatically.

"And you would like to know what is going to happen."

He was presenting that to me as if on a tray. I answered:

"Yes, of course."

He then enthusiastically described the policy of rapprochement between the left and the right over the coming decades, presenting it as a highly desirable development that must be driven forward at all costs.

It was a fluent exposition that lasted about 45 minutes, during which he put all his cards on the table.<sup>1480</sup>

"You know, professor, Europe is changing in a way no one can imagine. Instead of being torn apart by divisive currents, it will move toward a synthesis. They are preparing to establish a united Europe, the capital of which will probably be Strasbourg, the Carolingian city."

He continued:

"There will also be a European parliament, and a European government will follow. This parliament and government will make the diverse nationalities disappear completely. They will eliminate all customs barriers so goods can be exported from one country to another without taxes, duties or fees. Europe will be a single market for consumers, industry, and trade."

In the same vein, he continued:

"Within its countries, all political groups, from the Communist Party to monarchists, from the most moderate to the most radical and uncompromising, will become part of one and the same movement.<sup>1481</sup> The political left and the political right will converge.<sup>1482</sup> This Parliament of United Europe will have representatives from all walks of life, industries, trade unions, experts, and luminaries who will express all European values."<sup>1483</sup>

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<sup>1479</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1480</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1481</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1482</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1483</sup> SD 6/14/80.

Then he said something very unexpected:

“Even the princes of the royal houses will contribute to this. They will represent tradition in the European Council. Others will represent money; still others will represent culture, and so on. This Council will lead Europe to complete integration with Russia.”<sup>1484</sup>

He concluded:

“In this way, new possibilities will open up for the members of the imperial and royal houses, presently without any importance. They will not become monarchs again, for this period of history has passed. But they will be representatives of tradition as a European value. The royal houses and the old nobility will also send representatives to the Parliament in Strasbourg. And you will see Archduke Otto von Habsburg and a trade union president sitting side by side on the same bench. From its earliest, almost Carolingian tradition down to its most modern expression as represented by the extreme left, the whole of Europe will be reconciled and move in the same direction.”

I listened to all this without making any comment, my shock and complete lack of admiration for this plan masked by an air of surprise.<sup>1485</sup>

When we parted, I thanked him for the lunch and said it was very interesting and instructive but expressed no approval for those plans.

As we shook hands to say goodbye, he said:

“Well, Professor, I know you’re leaving for Rome and needed to know these things before venturing into an international center as important as the Eternal City. Here is my business card. Look me up when you return because that will be the other leg of your journey.”<sup>1486</sup>

And leaning toward my ear, he said softly: “I will then escort you to the best brothels for you to discover the true *filles de Paris*. ”

I let go of his hand and frowned, saying a very dry “goodbye.”<sup>1487</sup> He realized that the curtain had come down.<sup>1488</sup> He went one way, and I went another, and we never saw each other again.

This man knew perfectly well that I was a practicing Catholic and a daily communicant. He knew my past as a Catholic writer and journalist. How could he imagine that I would be pleased with such an infamous offer?

After a few disappointments in Spain, I was confronted with things like that. I had the unpleasant feeling of facing a wall I expected to be of reliable,

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<sup>1484</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1485</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1486</sup> SD 7/28/73.

<sup>1487</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1488</sup> SD 7/28/73.

resistant granite but which suddenly turned into cardboard with worms and rot spilling out. Just who were these people?<sup>1489</sup>

### 7. Visit with Archduke Otto von Habsburg

I had two letters of introduction to Archduke Otto, one from Prince Dom Pedro Henrique and another from Don Manuel Fal Conde.

I had these letters taken to the castle of Clairefontaine, where Archduke Otto lived, accompanied by a card asking him for an audience.

I called later, and he answered the phone, speaking excellent French with a beautiful accent. I said I would like to meet him in person and asked when he would come to Paris. He then invited me to lunch at Clairefontaine, where we would be more comfortable. He gave me a date, we hung up, and I went to Clairefontaine on the appointed day.<sup>1490</sup>

The castle was all stone, although not medieval. Built during the Ancien Régime, it was beautiful, dignified, well-arranged, and had good furniture. The ground floor had French windows under very high arches that gave way to the patio and were framed by long curtains. There was no great luxury, but it perfectly fit an exiled prince.

I rang the bell, they opened the doors, and I entered the salon.

The room was dominated by a big picture of Emperor Charles of Austria-Hungary (the father of Archduke Otto), dressed in his coronation robes, with the King of Hungary's crown on his head and the scepter in his hand.

I had to wait a few minutes, and Archduke Otto entered the room. He was slender and tall, very kind and nice, and his whole way of being was fascinating. He obviously was one of those people whom Providence intended for great things.

One of the most brilliant men I ever met, he had taken several top degrees at the Sorbonne and was famous for his intelligence. He had a bright, penetrating mind that understood things easily. Above all, he was endowed with a great ability to establish connections between various issues and understand anyone at their very first words. He was also a great conversationalist, and it was very pleasant to exchange ideas with him.

His stellar politeness recalled the incomparable charm of the nobility's transcendently refined yet extremely simple manners.

No one could have been more unassuming or more affable; he put his guest at ease without appearing desirous of doing so, which might have made him appear condescending. His whole manner was very open and unaffected.

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<sup>1489</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1490</sup> The visit took place on June 17, 1952. Clairefontaine was the residence of the Habsburgs in exile, including Empress Zita, between 1950 and 1953.



He expressed himself fluently, clearly and elegantly in French. He really had the *physique du rôle* of who he was meant to be.

We talked about various subjects, including politics. He told some anecdotes about his life, including that he met Churchill.

I asked about his impression of the man. He said:

“Professor, imagine encountering a radish of immense size but shaped in every way as a common radish. You would say that it is a phenomenon of nature. That is what Churchill is like. Next to ordinary men, Churchill is that giant radish by comparison with ordinary radishes. He is a colossus, a natural phenomenon, super-intelligent, super-cultured, and gifted with fascination.”

I listened to him and thought, “True, but you are not far behind because you have the gift of tradition and an indefinable charm that dynastic tradition confers on people and transcends everything else.”<sup>1491</sup>

At one point in our conversation, he expressed the highest praise of Francisco Franco, telling me that Franco was giving the Prince of Asturias a splendid education, which corresponded exactly to the kind of education that he, Otto, would like to give his own son.<sup>1492</sup>

The more we talked, the more I realized that he saw himself as the pretender to the throne of the European left and right – that is to say, he liked left-wing royalists who saw the possibility of a synthesis—a representative liberal-democratic monarchy ruling over a bourgeois society. He expressed little admiration for the nobility but spoke highly of the world of industry and commerce, which was just about to enter its eighth or tenth golden period.

He was very much caught up in the idea of a long period of peace during which he would have a chance to make his mark, less as an Austrian leader than a world leader.

As the highest representative of a royal house that ruled Europe—the German nation’s Holy Roman Empire had governed Europe when it led the world—he was the figurehead for conservatives worldwide. He was also the pretender to the Austrian throne and had considerable political support in Austria.

Added to his personal values, that would make him a globally recognized personality, a representative without a clear definition of what he was representing, but at least with right-wing public opinion worldwide.

He certainly thought that since I was from South America, he should express any rightwing ideas tempered with a North American touch, as it were. So he presented himself as a pretender who, if he were elected president or

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<sup>1491</sup> SD 6/14/80 & SD 10/27/73.

<sup>1492</sup> Little Dispatch 6/13/88.

emperor of North America by an unexpected circumstance, would leave everything as it was, with a slow gradual bend toward the left. That was my impression during that meeting.

He did not ask me what I thought about his ideas, and I did not argue with him, so the conversation remained cordial and pleasant, although there was always a certain note of reserve.<sup>1493</sup>

At one point, we were joined by his wife, Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen, a descendant of one of those old sovereign houses in small German states. She was a suitable wife for him in every way. She was still quite young but had a very regal look and demeanor.

She was the kind of princess you would expect to see descending from a carriage in a fairy tale—who would have looked good in the dress of a medieval princess. Delicate and very attentive to him, although she was his wife, she behaved toward him as discreetly as an empress toward an emperor.

She was very kind and friendly to me. We moved to the dining room, where the conversation continued. After lunch, we returned to the drawing room and talked for some time. Then I rose, and he accompanied me to the gate. That was the end of my acquaintance with Archduke Otto von Habsburg.

## 8. Meeting Prince Xavier of Bourbon-Parma

I would now like to say a few words about my two long meetings with Prince Xavier of Bourbon-Parma, the uncle of Archduke Otto and brother of Empress Zita, who was the widow of Emperor Charles of Austria.

The first meeting took place in Paris.<sup>1494</sup>

He was a personality who had gone through all kinds of vicissitudes. I had read much about him and his two siblings, both better known than he was: Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma and Empress Zita of Austria.

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<sup>1493</sup> In his biographical work on Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *The Crusader of the Twentieth Century*, Prof. Roberto de Mattei says that Archduke Otto of Habsburg “failed to comply with the hopes of many Counter-revolutionaries by subordinating the Catholic commitment to his political career.”

<sup>1494</sup> He was Duke of Parma and Piacenza and was called Francisco Xavier de Borbón y Parma de Bragança (1889-1977). He was the head of the house of Bourbon-Parma and the Carlist pretender to the throne of Spain between 1952 and 1975.

He participated in the First World War as an officer in the Belgian artillery, fighting on the Belgian, French, and British fronts. He fought against the Nazis in World War II as a colonel, again in the Belgian artillery, and was arrested by the Gestapo in France for having participated in the Resistance. He was jailed in Clermont-Ferrand and transferred first to the Schirmeck-Natzweiler extermination camp in Alsace, then to Dachau and finally to Prax in the Tyrol, where he was freed in 1945 by US troops.

After a series of political ups and downs related to the Spanish throne, the caudillo Francisco Franco expelled him from the country. In 1975, he abdicated in favor of his son, Carlos Hugo of Bourbon-Parma, and died in Switzerland two years later at 87.

Prince Sixtus, the eldest, had right-wing ideas, which caused the French left to hate him.

Xavier and Sixtus participated in one of the most important political moves of the First World War.

Austria was allied with Germany against France and England. When it became obvious that Germany was losing the war, Empress Zita saw the need to take measures to save the throne of the Habsburgs from destruction.

She called her two brothers, Xavier and Sixtus, and instructed them to go secretly to France to propose a separate peace to President Poincaré's government. Prince Sixtus was the central figure of the negotiations.

They brought the proposal to Georges Clemenceau, then president of the French Council of Ministers. The proposal was so advantageous to France that Clemenceau pretended that he was willing to consider it and sent the two princes to George V, King of England, with a letter of recommendation.

They were received by George V and Queen Mary and presented their proposal, which George V liked very much. The plan began to take shape behind the scenes.

However, news of the plan leaked at some point, and waves of leftist students went out into Vienna's streets, booing Prince Sixtus with the refrain "*Sixtus, das ist du,*" that is, "Sixtus, this is you."

Today, historians agree that the proposal's failure was a real tragedy because Nazism could never have been successful in Europe if Princes Sixtus and Xavier's plan had been successfully implemented.

When Prince Sixtus died, only Prince Xavier was left. Prince Xavier was the representative of all traditions and the Carlist pretender to the throne of Spain.

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I had a letter of introduction to him from the head of the Spanish Carlists, Don Manuel Fal Conde. I called, and he sent me a message saying he would come to visit.

When he reached the hotel, the doorman announced him quite naturally. I went down, took him to an empty room, and we began to talk.

He told me something about his life, and I told him about mine. He had been involved in historical events of global importance, and I had some participation in the history of the Church in Brazil.

Among other things, he told me a shocking story about his imprisonment in Nazi concentration camps, where he had a suppurative inflammation in one of his ears that caused him terrible pain, so they sent him to the infirmary.

He described this excruciating scene: While moaning at night on the ward with no German doctor around to treat him, he was approached by a Jewish prisoner who spoke very softly:

“As it is, this inflammation of yours could result in gangrene and kill you. The solution is to puncture it with scissors, which I would disinfect secretly with a candle so the authorities will not notice. It is your only chance of survival, but I have no anesthetic and must get right to the bottom. I will do the operation if Your Highness is strong enough not to cry or moan until the end of the night. If you cannot guarantee that, I can’t do it because I will be killed and many people I am helping would be without my help. Will Your Highness accept my offer?”

He said, “I do. Go ahead.”

The man replied: “That is not enough. In the morning, Your Highness will have to pretend that you slept well and normally work throughout the day, for otherwise, they will become suspicious.” He accepted.

It was a terrible ordeal. He stuffed the corner of the pillow into his mouth and filled it completely so as not to let even one groan escape. The doctor worked inside his ear, removing what had to be removed as he fought the pain without moaning, without anesthetic, until the morning light began to filter through the window.

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When it was my turn to speak, I thought, “Instead of talking about my activities, for him to know who I am, I will talk about our ideas.” So, I developed what later became the propositions underlying the book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*.

At one point during my explanation, he said:

“I have to interrupt here because I have an appointment for dinner.”

I invited him to dinner, and he said no because of that commitment and added:

“If you will permit, I would like to return after dinner so that you can finish your presentation.”

He returned at the appointed hour, and we continued our conversation, which lasted five or six hours.

He listened attentively. When leaving, he shook my hand and said: “What a pity that I did not meet you before! If I had, many things would have gone differently.”

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As he was going to Rome, we arranged to meet at the Duchess of Sorrento Bracciano's apartment.

But I was able to tell him the following:

“Prince, please permit me to tell you something. I am from South America and do not know Europe as well as Your Highness, but I fear that, before long, Your Highness will be sabotaged in the Vatican and can no longer obtain any audience or access because of the progressivism spreading there.”

He was unaware of those problems, and we parted.

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I traveled to Germany and many other places, and finally, I went back to Rome.

I looked for him in the house of that Duchess, and there was no news of him. Since I did not know where to find him, I resumed my schedule.

One day, walking through the streets of Rome, I met him unexpectedly. He looked very downcast.

“How are you, Prince?”

“Good afternoon, Professor. Listen, I did not dare to make an appointment with you.”

“But why, Your Highness?”

“I am annihilated. What you had predicted has happened. I arrived here and found everything completely undermined by progressivism; there is no future, nothing left. I am leaving tomorrow.”

He was really unhappy.

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Many years later, in the 1960s, one of his sons came to Brazil to visit Dom Bertrand because they were cousins. He visited our headquarters on Pará St. We chatted a bit, but I did not tell the son that I had met his father.

At one point, he told me:

“My father knows you.”

“True, I had the pleasure of meeting him in Paris in 1950.”

“Yes, and my father has your book, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, in his library.”

It was a vague echo of that conversation.<sup>1495</sup>

## 9. Visit at Paray-le-Monial

During my sojourn in France, I also went to Paray-le-Monial.

Paray-le-Monial is the famous place where St. Margaret Mary Alacoque received revelations from the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Convent of Visitation.

During the Mass, while praying, my eyes involuntarily roamed around the church. I felt as if the church was taking hold of me.

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<sup>1495</sup> SD 10/20/73.

I don't know if it was the size, type of stone, arches or mysterious factors that held my attention. I tried to concentrate and pay attention to Mass, but the impression returned: "This is not just a parish church; it's a very solemn and important monument, a magnificent thing."

As the Mass ended, I left the church in a rapturous state.

Recently, someone told me this church had belonged to Cluny. I went to Paray-le-Monial without realizing that the building once belonged to Cluny and resonated in my heart as a remnant of the Middle Ages.<sup>1496</sup>

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After my visit to the convent, I came across what looked like a small Catholic bookstore.

I spotted some little illuminated cards from a distance in a well-arranged display and assumed they contained phrases of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque for the use of the faithful. Remembering that Doña Lucilia was a fervent devotee of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I thought of buying a card collection as a gift to her.

To my surprise, when I approached the bookstore, I noticed these cards contained thoughts of Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert—masters of impious thought during the French Enlightenment. They were made to look like holy cards of the Sacred Heart of Jesus! I turned away in horror and never went there again.<sup>1497</sup>

## Chapter V

# Germany: Prince Albert of Bavaria

I met Prince Albert of Bavaria in Brazil, and we became friends.<sup>1498</sup>

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<sup>1496</sup> RR 11/1/80.

<sup>1497</sup> RR 6/13/92.

<sup>1498</sup> Albert Leopold Ferdinand Michael (May 3, 1905-July 8, 1996); Duke of Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia, Count Palatine of the Rhine, son of the Prince Heir Rudolf of Bavaria and his first wife, Duchess Maria Gabriela of Bavaria. His paternal grandfather was Louis III, the last king of Bavaria, deposed in

He was here in 1950 and, knowing that I was going to Europe that year, he told me:

“I really hope you will visit my castle and meet my wife and children. I am very keen on it.”

And so, I went.

When I arrived at Munich airport, I saw it was still in ruins because of the war.<sup>1499</sup> They had only rebuilt the runways in better shape than before the war. Germany was exhausted and had no money for new airport buildings.<sup>1500</sup>

I telephoned the wife of Prince Albert, Princess Marita,<sup>1501</sup> who received me very kindly. I had dinner there and spent the night in Berg Castle.

The castle was the very place where King Ludwig II of Bavaria had died mysteriously. On the lake, a cross marked the place where his body had appeared; nobody knew whether he was murdered or committed suicide. For that reason, it is a place of historical significance.<sup>1502</sup>

## Chapter VI

# Rome

On this trip, I visited the Vatican as it was before the conciliar reform.

My heart was overflowing with emotion and veneration—a faithful Catholic’s natural frame of mind when scaling the world’s paramount hill, Vatican Hill. In a figurative sense, it is incomparably higher than the Himalayas and even stars; you might say it’s a pinnacle reaching up to heaven.<sup>1503</sup>

### 1. St. Jeanne of Valois’ Canonization

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1918. The House of Wittelsbach, to which he belonged, opposed the Nazi regime, and in 1940 Albert took his family to Sárvár, Vas, Hungary. In October 1944, when Germany occupied Hungary, the Wittelsbach were arrested and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In April 1945, they were moved to Dachau and finally freed by the U.S. Army. With his father’s death on August 2, 1955, Albert became the head of the Bavarian royal family.

<sup>1499</sup> SD 10/27/73.

<sup>1500</sup> SD 4/26/80.

<sup>1501</sup> Mary Frances Juliana Joan Draskovich von Trakostjan (1904-1969).

<sup>1502</sup> SD 10/27/73.

<sup>1503</sup> RR 4/13/91.

The first canonization I attended was that of St. Jeanne of Valois, daughter of King Louis XI of France.<sup>1504</sup>

We saw the arrival of the dethroned French Royal Family, which still enjoyed great prestige. The men were in tails, and the princesses wore long gowns. They took their places on the Gospel side, which was more prestigious than the Epistle side, reserved for princes.

At a certain point, I heard loud applause from the people and saw an African tribal chief, a kind of king who evoked great interest among the people.

The Vatican, a father to the whole world, had honored him appropriately and reserved a small golden throne with chairs for his advisers among the faithful. In this way, he was neither mixed with the people nor among the princes, and he was delighted!

He came in wearing a gold-painted wooden crown, which is to be viewed with much sympathy from the standpoint of the faith because it symbolizes the penetration of the Church and her maternal desire to civilize and incorporate them.

He was greeted with thunderous applause, knew how to behave, and took his throne with dignity.

I have the impression that if this man was not a Catholic, he was well on his way to conversion. He felt loved, not despite being black, but because he was black. He was invited to occupy a position of dignity not equal to that of other princes but removed from most whites inside the Basilica, a dignity that the wooden crown conferred upon him.

The Church arranges all these things with the delicacy and thoughtfulness of a mother's hand. I found it wonderful!<sup>1505</sup>

## **2. Audience with Monsignor Montini**

I had an audience with Msgr. Montini, two weeks after attending this canonization.

It was 1950, only a year after I received the letter he signed on Pius XII's behalf congratulating me on my book.

Since I was in Rome, it was normal for me to visit him and pay my respects. Dom Mayer, too, was in Rome and wanted to go, so we went together.

At the time, Msgr. Montini, along with Msgr. Tardini was Pope Pius XII's Deputy Secretary of State, the highest dignity in charge of Vatican policy. Cardinal Maglione's death, instead of appointing another Secretary of

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<sup>1504</sup> She was canonized on May 28, 1950.

<sup>1505</sup> Quick word 3/22/92.



State, Pius XII appointed two Deputy Secretaries of State: Msgr. Montini (the future Paul VI) and Msgr. Tardini.<sup>1506</sup>

It was very difficult to obtain an audience with Msgr. Montini, but on that occasion, a phone call to his secretary sufficed to grant me one.<sup>1507</sup>

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You might say that this visit to Msgr. Montini was the last episode in the history of *In Defense of Catholic Action*.<sup>1508</sup>

Audiences at the Vatican occur from nine in the morning until noon or one o'clock. Our audience was scheduled to be the last one that day.<sup>1509</sup>

I handed the clerk my card, and he soon returned with a very kind reply: “Msgr. Montini sends word that he is in a conference with someone from outside the country who will soon be leaving again, and they are reviewing some material. The audience will necessarily be rather long, but if you have time to wait, he will meet you a bit later.”

I said I would wait, and so would Dom Mayer.

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While waiting, I ran into a thorny problem. A tall and rather thin cardinal entered the room and asked to speak to Msgr. Montini.

The secretary told him:

“Doctor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira was here before and should be received before Your Eminence. But Your Eminence could go first if Dr. Plinio would be kind enough to allow it.”

It was something I could not refuse.

The cardinal, who had not seen me, looked at me and said with a very strong Portuguese accent:

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<sup>1506</sup> SD 3/31/73. Monsignor Tardini, whose full name was Domenico Tardini (1888-1961), was appointed Deputy Secretary of State by Pius XII in 1944. In 1958, Pope John XXIII created him a cardinal and gave him the post of Secretary of State.

Dr. Plinio had heard about him from Msgr. Antonio De Angelis, the ecclesiastical faculty adviser of the *Unione internazionale pro Deo*, who was a man who openly favored the reforms, as a man of right-wing and monarchist opinions. Already – so said Msgr. De Angelis – Msgr. Montini had become “more understanding in the face of new problems.”

Msgr. De Angelis still felt that “the revolution has not yet been accomplished: it is on its way. For revolutions in the Church are not achieved by throwing bombs from one moment to the next or by a lot of staging. No...in the Church, everything is done slowly, gradually. Step by step, a little concession is obtained from one person, while another person is convinced that such a thing is necessary. So, gradually, conversation by conversation.... Over time...” (Report of this conversation, held on 07/09/52, drafted by a member of the Martim Francisco group who had accompanied Dr Plinio on this trip to Europe in 1952).

<sup>1507</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

<sup>1508</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1509</sup> SD 3/31/73.

So, are you “*brasileiro*”?

“Yes, sir, I am.”

“I am from this place (one of the many Portuguese colonies). So come and embrace me because we speak the same language.”

I got up, we hugged each other, and he said:

“My audience will be short, so you will not lose much time because of me, but let’s talk while I am waiting.”

“Of course, Your Eminence, with the greatest pleasure.”

I sat down. The man, very nice and friendly, started to talk, but with a heavy Portuguese accent that I could not understand him all. He talked, talked, talked, and I pretended to understand not to be impolite. But I did not understand a single word.<sup>1510</sup>

I was very nervous because I feared that he might ask me at any moment, “What do you think about all this?”

At long last, Msgr. Montini’s visitor came out, and the cardinal went in. I started breathing freely again.<sup>1511</sup>

The cardinal took a while. I thought, “Msgr. Montini will say that it is already lunchtime and I should come back another day.”

But the chamberlain returned to say that Msgr. Montini, knowing of the great friendship between Dom Mayer and me, had proposed to receive us together, unless one of us had anything private to discuss.<sup>1512</sup>

We found it curious that he was aware of our great friendship. I found the Vatican much better informed about us than we might have expected. We said yes and went in together.

\*

Msgr. Montini stood up straight like a sword; an engineering plumb bob would not be more rectilinear. Dry, thin, with a very prominent nose, small, piercing eyes, scrutinizing everything. His lips were very thin and sharply defined, and he visibly desired to be affable and pleasant.<sup>1513</sup> He received us very kindly.<sup>1514</sup>

Dom Mayer said he had come to pay his compliments, and I said much the same thing.<sup>1515</sup>

After greeting Bishop Mayer, he turned to me:

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<sup>1510</sup> Tea 11/15/94.

<sup>1511</sup> Quick word 3/22/92.

<sup>1512</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

<sup>1513</sup> SD 3/31/73.

<sup>1514</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

<sup>1515</sup> SD 3/31/73.

“Professor, I want you to know that my letter was not just a civil gesture. Each of its terms was carefully weighed. I am happy to confirm this here, in Dom Mayer’s presence.”<sup>1516</sup>

He then began speaking about Brazil’s immense possibilities and praised its Foreign Ministry, *Itamaraty*, as one of the world’s best and classiest ministries of foreign affairs. He commented on its high-quality diplomacy and filled the time praising the Foreign Ministry.<sup>1517</sup>

I realized he was not willing to talk about the fight against Catholic Action, and I did not want to force the issue. But I also saw that he wished to be kind.<sup>1518</sup>

While he was talking, a little clock on the fireplace mantle struck one, so we moved to leave.

Theoretically, we could have expected him to dismiss us since his rank was higher. But common sense can indicate that a slight departure from protocol would be appropriate under certain circumstances, so we said:

“Your Excellency, it is already quite late, the clock is striking.”

“No, no, wait a little longer.”

He let the conversation run on a little longer, but then, like a good diplomat, he suddenly gave us to understand: “If you were to ask to leave now, it’s time.”

So, we asked leave to depart.<sup>1519</sup>

At the end of the audience, he gave us commemorative medals of the episcopal Jubilee of Pius XII.<sup>1520</sup> I thanked him and said:

“Your Excellency, I wanted to ask you a favor before leaving. The canonization of St. Vincent Strambi will soon be held, and I would love to be there. I would like to ask you for an invitation for myself and four friends.”

Dom Mayer did not need one because bishops entered with the pope’s procession.

He said, “Certainly. What hotel are you staying at?”

I said, “At the *Ambassatori*,” a well-known hotel in Rome.

He did not ask me to write down my name or anything: “With pleasure.”

Two or three days later, a Vatican messenger appeared at my hotel with five invitations to attend the canonization from the tribune of the diplomatic corps (an exceptional honor).<sup>1521</sup>

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<sup>1516</sup> “And Upon Thee My Church Is Established,” *Catolicismo*, No. 151, July 1963.

<sup>1517</sup> SD 3/31/73.

<sup>1518</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

<sup>1519</sup> Quick word 2/26/89 & SD 3/31/73.

<sup>1520</sup> “And Upon Thee My Church Is Established,” *Catolicismo*, No. 151, July 1963.

<sup>1521</sup> Quick word 2/26/89 & SD 3/31/73.

### 3. St. Vincent Strambi's Canonization

On the day of the canonization, we arrived well before the start of the ceremony.<sup>1522</sup> We were placed near a lady of the Spanish aristocracy wearing a formal dress, which included the typical mantilla draped over a high tortoiseshell comb.

We saw ourselves very well placed and sat down to await the start of the ceremony.

Suddenly, I saw one of those noblemen of the Papal Household, with a lace collar in the style of Philip II, dressed in black velvet with silver ornaments, looking at me and walking toward me.

I thought, "He cannot be looking for me. I do not know this man; he certainly does not know me."

Coming closer, he bowed to me, so I also bowed. He said:

"His Excellency Msgr. Montini has expressed concern because he thinks you are not as well placed to attend the canonization as would be appropriate, and neither is your friend. He would like to offer you two vacant places below, in the front row."

I said, "Where is Msgr. Montini, so I can thank him?"

He said, "Behind."

I turned around, and he stood there, straight, stiff, his eyes fixed on me. I bowed to him; he nodded back and Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg and I made our way to the front row.

There, on my right side, sat the ambassador of Egypt, with a red fez topped by a pompom; and on my left, Dr. Adolpho.

\*

The canonization ceremony began.

The bells of St. Peter's Basilica rang out, brass bells with a truly majestic sound. They peal slowly but give out vibrations that create the impression that they will move the stars and the earth. At a certain point, all bells in the set were ringing simultaneously.

When the bells stopped, the sound of trumpets was heard from afar. These were the two or three hundred silver trumpets designed by Michelangelo, announcing that the pope's procession was approaching. St. Peter's bronze doors opened, and the procession began to file in.<sup>1523</sup>

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<sup>1522</sup> The canonization of Saint Vincent Maria Strambi was held on June 11, 1950. He was from the Passionist Congregation. Bishop of Macerata and Tolentino, he was the confessor of Pope Leo XII, having offered his life for that Pontiff. His feast is celebrated on September 24.

<sup>1523</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

The pope came in on the *Sedia Gestatoria*, made of ivory inlaid with silver. By his side, dignitaries carrying the huge feather fans known as *flabelli*, the Noble Guard with their breastplates, the Swiss Guard, and the Palatine Guard.<sup>1524</sup>

It was a beautiful but very long procession because according to Church protocol, the lower ranks walk in front while the higher ranks follow. The Church's lower orders come first, followed by superiors general of the religious orders. After them comes the famous *black pope*, the superior general of the Jesuits and, finally, the bishops, archbishops, and cardinals.<sup>1525</sup>

At last, the pope himself entered the Basilica to a storm of applause; the people knelt.

At the same time, we heard, high up in the gallery of St. Peter's dome a majestic chorus singing: "*Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam, et portae inferi non praevalent adversus eam*" – "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The bells, trumpets, chorus, the people's applause, the pope standing up very straight and giving blessings on both sides made a truly extraordinary and unforgettable spectacle.

We all knelt when the pope passed by the diplomatic corps tribune. Diplomats from non-Catholic countries, like our Egyptian neighbor, made a deep reverence as they would have done before a passing monarch.<sup>1526</sup>

The pope – tall, slender, with very white and long hands seemingly made of ivory – stepped down from the *Sedia Gestatoria* wearing his tiara and sat on his throne.

The Mass began, celebrated with great pomp. When the time for the consecration came, the pope rose from the throne and went to the Altar of the Confession under the Bernini columns. He removed the tiara, placed the miter on his head, then removed it again and assisted at the consecration with his head uncovered.

At the moment of Consecration, the silver trumpets played from the gallery of St. Peter's dome. It sounded like angels playing in heaven.

I noticed tears streaming from the eyes of the Egyptian ambassador. He was not sobbing, but tears poured down his face. I immediately turned away, unwilling to embarrass him as he might feel he was being observed.<sup>1527</sup>

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<sup>1524</sup> SD 3/31/73.

<sup>1525</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

<sup>1526</sup> SD 3/31/73.

<sup>1527</sup> Quick word 3/22/92.

A huge silence followed the Consecration because the Blessed Sacrament was present, and prayers followed. The pope returned to his throne and received Communion there.

Finally, he rose again and blessed the people.

Another explosion of joy and ringing fanfare followed.<sup>1528</sup>

\*

An ancient rite was performed before the pope rose to leave. It dated from the early days of Rome after the Church emerged from the catacombs.

Two ecclesiastical dignitaries approached, one carrying a cage with three live pigeons, and the other an ordinary cloth bag with gold coins. They bowed and offered the pope the stipend of the canons of St. Peter's Basilica – a contribution for the Mass just celebrated.

They sang "*pro Missa bene cantata!*" three times, each followed by a bow, and presented the stipend.

After it was all over, Dr. Adolpho and I took a car and went to our hotel. My heart and mind overflowed with impressions of all I had seen and heard.<sup>1529</sup>

#### 4. Last Encounter with Monsignor Montini

I needed to pay a farewell visit to Msgr. Montini before leaving Rome. After all, I did not want to be less courteous to him than he had been to me.

I went to the Vatican without an appointment, figuring they would forgive a foreigner unfamiliar with the proper visiting hours.

The Vatican was completely open; anyone who wanted could walk in. It was about seven in the evening.

I climbed stairs built by Pius IX that led me to St. Damasus' courtyard, where the visitors' entrance was. That staircase left you quite out of breath.

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<sup>1528</sup> Reading Dr. Plinio's description of that most beautiful ceremony many years after it happened, we asked a priest who specialized in the liturgy, Father William Barker, of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter and currently parish priest at the Holy Trinity of the Pilgrims in Rome, to comment about it. Here is what he said:

"I think it was a Mass celebrated by someone else (certainly a cardinal), with the Supreme Pontiff attending. That is how it was done in most cases because the Pontiff while celebrating Mass privately about every day, used to celebrate the solemn one only three times a year, usually at Christmas, Easter, and on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. At this kind of solemn (or Pontifical) Mass which the pope attended, as a rule, he watches everything from his throne except at the time of Consecration, during which he appropriately comes before the altar and kneels to attend the Consecration; he then returns to the throne to watch the remainder of the Mass. Concerning Communion, I am not aware that the pope received Communion while attending the Mass in that way, but on this point, the custom may have varied a little during the twentieth century. Anyway, when the pope received Communion at a Mass that he celebrated, he did so on his throne (even for a celebrant, receiving Communion on the throne is a private papal privilege). So it seems that if they gave the pope Communion during a Mass he attended, they would do so on the throne in that case as well."

<sup>1529</sup> Quick word 2/26/89.

In St. Damasus courtyard, I took the elevator and told the attendant I wanted to speak to Msgr. Montini. He replied that I should go up and see, so I did.

I found an old porter dozing in a chair, asked for Msgr. Montini, and he said “*non c’è*,” he’s not here.

“Ah! ‘*non c’è*,’ what a pity,” etc.

I gave him my card and a little tip and asked him to deliver the card to Msgr. Montini when he returned.

Upon leaving, I suddenly heard the sound of water. Janitors were beginning to wash one of the galleries of St. Damasus’ courtyard, the ceiling of which is completely covered with paintings by Rafael. Every inch of that gallery is priceless.

But, at that point, Rafael was the last thing on my mind. It was very dark, and one could hardly see anything.

The pavement was full of soapy water, and I had to take care not to slip. When making my way amid the downpour, I suddenly noticed something down the hall.

What did I see? A thin, erect prelate with a big black hat, covered with a mantle and also jumping over the puddles. It was Monsignor Montini.

I approached him: “Monsignor, I was just coming to make a farewell visit to Your Excellency....”

He quipped:

“Oh! Professor, what a surprise! I did not see you where I expected, and now I am meeting you where I did not expect.”

“But how, Monsignor?”

He said:

“There was a reception for the Cardinal of São Paulo at the Brazilian embassy and I expected to meet you there. I certainly did not expect to find you here at this time, with the Vatican completely deserted!”

I replied:

“Oh! Monsignor, imagine! If only I had known that Your Excellency would be there! I could not attend the reception (I did not explain why) and sought to make the best use of my time by coming here to say good-bye to Your Excellency.”

By then, the water spread by the cleaning crew was coming in such floods that we could no longer stay. A deluge was coming from all sides. We exchanged a few kind words, he wished me a good trip, and we never saw each other again.

That was my last meeting with Monsignor Montini, the future Paul VI.<sup>1530</sup>

### 5. Meeting with the Postulator of Dom Vital's Canonization

While in Rome, I visited the Capuchins and asked to talk to the postulator for Dom Vital's canonization.

A German priest, he spoke Portuguese with extraordinary fluency.

I asked him:

"I was wondering how this process is going."

"Ah! This process... It is on the yearbook's list of possible canonizations. However, this is one of those names we put in as a formality; we all know he will never be canonized."

"But why not, Father? Could you tell me?"

"It's very simple: All of Dom Vital's contemporaries are dead, so it is impossible to collect testimonies about his life. In such a case, the process cannot proceed; it is dead."

That explanation was unacceptable! The claim that canonizations can be based only on testimonials of living contemporaries is utterly false. Sometimes, people who died centuries ago are canonized, like St. Joan of Arc and Saint Beatriz da Silva.<sup>1531</sup> Countless other saints were also canonized long after all their contemporaries had died.<sup>1532</sup>

### 6. Meetings with Father Leiber and Other Jesuits

Father Mariaux had a group of intelligent and cultured Jesuit friends very opposed to Nazism, whom I had long wanted to meet.

In Rome, before visiting Pius XII, I visited them all: Father Robert Leiber, Father Gustav Gundlach,<sup>1533</sup> and many monsignors very close to Pius XII, to whom I had sent a report on matters concerning Catholic Action.<sup>1534</sup>

Father Leiber was originally from Austria. He liked to present himself as an ordinary man, but you only had to speak to him to realize that he was nothing of the kind.<sup>1535</sup>

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<sup>1530</sup> SD 3/31/73.

<sup>1531</sup> St. Beatriz da Silva (Campo Maior, 1424-1492), born Beatriz de Menezes da Silva, of great beauty, was a Portuguese aristocrat, a descendant of kings and a granddaughter of Dom Pedro de Menezes, a nobleman who exercised great influence. With the help of the Queen of Spain, Isabel the Catholic, she founded the Order of the Immaculate Conception (Conceptionists). Pope Pius XI canonized her in the twentieth century.

<sup>1532</sup> SD 5/4/94.

<sup>1533</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1534</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1535</sup> SD 6/17/89 & SD 4/14/79.



A first-rate historian, he contributed to Ludwig von Pastor's largest collection on the Church's history.<sup>1536</sup> He was also a retreat preacher and the spiritual director of Pope Pius XII, having a great deal of influence on and easy access to the Pontiff.<sup>1537</sup>

I remember my excitement when I looked for Father Leiber, and they told me that he was preaching a retreat in a convent of nuns on a certain hill in Rome.

I went there and said:

“I would like to talk to Father Leiber.”

“He is preaching a retreat. If you want to wait, he will see you when he comes out.”

I waited, and when he entered the room, I said,

“Father Leiber, I am Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira. And I searched in my pocket for a letter of introduction.

He said to me:

“Oh! Professor, I appreciate the letter of introduction, but in recent days, I have had no fewer than six letters from of various persons in Europe telling me that you were coming to visit and recommending that I make enough time for you. What can I do for you?”

It was like heaven opening up to me.<sup>1538</sup>

Something in his face told me that he was thinking: “I will try to look as though I have all the time in the world. But understand me, I am in a hurry.”

So, I went straight to the point:

“Father Leiber, this is the situation in Brazil.”

He listened and, at the end, told me:

“Well, Professor, all you have told me is very important and conclusive. Having lived in Rome for such a long time, it is only natural that I should know the person who will be interested in hearing all of this. So, if you’ve brought valid documentation to substantiate all that you told me, give it to me, and after some time, come pay me a little visit at the Gregorian;<sup>1539</sup> here is my card.”

He wrote his visiting hours on that card.

I thanked him, apologized for taking his time, and took my leave. He said: “See you later, my dear professor.”

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<sup>1536</sup> Lunch EANS 6/16/82.

<sup>1537</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1538</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1539</sup> The Pontifical Gregorian University, the famous Gregorian, is a center of theological and philosophical studies located in Rome. It is the successor to the Roman College, founded by Saint Ignatius of Loyola in 1551.

Later, I had many other meetings with Father Leiber, some during my subsequent visit to Europe in 1952.

He was very skillful at implying a lot of things when seemingly speaking about quite banal subjects:

“I have spoken to more than one friend (certainly, Pius XII was one of them). We examined your documents, which were seen as very important to the history of the Church.”

He also said:

“There will be plenty of occasions and opportunities to act. They have told me that the Holy Father is concerned, so some of your documents may help clarify things.”

In fact, Pius XII afterward published several encyclicals accordingly. But Father Leiber’s language was encrypted, so to speak, and I had to understand it and never try to decrypt it.<sup>1540</sup>

During one of those meetings, he said:

“You have given me a very rich material.”

I said:

“Too rich, isn’t it, Father?”

Father Leiber said:

“Yes, but very significant. Of course, there would be much to say about the report, but I want to focus on the moral side, which is entirely incompatible with Church doctrine. The report presents an accurate picture of the religious situation in Brazil.”

And, pointing to the report:

“The Secretariat of State will greatly appreciate this collection.”<sup>1541</sup>

## 7. Conversation with Father Gundlach

When still in Brazil, Father Mariaux had let slip that Father Gundlach<sup>1542</sup> was the one who drafted Pius XII’s famous speeches to the Roman nobility and a classic text on organic society by the same pope.<sup>1543</sup>

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<sup>1540</sup> SD 4/14/79.

<sup>1541</sup> Notes 7/29/52. Conversation with Father Leiber on 7/14/52.

<sup>1542</sup> Father Gustav Gundlach, S.J. (1892-1963), previously collaborated in writing Pius XI’s Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931), as well as several encyclicals of Pius XII. He was one of the pope’s closest advisers from 1939 to 1958 (cf. [www.Catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=4744](http://www.Catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=4744)).

Msgr. Antonio De Angelis said that “the drawback to many pontifical documents on social issues is that they are inspired by Father Gundlach, a conservative Jesuit” (cf. Dr. Plinio’s report on his trip to Europe, 7/9/52).

<sup>1543</sup> SD 6/17/89.

When I heard that, I resolved to try to meet Father Gundlach when I was in Europe. The occasion arose in 1952.

As a good German, I thought Father Gundlach would appreciate a good cigar, so I bought some excellent Bahia cigars in São Paulo.

Bahia cigars were world-famous at the time. Each cigar was sold in a half-blue transparent celluloid tube, accompanied by a little saw for the smoker to cut off its tip.

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Here is how I met him:

I was talking to Father Leiber when another priest joined us, whom I recognized as Father Gundlach.<sup>1544</sup>

He was not as tall as Father Mariaux, but also very tall.<sup>1545</sup>

He introduced himself, and we started a general conversation that became quite animated. At one point, I said to Father Gundlach:

“Tell me, Father, is it true that you are the one who drafted some of Pius XII’s speeches?”

“I did until recently, but Father Leiber and I have been relieved of these functions.”<sup>1546</sup>

Pius XII’s speeches drafted by Father Gundlach contain true masterpieces.

At the end of the conversation, I said:

“Father Gundlach, here are some cigars from Bahia; smoke them; you’ll like them.”<sup>1547</sup>

He was delighted. We established a very good relationship,<sup>1548</sup> and I left.

I could not have known that many years later, I would use those speeches in my book *Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites According to Pius XII’s Speeches to the Roman Patriciate and Nobility*.<sup>1549</sup>

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<sup>1544</sup> Dinner EANS 8/9/93.

<sup>1545</sup> Dispatch 11/6/91.

<sup>1546</sup> This statement fits into a framework that Monsignor Antonio De Angelis thus described in the conversation above of July 9, 1952: “Today we are in a period of concrete penetration by the revolution in various specific sectors of the Church’s domain. The pope agrees with these innovations that are slowly becoming a reality and have gradually taken the revolution to all fields.” ... He has hinted that ‘overall, there is no longer resistance to the penetration of the new principles. True, there are some old conservatives among the cardinals, but they are few and have little influence. Among these conservatives are found, for example, Cardinal Canali. ... The new principles have already fully penetrated. ... See what happened to *Pro Deo*: its early publications, always brought to the pope, were returned by him with all the new expressions underlined in red ink. Gradually, the thing changed; the pope’s underlinings became scarce, and now the Holy See enthusiastically applauds the University.”

<sup>1547</sup> Dinner EANS 8/9/93.

<sup>1548</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1549</sup> Dinner EANS 8/9/93.

## 8. Audience with Monsignor Luigi Valentini

Another personality I met during my trips to Europe in the 1950s was Msgr. Valentini, who was in charge of Brazilian affairs at the Vatican.

I brought him many newspaper clippings showing the errors of Catholic Action, which we photographed at the Martim Francisco headquarters for about a year, to take to the Holy See.<sup>1550</sup>

During the interview, I leafed through that packet of material documenting the errors and deviations of Catholic Action and the Liturgical Movement, showing him what was unorthodox about them.<sup>1551</sup>

He was very much impressed and gave it the most favorable reception possible.<sup>1552</sup>

## Chapter VII

# Results of the Trips to Europe

### 1. Understanding the Full Extent of the Crisis in the Church

The trips to Europe in 1950 and 1952 taught us much about the European environment and broadened our horizons; unfortunately, they did not open up a new way forward. They deepened our sense of universal crisis in the Church.

Until then, we had felt that this crisis was confined to Brazil. We knew that its focus came from Europe, but we believed there were just a few bad religious congregations sending missionaries to many countries to spread error, and this bad seed found particularly fertile soil in Brazil. We had no reason to think the European crisis was similar to what we saw in Brazil.

During the 1952 trip, we realized it was a universal crisis rooted in earlier crises.

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<sup>1550</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1551</sup> Dinner 1/14/92.

<sup>1552</sup> SD 6/16/73. Among the still unmentioned dignitaries with whom Dr. Plinio kept in touch on those two trips to Europe in the 1950s are Monsignor Agostino Casaroli (later Vatican Secretary of State under Pope Paul VI) on July 16, 1952, and Monsignor Roberto Ronca (Bishop of Pompei, man of confidence of Pius XII and founder of *Unione Nazionale Civiltà Italica*) on July 18, 1952.

I saw that my initial plan of action in the Catholic apostolate, to extinguish this evil in Brazil and restore good order, was no longer possible and would have to be abandoned.

We needed a complete change of tactics, something we would have taken at least ten years to understand had we not gone on these trips in 1950 and 1952. The reason is that progressivism's infiltration in Europe was even more veiled than in Brazil.<sup>1553</sup>

## 2. Understanding the Counter-Revolution's American Future

We met people with conservative convictions in Europe, but few were young.

With a few notable exceptions, those we met were divided among themselves, discouraged and influenced by the idea they had to make concessions to the Revolution to survive. We wanted no concessions because we are convinced that the Revolution must be tackled head-on and on all fronts.

On the other hand, all doors were open on these trips, and we entered wherever we wanted. We were received pleasantly and courteously.<sup>1554</sup>

We built a network of good friends and strong relationships in almost all European countries with people who thought more or less like us and with whom we formed lasting friendships. We owe these much of the impact of our writings abroad because we sent them the material, and they generally had it translated.

That is why our publications have so many Spanish, Italian, French, and German translations. Over time, this network of relationships and friendships established in several countries evolved into what we like to call, internally, the *Foreign Commission*.<sup>1555</sup>

During these trips, I also understood that the future of the Counter-Revolution lies more in America than Europe.

Tradition and many other things in Europe were so faded and withered that it would be difficult to revive them.

On the other hand, it could be made to march forward in the Americas.

The task of resurrecting the Counter-Revolution's fire in a continent with hardly any ancient tradition made it clear this work was more one of grace than men because, had it been the work of men, it would have come out of Europe.<sup>1556</sup>

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<sup>1553</sup> Conversation 9/30/88.

<sup>1554</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1555</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1556</sup> St. Anthony Mary Claret said something very similar about Latin America in a letter to Father José Xifré dated November 16, 1869:

“In America, there is a very large and very fertile field, and in time, more souls will rise to heaven from America than from Europe. This part of the world is like an old vine that no longer bears much fruit, while America is a young vine ... I am an old man... Were it not for that, I would fly there” (cf. Saint

The fact that the spirit of European traditions is reborn more strongly in the Americas than in Europe is the paradox of paradoxes. I trust that Our Lady has not excluded European nations from Her protection, but the good She will do for Europe must come from the Americas. This will be the history of the Counter-Revolution in Europe.<sup>1557</sup>

(Caption: The *Catolicismo* Group's 1956 Retreat)

## Part VIII

# The *Catolicismo* Group and Its Struggles During the 1950s

## Chapter I

### The “Stillborn”

We launched our first attack against Agrarian Reform in 1951.

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Anthony Mary Claret, *Escritos Autobiográficos*, BAC, Madri, 1981, edition prepared by Maria Viñas and Jesus Bermejo).

<sup>1557</sup> SD 10/20/73.

Dom Jaime Câmara, Cardinal Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, had sent a confidential circular to all the bishops, strongly calling for an agrarian reform plan that, from what it said, would result in confiscation.<sup>1558</sup>

According to His Eminence, this circular letter was the draft of a collective pastoral letter to be issued by the entire Episcopate. It contained the details of the most brazen agrarian reform project I had ever seen. This was in 1951!

The essential thesis was that men could not consider themselves owners of things: God alone is the owner of the land, so man, a mere administrator, should manage it on behalf of the community.

Therefore, it was necessary to implement an agrarian reform in which the hands of the landowner worked each plot of land. No one should have more land than he could personally cultivate.

To remedy the drawbacks of property fragmentation, the document suggested that small farms should band together to form something like Soviet Russia's collective farms (*kolkhozes*).<sup>1559</sup>

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We agreed with Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer that we would prepare a confidential reply and send it to all the bishops of Brazil, objecting to Dom Jaime Câmara's theses.<sup>1560</sup>

The bishops were still unprepared for the preaching and excesses of the Catholic left, a movement then beginning to raise its ugly head.

They were very shocked at Dom Jaime's circular.<sup>1561</sup> Around twenty bishops refused to sign. Soon afterward, Rome called Dom Jaime Câmara, whose proposed pastoral letter remained unpublished.<sup>1562</sup> Dom Jaime understood he had to let the dust settle over this episode and later start another effort to implement agrarian reform.

We began calling Dom Jaime Câmara's circular the "stillborn" because it died immediately after emerging from his mind and seeing the light of day.

So, in 1951, the group launched the first cry of alert against agrarian reform through the two bishops.

If the agrarian reform project had passed in 1951, it is almost certain that Brazil would have become a Communist country long ago. Had Brazil become Communist, it would hardly have been possible to prevent most countries of

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<sup>1558</sup> RR 1/21/95.

<sup>1559</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54.

<sup>1560</sup> This study was presented at the Archbishop of Rio's palace, Palácio São Joaquim, on June 23, 1951, with a signed receipt.

<sup>1561</sup> RR 1/21/95.

<sup>1562</sup> Lecture on Memoirs (X) 8/15/54.

Spanish America from falling prey to the Communists. If this immense bloc of nations had become Communist,<sup>1563</sup> Communism could have taken over the world.

## Chapter II

# Dom Mayer's Pastoral Letter: The Fight Continues

### 1. Launch and Repercussions

Another measure I suggested to Dom Mayer was that he issue a pastoral letter recapitulating and defending all the theses of *In Defense of Catholic Action* as Bishop of Campos.<sup>1564</sup>

The pastoral letter had one rather curious, almost unexpected consequence: countless letters from Brazilian churchmen.

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<sup>1563</sup> RR 1/21/95.

<sup>1564</sup> Based on this suggestion, the *Pastoral Letter on the Problems of the Modern Apostolate* was issued in 1953. This pastoral letter's format was a novelty: a kind of catechism presenting the wrong theses in a column to the left and the true ones in another column on the right. Its launch was announced in an article on the front page of *Catolicismo's* April 1953 issue (No. 31).

In writing this pastoral letter, Dom Mayer was extensively and perhaps fully helped and supported by Dr. Plinio, to judge by what the prelate wrote Dr. Plinio: "There are others who wait until they have a few quiet hours to read at leisure *my modest and your brilliant work*" (letter from Dom Mayer to Dr. Plinio, written from Itaperuna-RJ on 07/27/53 with accounts of various reactions to the Pastoral Letter – emphasis added)



Seven archbishops, 25 bishops and 104 priests warmly praised Dom Mayer, not counting the letters from religious and laypeople from around the country.<sup>1565</sup> There were about 250 letters altogether.

These letters clearly showed how many people had experienced the errors that the pastoral letter condemned and deemed it beneficial and very timely. They also revealed that many people appreciated its doctrine and method of presentation (wrong theses on the left and true ones on the right).<sup>1566</sup>

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For progressives, the publication of the letter from the Holy See on the book *In Defense of Catholic Action* and a bishop endorsing that book's arguments was devastating! All the more so because, at that time, it was unthinkable that anyone should suggest there was a split in the Episcopate.

Of course, this split is indeed a horrible thing. Today, we are very much accustomed to this reality, but it was a frightful suggestion at that time. And our adversaries did all they could to avoid public confrontation.

The pastoral letter was printed, and the TFP's small predecessor, the *Catolicismo* group, began to promote it.

I was teaching at the Catholic University and met the top professors from "the other side" between lectures. I saw their disappointed faces, but they did not dare confront me.<sup>1567</sup>

There was also a manifestation of displeasure. Days before the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Patroness of Brazil, held in São Paulo in September 1954, the Archbishop of Manaus, Dom Alberto Gaudencio Ramos, gave a speech broadcast throughout the country in which he made a disparaging allusion to Dom Mayer's pastoral letter, much noticed by the listeners.<sup>1568</sup>

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<sup>1565</sup> Memorandum on the Brazilian Religious Crisis on the occasion of the 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress (Rio de Janeiro, 1955).

<sup>1566</sup> Dr. Plinio's letter to Dom Sigaud 9/20/54. It is worth noting that the pastoral letter was sent to Cardinals Carlos Carmel and Jaime Câmara, as well as to all archbishops and bishops of the 113 dioceses and prelatures then existing in Brazil; 32 archbishops and bishops replied; 81 did not. Some of these probably failed to reply because they did not receive it due to the poor postal services available at the time. The remainder kept silent either because they were afraid to take a stand, uninterested, or hostile.

Dom Mayer received no reply from the cardinal of São Paulo despite having sent him a special dedication. The liturgist bishops and the Episcopal Commission of Catholic Action members did not reply either, except Dom Jaime Câmara, who sent a congratulatory note, saying that he was about to start reading the text. But he did not comment afterward on the work as a whole (cf. Dom Mayer's Letter to Father Leiber, November 1, 1953).

<sup>1567</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82

<sup>1568</sup> Memorandum on the Brazilian Religious Crisis on the occasion of the 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress (Rio, 1955).

Our distribution capacities were small, but we knew to whom we should give this pastoral letter to stir the waters in the Catholic circles in São Paulo, Rio, Belo Horizonte and everywhere else we could. We handed the letter to the right people, and the agitation continued.

In other words, we came out of our catacombs directly into the war for Our Lady with this clarion call: “Here’s the Queen’s flag raised once again! So let us fight!”

## 2. The Italian Translation

You can imagine our surprise when Dom Mayer suddenly received, by international mail, his pastoral letter translated into Italian by order of Most Rev. Roberto Ronca,<sup>1569</sup> the Titular Archbishop of Lepanto and Prelate of Pompeii in Italy – the famous Pompeii of the Roman ruins. He had the pastoral letter translated into Italian and published it in Italy.<sup>1570</sup>

He packed the book and sent it to us without any explanation. We had a party because it looked like we would start something in Italy.

Dom Mayer wrote Archbishop Ronca saying we would publicize this Italian edition in the Brazilian press.<sup>1571</sup>

As a result of this publication, Archbishop Ronca was summoned by Cardinal Piazza, the Vatican representative, who dismissed him from office (this happened in December 1955). Archbishop Ronca was a conservative who ran the chaplaincy service of the entire Italian prison system.<sup>1572</sup>

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<sup>1569</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>1570</sup> SD 5/5/73.

<sup>1571</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82. It seems that the idea that the pastoral letter could put the cat among the pigeons in Italy was not that far from reality, according to what we read in a letter from Dom Mayer to Father Leiber: “According to rumors going around in Brazil, the translation of my *Pastoral Letter on Problems of the Modern Apostolate* into Italian has given rise to political-party controversies in connection with its reception by the Christian Democratic government of that country. Apparently, these controversies had become particularly heated and were judged inappropriate by the Holy See, so the Italian edition of my pastoral letter was recalled. I do not know to what extent these rumors should be taken seriously.”

Dom Mayer explained, “My pastoral letter was translated into Italian without my knowledge.” He added: “When writing my pastoral letter, I could not have foreseen that this translation of a purely doctrinal document would produce political-party repercussions in such a remote country and a culture so superior to that of young Latin American republics” (Letter of Dom Mayer to Father Leiber, 04/28/56).

The *Istituto Editoriale Bartolo Longo* of Pompeii published the pastoral letter. Although it was printed in 1954, news of its publication only came to the attention of the *Catolicismo* group in November 1955, according to page 2 of the December 1955 issue of *Catolicismo* (no. 60), which also reported news of other editions in the magazines *Verbe* and *Cité catholique* in France; *Fé integra*, in Madrid, and *Cristiandad* and *San José Oriol*, in Barcelona, Spain; also in Québec, Canada. *Civiltà cattolica*, a world-famous Jesuit magazine in Rome, published an enthusiastic comment in its issue of 11/15/55.

<sup>1572</sup> SD 5/5/73. At the time, Adeodato Giovanni Cardinal Piazza (1884-1957) was Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation and president of the Italian Bishops’ Conference. In a letter dated June 3, 1954,

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By then, our situation was much stronger; it was no longer like that in *Legionário's* basement, owned by Santa Cecilia's parish, from which they could drive us out.

We now owned our offices, which were installed in rented houses. We were not a religious association dependent on the archdiocese. Under Canon law, we did not depend on the progressive bishops on anything except concerning doctrine and morality, points on which we were unblemished. We did everything openly in the right way, and they kept their mouths shut.

Very slowly, the battle had turned around. And the counter-offensive would start from much more secure positions.<sup>1573</sup>

### Chapter III

## The Eucharistic Congress in Rio in 1955

The 36<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress was held in Flamengo Park, Rio de Janeiro, in July 1955.

Since it was an International Congress, participants arrived from all countries, and we considered it a good occasion to promote the magazine *Catolicismo*.

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Dom Mayer wrote to Father Leiber about Cardinal Piazza: "When we met His Eminence [Cardinal Piazza] in Rome, both His Excellency the Bishop of Jacarezinho and myself did our best to inform him about the Brazilian situation as soon as possible, and found no resonance for our apprehensions and concerns. On the other hand, the facts leave no room for doubt that the sympathies of His Eminence are entirely with those prelates and priests who see the facts in a way that is diametrically opposed to the opinions of the Bishop of Jacarezinho and of my own."

<sup>1573</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82.

The progressive wing controlled the congress; we were not involved in its organization.<sup>1574</sup>

We set up a stand in a public school lent to us.<sup>1575</sup>

We strung up a huge banner advertising *Catholicismo* overlooking the esplanade. At night, when they held meetings at the Congress, a beam illuminated the banner to bring it to the attention of the bishops, priests and laypeople present.

Courageous Dom Mayer, sitting undaunted among the bishops, was well aware that many of them hated that, but they greeted him politely. “How are you, Dom Mayer?” The atmosphere was not right for them to say anything else.<sup>1576</sup>

Therefore, the dissent was muted, and our group there was quite large, all of which served to raise our profile. It was a show that produced a big commotion and marked our presence.

Our group’s younger people advertised *Catholicismo* among the participants, many of whom showed an interest and began frequenting our stand. We established relationships with many Latin-American bishops, as well as with other important persons from many countries and various Brazilian states.

We set up our headquarters in that school and, to some extent, at the Hotel Gloria, where the Vieira and Martim groups stayed with other volunteers.

The hotel was full of very well-known people from São Paulo and other states.

At lunch and dinner, they saw Marian Congregations members (we had no other official qualification) gathering at the huge table. We would enter together wearing our distinctive Marian pins, cross ourselves as if in a monastery, pray and sit down.<sup>1577</sup>

On that occasion, we contacted many bishops from outside the area and invited them to give talks.

We invited the most promising to lunch or dinner at the Hotel Gloria, which also helped to impress the audience. They were not used to seeing groups of seven or eight bishops having lunch or dinner with twenty laymen.

The Eucharistic Congress was a huge triumph, but it also taught us a lesson. Having no outside information, we believed that the religious crisis was

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<sup>1574</sup> Dom Helder Câmara, chosen by Cardinal Jaime Câmara, was the Congress’ real organizer. An Auxiliary Bishop of Rio, he was already a prominent leader and promoter of progressivism and Catholic Action in Brazil.

<sup>1575</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1576</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/93.

<sup>1577</sup> SD 7/14/73.

specifically Brazilian. We perceived lukewarmness, softness, doctrinal indifference, and sometimes even worse.

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On that occasion, many young people from Rio began to join our group and brought brothers, cousins and friends to our headquarters. The group began to flourish in Rio de Janeiro.

## Chapter IV

# Formation of the First Groups

### 1. Promotional Trips throughout Brazil

The *Catolicismo* journal was used for recruitment even before the Eucharistic Congress.

The young men with the Martim group started going on a series of trips throughout Brazil<sup>1578</sup> with great dedication and efficiency.<sup>1579</sup> They promoted *Catolicismo* in universities, schools, and various environments and collected the names of potential supporters.<sup>1580</sup>

This is how the *Catolicismo* group began establishing core groups.<sup>1581</sup> Many groups were set up all over Brazil.<sup>1582</sup>

### 2. Study Weeks: Consolidating New Groups

The idea to organize a movement arose among young men with the Martin group. I had the same idea, so we launched supporters from Brazilian

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<sup>1578</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>1579</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>1580</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1581</sup> Dinner EANS 6/17/82.

<sup>1582</sup> SD 6/17/89.

states for a *Study Week*.<sup>1583</sup> The *First Study Week for Catholicism Promoters* was held in 1953 with six visitors.

At first glance, it looked like a completely unreasonable effort. What was the point of trying to spread to other cities in Brazil when forming a group in São Paulo was already so difficult? What was the point of this attempt to set up groups in Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Rio Grande do Sul, Ceara, and Paraíba?

Other Study Weeks followed,<sup>1584</sup> we painstakingly held them for eight or ten out-of-state people and considered it a very good result.<sup>1585</sup>

These Study Weeks peaked in the Serra Negra Conference (1961).<sup>1586</sup>

With about 400 attendees,<sup>1587</sup> including visitors from other Latin American countries, it was considered a great success.<sup>1588</sup>

Study Weeks were the basis for establishing the principal groups in Brazil.<sup>1589</sup>

### 3. The *Catholicism* Movement Begins to Take Shape

Divine Providence made early founders appear in various places who could carry the weight of a local group in its initial stages.

These young men came to São Paulo during the year to visit or to take part in Study Weeks. While here, they participated in daily life at our centers and prepared themselves to join what would eventually become the TFP.

Upon returning to their cities, many (not all, as there were many disappointments) established a base to support our movement.

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<sup>1583</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>1584</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1585</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1586</sup> This conference became known as the *First Latin American Conference of Catholicism*. It was held between January 25 and February 1, 1961, at the Hotel Pavani in Serra Negra, a well-known health resort in the State of São Paulo. Brazilians and twenty participants from outside Brazil attended, and it marked the point at which our ideals started to spread beyond our borders.

<sup>1587</sup> Interview with *Catholicism*, No. 481, January 1991.

<sup>1588</sup> The conference was so significant that it irritated Dom Helder Câmara, who called it a “clandestine meeting.”

When Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer, in a letter of 06/24/61, complained to Cardinal Jaime Câmara about this scurrilous remark by his auxiliary bishop, on 07/24/61, the Cardinal of Rio sent a copy of Dom Helder’s response justifying himself: “I did not refer to Serra Negra’s ‘clandestine meeting’ intending to exercise any fiscal or supervisory function as bishop, powers that would be absurd and ridiculous.” He added that “there was also the publication of ‘Agrarian Reform, a Question of Conscience,’ which was not very conducive to better harmony between us all.” The meeting was so “clandestine” that it was written about in the newspapers *O Estado de S. Paulo*, *Diario de S. Paulo* and *Diario da Noite* on 01/24/61, all of which reported that this conference was being held and highlighted the arrival of delegations from Medellín (Colombia), Quito (Ecuador) and Santiago (Chile) in the state capital.

<sup>1589</sup> SD 7/14/73

We often sent someone from São Paulo to visit the most distant core groups. In this way, we built up small groups of five, six, or seven people here, there, and everywhere. It was an immense task.<sup>1590</sup>

As a result, a new field of activity opened up. We began going on regular visits to consolidate the various groups in other States by lecturing and giving support. I went on many of those trips.<sup>1591</sup>

The whole São Paulo group participated in this work. As the group was small, a visitor sought to get to know everyone. There was still time for everything. Everyone spoke and was supportive and encouraging. It was a huge effort by the whole group.

That went on for years. It was a small but very intense daily effort that is hard to describe because the data have disappeared, and no one remembers the details.

It would not be fair to tell this story without highlighting the enormous amount of work contributed by every member to permit this development. It was truly an enormous effort!<sup>1592</sup>

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In this way, we left behind the absolute immobility in which we were locked and began a slow growth process. We would have wished for immediate growth. However, growth continued, but slowly.

We felt an urgent need to go into battle, act, shout, and cry out, but this heavenly gift dripped down drop by drop in quantities that would not have filled the hollow of a hand.

So, we had to wait for a day when everything would be ready and we could begin to march.<sup>1593</sup>

#### 4. The Aureliano Group

During this expectation phase, Our Lady favored us, and larger groups began forming here in São Paulo.

This prosperous period was influenced by several factors, one of which was the founding of the Aureliano group.<sup>1594</sup>

How did this group come into being?

When good historians speak about the history of the Church, they naturally recount many wonderful things. But the Church has divine and human

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<sup>1590</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1591</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1592</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1593</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>1594</sup> SD 7/14/73.

elements. The divine element is always perfect, but the human element... is human.

Accordingly, there are defections and other such things in Church history, and these must also be recounted. The method employed by good historians, especially Catholic ones, is to look at the phase before defection, and if the person has done something good, not to hide it but present it as it was and to say honestly: He did such good things for as long as he was receptive to grace; then he began to weaken, defected, and did such bad things. As a matter of principle, one must always tell the truth.

A young student of mine<sup>1595</sup> at the São Bento College of History was not very tall but very bright and alert, always with a tuft of blond hair facing forward.<sup>1596</sup> He sat in the first row and followed my lessons with extraordinary attention.<sup>1597</sup>

He showed himself to be extremely receptive when I spoke about events during the French Revolution or the Middle Ages. I could see he was extremely intelligent.<sup>1598</sup> His name was Orlando Fedeli.

He soon revealed himself as a first-rate recruiter.

A talented speaker and storyteller, in his spare time, he liked talking to people in a way that also appealed to his generation. He soon gathered a group of people who liked to discuss various topics, both serious and amusing.

This group grew, and there were twenty, thirty, and forty people soon.

We happily acknowledged the necessity of renting a center for them. The Martim group members provided money, so the Aureliano Coutinho Group came into being, named after the street on which its seat was located.<sup>1599</sup>

## 5. The Alcacer Group

At the same time as the Aureliano Group, another group of young men emerged from among the students of São Luis High School, no longer pupils of Father Mariaux, who had returned to Europe.

This group was referred to as *Juniors* because some of them were brothers or the age of Martin Group members' younger brothers.

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<sup>1595</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>1596</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1597</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>1598</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1599</sup> This house still exists today on 23 Aureliano Coutinho St. in São Paulo's Santa Cecilia neighborhood. Later, we rented the adjacent house, No. 25, and knocked the two houses into one.



They had a small headquarters at 518 Martim Francisco Street, not far from the Martin Group's headquarters.<sup>1600</sup>

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One of this group's members regularly frequented Study Weeks since he was almost too young to attend. He came with his father, Prince Pedro Henrique of Orleans-Braganza, which meant that all doors were open to him. His name was Dom Bertrand of Orleans-Braganza.

Dom Pedro Henrique was one of the very few who stood by us when we appeared to have reached rock bottom, something I will never forget.

Occasionally, he would tell me (with a slight French accent): "Plinio, I already told you, eh? You must keep some places for my sons."

I would very happily reply, with the greatest satisfaction:

"Dom Pedro, rest assured, there are plenty of vacancies."

The eldest son, Dom Luiz, was studying in Europe.

Later, fair winds started to blow, and Dom Luiz, a practicing Catholic who always frequented the sacraments, returned to Brazil and naturally joined the TFP, becoming part of this Juniors-Alcácer Group.<sup>1601</sup>

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With some Aureliano Group members, the Alcacer Group did the most brilliant work at the Largo de São Francisco Law School.

The news that Prince Bertrand would be a student there caused a small sensation. Supported by his peer group, Dom Bertrand created such an atmosphere that everyone addressed him as *Prince*. The time Dom Bertrand spent at the school and his influence were memorable.

Along with the Juniors group, most of whose members studied there and others from the Aureliano Group "painted the town" within the *Arcades*.<sup>1602</sup>

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<sup>1600</sup> Later, this group occupied a new house on 258 Aureliano Coutinho Street, which they named Alcacer, in remembrance of the Alcacer do Sal, where one of the glorious battles of the Portuguese *Reconquista* was fought. From that time onward, the group called itself the Alcacer Group.

<sup>1601</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

<sup>1602</sup> Here are a few of the public stands they took:

1. A manifesto-petition, issued in April 1961, rejecting the actions of Communist-progressive student groups in various universities of São Paulo and Curitiba (signed by 1,200 students);

2. A June 1962 petition addressed to the JUC [Catholic University Youth], requesting an explanation of its support for an ambiguous and mysterious "third position, neither capitalist nor communist" (subsequent events linking JUC elements with Communist agitation and even with terrorism have left no doubt in the minds of the public about the nature of this Communist "third position," viscerally opposed to private property).

3. A manifesto titled "Ten Anti-Communist Statements" (September 1962), denouncing the agitations and strikes of UNE [National Students Union] and other events that were promoting Communism on the national and international levels.

The camps were so divided that the graduation ceremony at the Municipal Theater saw both applause and booing. Dom Bertrand's presence and the work of *Catolicismo* Group members divided the law school into two factions, a fine achievement.<sup>1603</sup>

So, after many years, when no one joined us, the tree flourished and bore fruit. The Santa Cecilia neighborhood was burgeoning with small centers of the *Catolicismo* Group members who later joined the TFP.<sup>1604</sup>

## Chapter V

# *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (RCR), 1959: Defining an Ideology

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4. A petition, in July 1963, addressed to André Franco Montoro, a Christian-Democrat congressman at the time, requesting a public explanation of his statements against the book *Agrarian Reform – A Question of Conscience*, in which he, like the JUC, declared himself an adherent of the “third position” – neither capitalist nor communist, but Christian-Democrat. The petition was signed by 7,400 students from various colleges.

5. A manifesto, issued in October and November 1964, which frustrated attempts by members of the JUC and by Communists to elect leftists as spokesmen at the graduation ceremonies. After graduation, the graduates of the TFP distributed another manifesto to their colleagues in which they recapped their anti-Communist struggle at the school (cf. *Half a Century of Epic Anticommunism*, The Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Mount Kisco, NY 1981, 459 pp.).

<sup>1603</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1604</sup> Lunch EANS 4/10/87.

## 1. The Book's *Raison d'être*

In 1959, I thought the time had come to define our philosophy and provide ourselves with a battle cry. The proper medium for this seemed to be the book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, which became known among us by the abbreviation RCR.<sup>1605</sup> It condenses the essence of my thinking and explains the direction of my ideological work.<sup>1606</sup>

In the extremely quiet Brazil of that time, we needed a doctrinal and historical subject of great scope and significance to draw attention to our cause.<sup>1607</sup>

The intention was to publish and distribute the book as widely as possible in Brazil and abroad.<sup>1608</sup>

At that time, our numbers were still quite low: fewer than a dozen groups in Brazil were growing, over time, into the initial core of what would eventually become the TFP. You might say it was a kind of pre-TFP limited to publishing *Catolicismo*.<sup>1609</sup>

The choice of subject was easy to explain. *Catolicismo* was a combative paper. As such, it should be judged mainly by the goals that it was fighting for. Now, whom, precisely, did I want to fight?<sup>1610</sup> What was the *unum* in this battle?

In preparing this book, I believe I provided a unified solution to this problem and explained that the chaos in which we live has a single underlying cause with its own personality and *raison d'être*, which generates all the ills of the modern world.

For reasons I will explain, the name of this common root cause was incredibly easy to find: *Revolution*.<sup>1611</sup>

## 2. Sojourn in Campinas

I wrote this book outside of São Paulo.<sup>1612</sup> I told the young men:

“I am going to Campinas to write a book for fifteen or twenty days. I will leave on such a day and return on such a day.”

“Oh! What is it about?”

I explained briefly what the book would be about.

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<sup>1605</sup> SD 11/24/73.

<sup>1606</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, *Catolicismo*, No. 550, October 1996.

<sup>1607</sup> SD 11/24/73.

<sup>1608</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1609</sup> SD 8/11/95.

<sup>1610</sup> *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, third English edition, 1993.

<sup>1611</sup> SD 8/11/95.

<sup>1612</sup> SD 7/14/73.

I expected the oldest members of the Vieira de Carvalho Street group would accompany me.

But to my surprise, when it was time to leave, I saw all the young Martim Group members with their bags and suitcases ready. Everyone was there, so most of the *Catolicismo* Group came with me.

I drew up a schedule in Campinas, managed to work fairly regularly, and wrote the book.<sup>1613</sup>

Regarding linguistic details and exact quotes, RCR was edited by Dr. Castillo and others, including Bishop Mayer.

We published it for the first time in the 100<sup>th</sup> issue of *Catolicismo* and soon after in book form.<sup>1614</sup>

## Chapter VI

# An Unexpected Trip to Europe

### 1. Weighing the Circumstances

At that time, my niece called me at home and said:

“Uncle Plinio, my husband just received an offer to go as a guest of honor on Air France’s Caravelle aircraft’s maiden flight from Brazil to Europe. But he has business commitments and cannot go, so he is offering his place to you.”<sup>1615</sup>

She later added she had a pressing need for me to go because she wanted me to do her a favor in Rome.

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<sup>1613</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1614</sup> SD 11/24/73.

<sup>1615</sup> SD 11/24/73.

I thought, “Nothing could be more inconvenient for the book launching than going to Europe now.<sup>1616</sup> On the other hand, a free trip to the old continent to cultivate our contacts is always worth taking advantage of.”<sup>1617</sup>

I weighed both aspects and decided to go. Pretending to be very happy, I said: “Oh! How wonderful! All right, let’s go then.”<sup>1618</sup>

I left the book in the process of being printed, its advertising organized, a list of persons to send it, and everything else perfectly planned for our staff to execute,<sup>1619</sup> and went off to Europe.<sup>1620</sup>

## 2. In Paris, With a Flu

I remember inviting Dr. Fábio Xavier da Silveira to accompany me. He enthusiastically accepted my invitation.<sup>1621</sup>

It was a lightning trip with much hustle and bustle and many things going wrong. It lasted about three or four weeks.<sup>1622</sup>

The flight was São Paulo-Paris-Rome, not São Paulo-Paris.<sup>1623</sup>

In a typical French way, each plane was named *Ciel*, sky—*Ciel de Bretagne*, *Ciel d’Anjou*, *Ciel de Normandie*, each name more beautiful than the last. If I am not mistaken, my plane was *Ciel de Lorraine*.<sup>1624</sup>

But since I always catch a cold from air conditioning, I arrived in Paris with a bad flu,<sup>1625</sup> went to Communion and straight to the hotel to recover. The hotel, *Le Claridge*, was paid for by *Air France*.

The next morning, I woke up with a high temperature.<sup>1626</sup>

I called the airline:

“Look, I cannot go to Rome because I have a fever. I am staying in a hotel you paid for on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. Please see what you can do; I am at your disposal.”

I got this reply:

“We are very sorry, but you must undergo a medical examination. On our inaugural flights, many people claim to be sick and stay to have fun because of the lure of Paris.”

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<sup>1616</sup> Lecture 8/1/92.

<sup>1617</sup> SD 11/24/73.

<sup>1618</sup> Lecture 8/1/92.

<sup>1619</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1620</sup> Lecture 8/1/92.

<sup>1621</sup> SD 11/24/73.

<sup>1622</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1623</sup> SD 11/24/73

<sup>1624</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1625</sup> SD 11/24/73.

<sup>1626</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

“All right, let him come.”

The next morning, the doctor confirmed that I had a high temperature.

\*

Soon after, Fabio came to visit me. I asked him to buy me an interesting book enjoyable to read and added:

“I will stay here by myself. You go to see the city, as there is no point staying locked up inside in a city like Paris.”

After a while, he returned with a book, *Memoires du Cardinal de Retz*.

I opened the book and read the first few lines: “These Memoirs of the Cardinal of Retz are thought to be one of the most confusing and monotonous historical documents in the history of France.”

Result: I spent three or four days in bed reading the indigestible memoirs of the Cardinal of Retz.<sup>1627</sup>

Finally, I was able to leave for Rome.<sup>1628</sup>

### 3. Rome: Cramps and Monsignor Casaroli

In Rome, we stayed at the Hotel Excelsior.<sup>1629</sup>

On the third day, if I remember correctly, I woke up with cramps, sudden muscle contractions and stinging pain. I was unable to walk.<sup>1630</sup>

I had to spend another three or four days in bed in Rome, hoping the crisis would pass so I could go to the Vatican to establish contacts and discharge the commission my niece entrusted me—a very simple matter.

Finally, the cramping stopped, and I went to the Vatican, but the offices were half-closed due to a holiday.<sup>1631</sup>

Although entry was forbidden, I went in, as everything was half open.<sup>1632</sup>

I introduced myself, saying I wanted to talk to the person responsible for Brazilian issues and Msgr. Valentini, who had received me on my previous trips.

They told me he was not at the Vatican but that Msgr. Casaroli was his deputy.<sup>1633</sup>

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<sup>1627</sup> Jean-François Paul de Gondi, Cardinal of Retz (1613-1679) was a French statesman and memoirist born to a family of small Florentine nobility who came to France with Catherine de Medici. A controversial character given to intrigue and political ambitions, he was part of the Fronde and later went into exile in Rome, escaping from a prison where he had been locked up by Mazarin. Having returned to France after the latter died, he failed to obtain the good graces of Louis XIV and had to renounce the See of Metz. He died as abbot of Saint-Denis.

<sup>1628</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1629</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1630</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1631</sup> Lecture 1/8/92.

<sup>1632</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1633</sup> SD 6/14/80.

I found Msgr. Casaroli in Saint Damasus' courtyard talking to a group of people. Many laypeople around him were enjoying a leisurely holiday chat. I recognized him because his interlocutors mentioned his name.

I had brought a book by a Brazilian priest<sup>1634</sup> describing in erotic terms the prevarication of another priest. As this priest was a progressive, this book was a disgraceful chapter for progressivism.

I told Msgr. Casaroli, in French:<sup>1635</sup>

“Your Excellency, I’m from Brazil. My name is Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, and I wanted to bring you a book by a priest, João Mohana, in which he describes a priest’s apostasy<sup>1636</sup> and his first sacrilegious Mass celebrated after sinning against chastity the night before.”

I also gave him a copy of a Catholic magazine containing a favorable book review.<sup>1637</sup>

He cut me short and said cheerfully:<sup>1638</sup>

“Ah! João Mohana. He is a good friend of mine!”

I looked at him and thought:<sup>1639</sup> “I have nothing else to say to this man.”<sup>1640</sup> It will be better to hand him the book with a few well-chosen words.”

“Your Excellency, in that case, you should find the book interesting for more than one reason.”

“I will read it.”<sup>1641</sup>

And we parted.

\*

After that, I went to look for Cardinal Tardini, the Deputy Secretary of State. I made my way to the wing where his office was located. It was empty.

I asked upon arriving:

“Is Msgr. Tardini here?”

“Ah! No, he has gone to the mountains.”

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<sup>1634</sup> His name was Father João Mohana (1925-1995), a priest, physician, and writer from the Brazilian State of Piauí. He wrote several books in a progressive vein, including, in 1952, the mystic-erotic novel *O outro caminho* [The Other Way], in which he imagined a priest’s psychological reactions when celebrating his first sacrilegious Mass. According to the blog *Chave de Leitura* [Reading Key], the novel *The Other Way* “was not written entirely written by João Mohana; as he explains in the first pages, but is based on autobiographical accounts written by his brother and published after his death by Mohana” (cf. <http://chavedeleitura.blogspot.com.br/2012/05/o-outro-caminho-joaomohana.html>).

<sup>1635</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1636</sup> Lecture 8/1/92.

<sup>1637</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1638</sup> Lecture 8/1/92.

<sup>1639</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1640</sup> SD 6/14/80.

<sup>1641</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

“To which mountains has he gone?”

They did not want to tell me, apparently thinking I might chase after the cardinal.

I accepted defeat and considered my mission to the Vatican a failure.<sup>1642</sup>

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There were small and great setbacks like that, one after another, throughout the entire journey, and the return trip was just like the first: something really out of this world.<sup>1643</sup>

## Chapter VII

# RCR’s Initial Difficulties, And Finally, Success

### 1. Return to Brazil; News of the Campaign’s Failure

From Rome, I flew to Paris to take a plane for the return flight to Rio de Janeiro, a journey that took almost twenty-four hours back then.

As the plane landed in Rio, I anxiously awaited news of RCR’s promotional campaign. I found Dr. Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra, Dr. Sergio Brotero Lefevre, and Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg waiting for me—they had come from São Paulo to meet me at the Rio airport.

First greetings, first question: “What news do you have concerning RCR?”

Dr. Paulo remained silent; Dr. Sergio looked undecided; Dr. Adolpho said, very tactfully and kindly:

“It was a relative success. Very few people sent thanks for your [copies with] dedication; everyone was noncommittal.”

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<sup>1642</sup> Lecture 8/1/92.

<sup>1643</sup> Tea 2/15/95.



Back in São Paulo, I heard through other channels that no newspaper had published anything. They all boycotted the book. Some bookstores refused to put it on sale, others appeared to accept it but buried it in a corner. Many friends who asked for RCR in bookstores were told the shop was not stocking it.

As a result, piles and piles of copies of RCR went unsold, an implosion where I expected an explosion.

Our first campaign after emerging from the catacombs could not have ended on a melancholier note. The series of setbacks that accompanied our first effort to make our philosophy known to the public was truly tragic.<sup>1644</sup>

## 2. Finally, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* Takes Off

Sometime later, we produced a French edition with an introduction by Dom Pedro Henrique.<sup>1645</sup>

After that, requests from abroad started coming in from people wanting to buy RCR, so we published RCR editions in several countries.<sup>1646</sup>

The book began to take off and is one of our best-known and most widely read publications.<sup>1647</sup>

It would be impossible to understand our group's aims without RCR. What is now the life of the TFP started with a monumental failure. Our Lady will sometimes do incomprehensible things for us along the way.<sup>1648</sup>

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<sup>1644</sup> SD 11/24/73.

<sup>1645</sup> Lecture 8/1/92.

<sup>1646</sup> Tea 2/15/95.

<sup>1647</sup> Tea 4/30/93.

<sup>1648</sup> The book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* was widely disseminated, inspiring the foundation of TFPs and similar organizations in several countries. It went through four editions in Brazil and was published in Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Italy, Germany, Peru, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the United States and made available in Australia, South Africa, and the Philippines. More recent editions were in Belarussian, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Japanese, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, and Ukrainian.

## Part IX

# TFP's Foundation: Highly Successful Books, Activities and Campaigns During the Sixties

### Chapter I

## Tradition, Family, Property

### 1. How We Chose the Name

It might be interesting to explain how we chose the name “Tradition, Family and Property.”

I remember that sometime in 1960, during a meeting<sup>1649</sup> at the Aureliano Coutinho Street headquarters,<sup>1650</sup> I remarked that the three terms that best describe our group's aims would be “Tradition, Family, and Property.”

I sensed that denying these three values was the terminal point of Christian civilization in the West and the beginning of an order based on their antitheses. Therefore, our name should be Tradition, Family and Property.<sup>1651</sup>

I also remember saying: “The perfect name for our group would be the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property. In this way, we would be fighting Communism not just by opposing it but by affirming

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<sup>1649</sup> SD 11/7/75.

<sup>1650</sup> RR 3/6/85.

<sup>1651</sup> SD 11/7/75.

the three values that Communism is working to destroy by slow erosion to prepare for its ultimate victory.”<sup>1652</sup>

Those present accepted my suggestion quite naturally and very joyfully.<sup>1653</sup>

Therefore, we carefully considered and analyzed the name because we wanted to ensure it reflected our ideals in every way.<sup>1654</sup>

Any three other words we might have decided to combine would not necessarily have formed a trilogy. *Tradition, Family, and Property* are bonded together to form a sequence.<sup>1655</sup>

## 2. TFP’s Foundation in 1960; Founding Members

With this trilogy as a basis, we decided to found a civil association<sup>1656</sup> and register it<sup>1657</sup> as a legally constituted organization,<sup>1658</sup> its core members were the group of friends that gathered earlier around *Legionário*.<sup>1659</sup>

The TFP was established on my initiative. I gave it its name, gathered the friends that became its first group of members,<sup>1660</sup> and carefully drew up its statutes, weighing every word to ensure their authenticity.<sup>1661</sup>

I chose the title “President of the National Council” instead of “President of the TFP” for many reasons that still stand.<sup>1662</sup>

The TFP is the only association I know of that has two full-fledged boards of directors: the National Council and the DAFN (National Administrative and Financial Department). The National Council, chaired by me, is responsible for our work’s intellectual aspects, our members’ formation

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<sup>1652</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1653</sup> SD 11/7/75.

<sup>1654</sup> SD 7/26/69.

<sup>1655</sup> CM 3/3/85. This was perfectly understood, more than a decade later, by the famous and frankly progressive Belgian author Max Delespesse, who published a book significantly titled *Tradition, Famille, Propriété: Jésus et la triple contestation* [Tradition, Family, Property: Jesus and the Threefold Constestation]. He accurately stated, "Superficial observers might be surprised at the trilogy of ‘tradition-family-property,’ as though it were an artificial amalgam. In fact, the combination of these three terms was not accidental.... ‘Tradition-Family-Property’ is a coherent entity that can be accepted or rejected, but whose elements cannot be separated” (Max Delespesse, *Tradition, Famille, Propriété. Jésus et la triple contestation*, Fleurus, Paris, 1972, pp. 7-8).

<sup>1656</sup> SD 7/26/69.

<sup>1657</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1658</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>1659</sup> SD 7/26/69. The official foundation date of the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) is July 26, 1960.

<sup>1660</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording) 1/23/91.

<sup>1661</sup> SD 2/7/87.

<sup>1662</sup> Quick word 1/4/81.

and all TFP activities except for economic issues, which are taken care of by DAFN, the National Administrative and Financial Department.<sup>1663</sup>

According to TFP statutes, the National Council is the deliberative body. TFP associates include myself, National Council and DAFN members, and some members of the Immediate Order.<sup>1664</sup>

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I have already described how this legal entity was established; the history of the TFP also includes an account of it.

Until about 1949, the group consisted only of the members of what was later called the Pará Group and me. I was the president, courtesy of Dr. José de Azeredo Santos, a year older than me.

As time passed, the Martim Group young men took on leading roles.

The age difference between those in the Pará Group and Martim Group members gradually became less significant, which also helped. Over time, this led to an integration between the two groups, although we always observed an order of precedence in our everyday dealings.

In this way, the leadership of this new organization established itself quite naturally.

When the TFP was founded in 1960, members of both the Pará and Martim groups became founding members and board members simultaneously, by a sort of organic process, along with half a dozen younger men also nominated as founding members. In legal terms, this became the TFP.

According to our statutes, volunteers do not belong to the TFP.<sup>1665</sup>

### 3. An Ideal Realized

It took some time since the TFP was founded before it could start its activities. After all, the group was still very small, a society that existed more on

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<sup>1663</sup> SD 4/7/79.

<sup>1664</sup> The “Immediate Order” – an expression used until the death of Dr. Plinio – consisted, as its name implies, of persons who ranked immediately below the founders and directors but occupied various leading roles, including managing entire sectors within the *Catolicismo* Group. Some of them were associates, while others were not.

<sup>1665</sup> SD 9/7/74. Initially referred to as *militants*, these volunteers were the Alcacer and Aureliano group members and many young men from all over Brazil fully dedicated to TFP ideals. Later, groups of supporters were formed, comprised of families acting within their social spheres and supporting the organization according to their possibilities. Over time, those who supported the ideals of the TFP expanded throughout the country, contributing greatly to the organization's highly successful campaigns.

paper than in reality. Much more talk was about the “Catolicismo Group” than TFP.<sup>1666</sup> TFP public activities and street campaigns as such started later.<sup>1667</sup>

Had someone asked, at the time the TFP was founded, “Would it be possible to establish a society with the characteristics of the TFP?” practically all those questioned would have replied that it would be impossible, that there was no place in today’s world for such a society.

A seemingly unattainable ideal has come true, and when an impossible ideal is realized, it is called a miracle.<sup>1668</sup>

## Chapter II

# TFP Ideals Spread Throughout Hispanic America

### 1. Argentina

During this period, we began traveling to other countries, especially in Latin America, looking for like-minded people to form a global confederation and become active worldwide.<sup>1669</sup>

We organized a trip to Argentina for many of our members and started contacting Catholic groups there.<sup>1670</sup>

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<sup>1666</sup> SD 7/26/69.

<sup>1667</sup> SD 6/16/73.

<sup>1668</sup> RR 8/15/92.

<sup>1669</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>1670</sup> SD 7/21/73.

For me, Argentina was a revelation,<sup>1671</sup> a nation that had preserved its religious heritage and practice of the Commandments to a far greater degree than Brazil.<sup>1672</sup>

At that time, part of Argentina's population was truly Catholic (and probably still is to some extent) across its various social classes, comprising upper, middle and lower classes. Ladies particularly showed impressive piety, as did men, and Catholics represented a huge force.<sup>1673</sup>

Far more than in Brazil, we saw many people praying in churches. The latter were beautiful and solemn, with statues of saints with the countenance of warriors displaying dignity, a spirit of chivalry and valor I found enormously inspiring.<sup>1674</sup>

The number of women and men who paid quick visits to the Blessed Sacrament was impressive.

Busy people working and doing business took the time to greet the Blessed Sacrament. Others spent more time there. Men of high social standing did not hesitate to declare their Catholic faith publicly without considering what people might think. They would raise their hats when passing in front of a church. It was wonderful to see things like that.<sup>1675</sup>

That made me realize that Argentina inherited the Catholic faith of unique richness and depth from Spain. I thought this was probably due to the way the Spanish managed all their former colonies—now independent nations in Latin America—by injecting them with a dose of faith that was much stronger than I could have imagined at first sight.

This resulted in us directing our foreign affairs endeavors toward South America for many years.<sup>1676</sup>

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In Argentina, we found a right-wing movement that included people whose vocation was identical to ours.<sup>1677</sup>

During one of our trips to Argentina, we met a group responsible for publishing the journal *Cruzada*, which reflected our ideas to an extraordinary degree. It consisted entirely of youngsters whose parents belonged to that right-wing movement.<sup>1678</sup>

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<sup>1671</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1672</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1673</sup> CM 5/21/89.

<sup>1674</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1675</sup> Dinner 1/16/92.

<sup>1676</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1677</sup> SD 6/17/89.

<sup>1678</sup> SD 7/21/73.

I contacted these youths when I went to Argentina and spent a long time there.

These contacts bore fruit, and on one occasion in 1965, I held a symposium for this youth group from Buenos Aires. They came to São Paulo to resolve some of the “thousands of issues” between the two groups. That symposium served to clarify this question: *What exactly are we?*

Our Lady favored this symposium, and in the end, they decided to adhere fully to our ideals and found an autonomous TFP in their country, a sister organization to ours. This was how the Argentine TFP came into being.

## 2. Chile

While traveling to Chile, we met young people from the *Fiducia* group, which published a magazine of the same name.

It was much easier to find common ground with them; we understood each other immediately. Some came to visit us in Brazil shortly after, followed by others. They took turns to come and see us, and we understood each other perfectly. Their transformation into the Chilean TFP was the simplest, easiest, and fastest process anyone could have imagined.

## 3. Uruguay

As soon as we could say we had groups with the same ideals in Argentina and Chile, many doors opened for us in other countries.

In Argentina, they told me there were people with similar ideas to ours in Montevideo. Indeed, when I went there, I met a group of people of high social standing, mostly about my age and some quite a bit older.

The group’s youngest invited me to lunch at his house, where I saw some boys playing in the drawing room. Two of them later became co-founders of a group in Montevideo.

## 4. Trips to Other Latin American Countries

At the same time, members of the Pará and Martim groups made several apostolic visits to other Latin American countries. Dr. Fernando Furquim de Almeida, Dr. Paulo de Barros Ulhôa Cintra, Dr. Sergio Brotero Lefèvre, Dr. Fabio Xavier da Silveira, and Dr. Paulo Corrêa de Brito Filho traveled around South America in all directions.<sup>1679</sup>

In every country, they found small groups of young people who responded positively.<sup>1680</sup>

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<sup>1679</sup> SD 11/24/73

<sup>1680</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

The pioneering work done by Catolicismo Group members enriched the domestic Brazilian routes by which pre-TFP ideals spread throughout the country. That pioneering impulse eventually became not just national but also Hispanic-American.

There were two rounds of epic journeys, both requiring a lot of work and being expensive; some trips remained unsuccessful. However, thanks to these trips, groups with similar ideals to those we fought for were established all over South America.

As I said, my friends from the Pará and Martim groups traveled up and down this whole region at first. Later, the Alcazar and Aureliano group members also undertook similar trips.<sup>1681</sup>

### Chapter III

## The Pivotal Role of *Agrarian Reform, a Question of Conscience*

#### 1. Opposition to Land Reform, even as a Teenager

As a schoolboy, I used to take a streetcar every day from the Campos Elíseos neighborhood to São Luis High School on Avenida Paulista. The streetcar line crossed Consolation Street, and one day, I saw a banner strung up that read: “Agrarian Leagues.”

At home, I asked what these agrarian leagues were.

“Ah! That’s a Communist movement; they want to take the land away from landowners and divide it up.”

I thought to myself: “We must stop these people because this is where Communism will start.”

When I saw the first news on agrarian reform in late 1959, when I was fifty years old, I thought, “Here we are; now Communism is upon us.”<sup>1682</sup>

#### 2. A Small News Item Provides a Glimpse of the Big Battle to Come

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<sup>1681</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1682</sup> SD 12/1/73.



In 1959, our group organized a trip to Poços de Caldas for a small symposium, which was attended by about twenty people.<sup>1683</sup>

I remember we held the meetings on the terrace of a beautiful hotel overlooking a lovely garden—a contrast to our sad situation.

It was there that one morning, I read a tiny news item,<sup>1684</sup> perhaps five or ten lines,<sup>1685</sup> announcing that agrarian reform was on the point of being launched in our country.<sup>1686</sup>

I went down to breakfast and told the young men:

“I just read in the *Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper that they are preparing an Agrarian Reform in Brazil. And if they try to do that here, I assure you that our group will intervene.”

They looked at me, their faces reflecting a mixture of astonishment and fear.

I said, “You may be quite sure of that. The enemy is launching this campaign prematurely because national opinion is unprepared to accept it. And the agrarian reform in the works is contrary to Catholic doctrine. As soon as land-reform advertising is well underway, we will strike a blow against it.”

I could see they were hopeful but had some doubt: “How could a group as small as ours hope to run a campaign of such magnitude?”<sup>1687</sup>

### 3. Carvalho Pinto’s Agrarian Reform Plan

São Paulo was governed at the time by Carvalho Pinto, whom I knew very well.<sup>1688</sup> He had been my classmate in law school and was a nice man, friendly and good company. But as governor, he suddenly launched a great propaganda campaign for Agrarian Reform.<sup>1689</sup>

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<sup>1683</sup> This symposium was held in September 1959, during the Homeland Week holiday.

<sup>1684</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1685</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>1686</sup> Despite the research effort, we were unable to locate this news item read by Dr. Plínio. We only note that during the 1959 Homeland Week, several news items came out insisting on the subject of agrarian reform.

<sup>1687</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1688</sup> Carlos Alberto Alves de Carvalho Pinto (1910-1987) was a university professor, lawyer, politician, and technician in administrative and economic affairs. A grand-nephew of former President Rodrigues Alves, he became governor of São Paulo State on January 31, 1959. In July of that year, certainly commissioned by the state government, *Manchete* magazine published a bombastic cover story titled, “Carvalho Pinto Already Doing Land Reform in São Paulo.” That same month, with decree No. 35090, he created a committee responsible for “studying measures aimed at better utilization of unused public or private lands in the state” (cf. Célia Aparecida Ferreira Tolentino, in *O Farmer contra o Jeca*, Cultura Acadêmica Editora, São Paulo, 2011). That commission would be led by his Agriculture Secretary, José Bonifácio Coutinho Nogueira, whose adviser, José Gomes da Silva, was the future president of INCRA [National Institute for Agrarian Reform] under President José Sarney.

<sup>1689</sup> Conversation 1/20/93.

During the early months of the following year, 1960, he submitted an Agrarian Reform project to the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo<sup>1690</sup> that immediately found great support in the press and radio, as well as with most of the São Paulo Episcopate and Brazil's National Conference of Bishops (CNBB).<sup>1691</sup>

In the state government's words, this projected bill was "a first, truly pioneering step," a starting point for further land reforms.<sup>1692</sup> It became the basic law to be adapted to different regions of the nation, serving as a model for a national Agrarian Reform Law to be implemented soon.

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In the words of the Secretary of Agriculture, José Bonifácio Coutinho Nogueira, speaking at the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo, this bill was based on a doctrine, a "philosophy," a "mentality."

The proposed Agrarian Reform legislation would give the State a huge power over small "landowners," effectively reducing them to slavery. Instead of ensuring their freedom, their "property" would force them into a straitjacket. The whole thing was a socialist project, a first step toward introducing the total state control of Communism.<sup>1693</sup>

#### 4. Writing the Book

While land reform propaganda became increasingly insistent, I went to Santos to write the doctrinal part of the book, which was later named *Agrarian Reform—a Question of Conscience*. The part dealing with economic questions was written by the economist Luiz Mendonça de Freitas, a member of the Martim group.

I remember spending fifteen to twenty days in Santos. It was a difficult book to write because the effect I intended to produce required much attention to wording and detail.

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A painful ordeal marked this stay in Santos and the book's preparation: the death on June 25, 1960, of my beloved and unforgettable friend, Dr. Antonio Ablas Filho. He had shown great interest in the project.

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<sup>1690</sup> Bill 154/60, introduced on April 1, 1960, and approved on December 28 of the same year, was sanctioned by Carvalho Pinto on the 30th, becoming Law No. 5994 (cf. site of the State of São Paulo Legislative Assembly at <http://www.al.sp.gov.br> and also Célia Aparecida Ferreira Tolentino in "O Farmer contra o Jeca," op. cit.), but it could not get off the ground.

<sup>1691</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 1986.

<sup>1692</sup> SD 12/1/73.

<sup>1693</sup> Analytical report on the São Paulo Agrarian Revision sent to Rome in 1962.

As the book's writing progressed, I became more and more convinced that it would cause a huge reaction, given the degree of attention the media accorded to land reform propaganda.

I also became convinced that this campaign would transform us from an insignificant group that only a few people specializing in religious issues knew to a group whose radius of action would extend all over Brazil.<sup>1694</sup>

## 5. Media, Clergy, Conniving Rural Leaders: The Bastion to Storm

The political situation was the following.

All newspapers, broadsheets, and newsletters published clear or veiled propaganda favoring land reform.

All these publications painted farmers as a class of bloodsuckers who dominated agricultural production and kept it in a backward state.

They claimed that, due to the farmers' narrow-minded and backward mentality, Brazilian agriculture did not produce enough food to supply the population and attributed this alleged lack of productivity to the system of large and medium-sized properties. They called them unproductive without any factual evidence to support their allegation.

Consequently, they added that if Brazil were to make progress, it would be necessary to eliminate the large and medium-sized properties and establish a system consisting of only small farms.

\*

From the first moment, the Catholic left threw its whole weight behind the campaign favoring agrarian reform.<sup>1695</sup> That was one of the strongest reasons for writing the book.<sup>1696</sup>

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<sup>1694</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1695</sup> SD 7/17/73.

<sup>1696</sup> Of the 187 bishops who constituted the Catholic hierarchy in Brazil at that time, forty-nine had spoken in favor of a socialist and confiscatory agrarian reform. Their figurehead was the Secretary-General of the CNBB at the time, Dom Helder Câmara. Few bishops spoke out against the reform. The vast majority kept quiet.

The following Communist poem by Vinicius de Moraes, published in a prominent position in the left-wing Catholic weekly *Brasil Urgente*, edited by the infamous Dominican Friar Carlos Josaphat, shows the virulence of the land reform propaganda of the Catholic left: "Lords and barons of the land / Prepare your shrouds / Because you enjoy the land / But the land belongs to those who work on it / As do the fruits that it brings forth ... The time of war has come / No saint will save you now. / ...We want the land to be / As much ours as yours / For the land has no owner / Gentlemen owners of the land. / ...Not sickles to fight swords / Not fire to fight stone / Not rifles to fight hoes: / Grenades against grenades! / Machine guns against machine guns! And our war is sacred! / Our battle will not be lost!" (*Brasil Urgente*, May 12, 1963).

Such was the support the land reform agitation received from religious circles that in various parts of Brazil, farmers began to have qualms of conscience at possessing land inherited from their ancestors or legitimately acquired through hard work. Some were cowed into adopting a submissive attitude, while others began to revolt against the Church.<sup>1697</sup>

All this happened before the Second Vatican Council when the prestige of the bishops in Brazil was still much higher than today.

A word from the bishops could be powerful enough to send the whole country in one direction. If the bishops had unanimously supported agrarian reform, it would have been a *fait accompli* because the farmers would have had no one to defend their interests, not even the farming associations, most of which were governed by compliant and appeasing leaders who took no effective steps against agrarian reform.

That was compounded by the fact that the part of the national *intelligentsia* that addressed the subject generally favored land reform.<sup>1698</sup>

These people had powerful means of propaganda and the support of the Communists and some of their sympathizers among the bourgeoisie.

## **6. AR-QC's Strategy and Development; Crucial Co-Authorship of Two Bishops**

We faced the problem of defending private property, including giving farmers two tools they lacked to defend themselves.

The first was to show them that there was a book that defended their legitimate cause. The second was to show the public that, along with two lay Catholics, there were also two bishops fighting against agrarian reform: Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud.

The public needed to see that these two bishops considered the agrarian reform as a step toward Communism at a time when people still viewed Communism with horror and to realize that Catholics were by no means unanimously in favor of agrarian reform, as the leftist propaganda implied.

With these two resources, it would be possible to show the farmers that, as Catholics, they were not morally obliged to agree to agrarian reform.

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It was indispensable to have the book reviewed and obtain the endorsement of the two bishops—Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud. I took the draft

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<sup>1697</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>1698</sup> At the same time, agrarian unrest started in some parts of the country: land occupations in Pernambuco and São Paulo; agitation by the Peasant Leagues of Communist Congressman Francisco Julião; an attempt to organize farm workers into communist unions in the north of Paraná, etc.

manuscript and asked them to review it and let me know if they approved it. I also invited them to give their names as co-authors.

These negotiations took place during a Eucharistic Congress in Curitiba<sup>1699</sup> that all Brazilian bishops were expected to attend, so Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud would be there.<sup>1700</sup>

They reviewed the book's draft during their free time between congress sessions.<sup>1701</sup>

We used to meet in my hotel room. After they had finished reviewing the text, they agreed to list themselves as co-authors.

Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud made several observations; Dom Sigaud even added some interesting pages.

Dr. Plinio Xavier was also a great help; he reviewed the economics chapters written by Dr. Luiz Mendonça de Freitas.<sup>1702</sup>

## **7. Dr. Castilho's Revision**

Finally, I entrusted the finished book to my deeply missed and dear friend, Dr. José Carlos Castilho de Andrade, for the final revision. He asked me to give him a few days.

Dr. Castilho was a very competent reviewer who paid great attention to detail and was also quite ruthless. Not the slightest error or inaccuracy escaped him, and he would not let anything pass, which is why he was a good reviewer. A lazy reviewer would not have suited me at all. A reviewer who is truly my friend treats me as though he were an enemy.

He had a singular way of expressing himself. When faced with a perplexing situation, he would squeeze and crack the four fingers of his hand and say, "Well..."

Having finished the review, he sat down and told me:

"Well, Dr. Plinio, I do not know if it would be better for you to write another book or have me revise this one because I have four hundred objections to raise."

A shiver ran down my spine at the thought of writing a new book. On the other hand, I knew that correcting the 400 defects pointed out by Dr. Castilho would be roughly equivalent to correcting 600 because I would offer four hundred solutions, of which at least two hundred would be found wanting. So, I said:

"No, Castilho, I would rather review your objections."

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<sup>1699</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1700</sup> It was the 7<sup>th</sup> National Eucharistic Congress, held from May 5 to 8, 1960.

<sup>1701</sup> SD 12/1/73.

<sup>1702</sup> SD 7/14/73.

And so we started revising them one by one.

We disagreed and argued about several points, but I accepted his opinion whenever I could not convince him. In so doing, I would avoid “blowing my own trumpet.”

You may imagine the joy I felt when I saw Dr. Castillo arrive at the last page, as calm and unruffled as he had been when he started on the first, and tell me:

“Well then...now...it’s all done; the revision is complete.”<sup>1703</sup>

## 8. Carefully Avoiding News of the Book Leaking Out Prematurely

After we finished revising the book, we had to send it to a printer. But which printer should we entrust it to?

It was a knotty problem: if the leftist clergy learned about the book before its release, we could expect a letter from the Nuncio forcing Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud to withdraw their names. And without the names of the two bishops, much of the book’s impact would be lost.<sup>1704</sup>

We considered one printer after another until we found the one that printed *Revista dos Tribunais* (journal of the courts) in São Paulo. We hired this firm and delivered the text. We wanted the book printed as soon as possible, but the firm had quite a backlog of orders, and the printing date was postponed repeatedly.

Finally, the book was ready. We do not know how many times Our Lady protected us, but the archdiocesan Chancery had no prior news of the book.

## 9. A National Best-Seller “Bombshell”

As soon as this problem was solved, another problem appeared: Who should we entrust with launching the book?

*O Palácio do Livro* [The Book Palace] was a large book distribution company at São Paulo’s Republic Square.

The *Xaviers* went to see its manager, who showed genuine interest and goodwill. He agreed to take responsibility for distributing the book in the fifty bookshops under contract with the company, many located in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and the state's interior.

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<sup>1703</sup> Tea 4/30/93.

<sup>1704</sup> These fears were not unfounded. The Nuncio at the time was Dom Armando Lombardi, who, according to the former Congressman Márcio Moreira Alves, used to lunch every week with Dom Helder Câmara, whose group he always tried to support (cf. Márcio Moreira Alves, *O despertar da Revolução brasileira* [The Awakening of the Brazilian Revolution], Empresa de Publicidade Seara Nova, Lisbon, 1974, p. 220). He actually tried to silence Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud a short time later.

He suggested that we advertise the book using the services of an organization called The Book Club, which had the names of thousands of readers on file.

Sales of AR-QC started on November 10, 1960.<sup>1705</sup>

The book's impact was overwhelming!<sup>1706</sup> It sold like hotcakes throughout Brazil<sup>1707</sup> and was recognized as a national bestseller by the bibliographical section of the newspaper *O Globo* (June 30, 1961).<sup>1708</sup>

The book's publication news spread like wildfire throughout the country. The first edition, of 5,000 copies, sold out in three weeks. For the following edition, we printed 7,000 copies. The third was 10,000 copies and sold out in two or three months.

We published the fourth edition of 8,000 copies at the start of the following year.<sup>1709</sup>

## 11. Invited to a Debate at São Paulo's Legislative Assembly

As expected, the book's impact was huge.

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<sup>1705</sup> SD 12/1/73. The first advertisement was a full page in the September 1960 issue of *Catholicismo*. The October issue contained an article by Dr. Plinio, giving a broad summary of the central theses of the work. And on November 10, *O Estado de S. Paulo* published this ad, which ran as a footer across the entire front page: "In every bookstore in the country: *Agrarian Reform, a Question of Conscience* – A very timely book revealing the socialist and anti-Christian aspects of agrarian reform" (see *O Estado de S. Paulo*, November 10, 1960).

<sup>1706</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>1707</sup> Sup 11/8/92.

<sup>1708</sup> Conversation 1/20/93.

<sup>1709</sup> SD 12/1/73—Agrarian Reform, a Question of Conscience, had twelve editions: five in Brazil, the latest one in the first quarter of 2011 commemorating the 50th anniversary of its launch; in Argentina (1963), Spain (1969) and Colombia (five editions), totaling more than 43,000 copies.

Among the socialist measures denounced in the book were the compulsory partition of land, the elimination of large and medium-sized farms, expropriation by the imposition of prices much lower than the actual market prices, and the establishment of a regime of communal property.

On the other hand, AR-QC analyzed some of the social and religious aspects of the problem—was it possible to have Christian socialism? Was it fair that economic and social inequalities should exist? Were the farmers parasites or benefactors to the country? Would the land reform undermine the institution of the family? and many others.

In the book chapters that dealt with the economic aspects of the reform, Dr. Luiz Mendonça de Freitas showed that the agrarian reform project intended to eliminate large and medium-sized properties. He used statistics to prove that Brazilian agriculture was actually very productive. He also defended our rural structures and pointed out the evils of excessive state interventionism, exchange-rate confiscation, and other similar measures.

So much so that, six days after its release, the Economic Committee of the São Paulo State Legislative Assembly invited us to discuss Agrarian Reform during a meeting of the Committee.<sup>1710</sup>

Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer came to São Paulo for this, and we prepared to discuss the matter with the committee members.

The book's authors addressed the various aspects of the Agrarian Reform project, emphasizing the measures' egalitarian and anti-Christian character. I was the first to speak, followed by the two bishops, Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer. The last to speak was Mendonça de Freitas, the economist, who spoke about the project's economic aspects.

A heated debate followed our presentations. Several questions were addressed to Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer, and myself. Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer responded very well. Dr. Luiz Mendonça de Freitas masterfully explained the matters of his specialty.<sup>1711</sup>

Our intervention produced enormous repercussions in São Paulo. It was a great start to our campaign against agrarian reform.<sup>1712</sup>

## 12. Debating Paulo de Tarso on the Tupi TV Network

I also participated in a public debate in São Paulo, in a program known as *O Grande Júri* (The Grand Jury), with Congressman Paulo de Tarso, the former mayor of Brasília; we did not discuss land reform but rather the question of whether socialism was compatible with Catholicism.<sup>1713</sup>

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<sup>1710</sup> Symposium 2/26/66 (I). The session was held on November 16, 1960. The subject was the Agrarian Revision proposed by Governor Carvalho Pinto.

<sup>1711</sup> SD 7/14/73 – See report in *Catolicismo*, No. 121, January 1961.

<sup>1712</sup> Symposium 2/26/66 (I) – An unsigned record written by a member of the *Catolicismo* group provides some interesting data: “The debates produced a great effect, to the point that agro-revisionist state assemblymen approached the specialized media trying to prevent the publication of any news about it, to no avail. The news soon spread, several newspapers commented on it, the visit [to the Assembly] was filmed and shown on television, and later in movie news in São Paulo’s main theaters and throughout Brazil.”

<sup>1713</sup> Lecture in Belo Horizonte on Agrarian Reform, 10/29/61. During this momentous debate, held on October 24, 1961 before the cameras of TV Tupi in São Paulo, the Christian-Democrat Congressman Paulo de Tarso (he had been the mayor of Brasília under the Jânio Quadros Administration and was a leading exponent of the Brazilian Catholic left) defended the position that socialism was compatible with Church doctrine and that the Church had condemned capitalism.

Using arguments based on the papal encyclicals that dealt with the subject, Dr. Plínio demonstrated the opposite: the Church does not condemn that capitalism itself, but only its abusive aspects, whereas socialism is condemned even in its mitigated forms.

During the same debate, Dr. Plínio raised questions that led the Christian-Democrat congressman to reveal socio-economic tenets that the public had not been aware he held. This contributed, at the time, to reveal the true intentions underlying the various ideological trends summed up by the term “Catholic leftism” (cf. *Half a Century of Epic Anticommunism*, The Foundation for a Christian Civilization, Mount Kisco, NY 1981, 459 p.)



## Chapter IV

# The Division between Bishops and Laity Becomes Patent

### 1. Dom Lombardi Orders the Two Bishops to Keep Silent, Tries to Tie Their Hands

A few days later, Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer received a letter from the apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Armando Lombardi. In it, he asked the two bishops to explain the reasons behind their objections to land reform and ordered them to “avoid public declarations concerning this matter.”<sup>1714</sup>

### 2. São Paulo Bishops Issue Statement Against the Book

Having successfully silenced the two bishops, less than a month after the release of AR-QC, Dom Helder Câmara, in his capacity as secretary-general of

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<sup>1714</sup> The two bishops responded in a joint letter to the Nuncio that “having received Your Excellency’s letter of November 15 only on the twenty-seventh of this month,” they were preparing “the opinion requested by Your Excellency with all due dispatch.” But they took the opportunity to indicate to Archbishop Lombardi their perplexity at those facts that, “from what we can see, do not fit the prospects suggested by the letter of November 15 that we received from Your Excellency. In fact, your request to us to explain our objections to the Agrarian Reform project..., as well as your request that we keep silent on the matter for some time...appears to foreshadow a public offensive by several bishops against the position that we have adopted.”

After referring to some news items confirming these rumors – the announcement of a statement on the part of the Episcopate of São Paulo in which arguments were to be presented in reply to the book, the speech of Dom Helder in Brasília, and the statements of the Cardinal of São Paulo in favor of land reform – they concluded:

“To a diplomat of Your Excellency’s standing, the possible consequences of the facts recounted here could not escape unnoticed. Although we have not received an invitation to the meeting of the bishops that is to be held before our explanations will even have reached the hands of Your Excellency..., as far as we are concerned, we do not fear any refutation. Convinced that we are on the side of the truth, we are forced to do battle by a duty of honor. And according to the principles of natural justice, we will succeed, with God’s grace, in ensuring the triumph of sound doctrine. However, we hope that any consequences of this meeting will weigh only on those who promote it” (cf. the letter of Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer to the Nuncio, Dom Armando Lombardi, of December 1, 1960).

the CNBB, began to organize a collective statement of the Episcopate of São Paulo against our book and in support of land reform.<sup>1715</sup>

At that moment, I was spending a few days in Rio.<sup>1716</sup>

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Finally, on December 5, the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of São Paulo held a meeting attended by Dom Helder Câmara and declared their support for the agrarian reform project promoted by the state government.

In a sensational TV show, seven bishops gave detailed explanations regarding the considerations and conclusions of the Assembly on the subject.<sup>1717</sup> Their statements were not direct but implicit attacks against the book.<sup>1718</sup>

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We were in our auditorium on Vieira de Carvalho Street, watching the broadcast on a TV set placed on the conference table.

For some reason, the images of the bishops appeared distorted on the screen, making for an extraordinary spectacle. Seen like that, Dom Helder resembled a masterpiece of modern art!

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<sup>1715</sup> Report to Cardinal Ottaviani 12/20/60. One of the symptoms of this episcopal campaign was the notice that suddenly began appearing in major São Paulo newspapers, insistently and enigmatically announcing: *Agrarian Reform—A Question of Conscience: Watch it on the 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 PM on channels 4, 5 and 7.*

<sup>1716</sup> SD 12/8/73.

<sup>1717</sup> *The Church in the Face of the Escalating Communist Threat*, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>1718</sup> It is worth noting the names of these bishops: Dom Helder Câmara, as rapporteur and Secretary of the CNBB; Most Revs. João Batista da Motta e Albuquerque, Archbishop of Vitória; Antonio Macedo, Auxiliary Bishop of São Paulo; Aniger Melilo, Bishop of Piracicaba; David Picão, Bishop of São João da Boa Vista; Jorge Marcos de Oliveira, Bishop of Santo André; and Vicente Zioni, Auxiliary Bishop of São Paulo.

During the interview, Dom Helder claimed that he had been “expressly authorized by all the archbishops and bishops of São Paulo.” For the historical record, it should be noted that Dom Henrique Gelain, who was the Bishop of Lins at the time, did not attend the meeting of the São Paulo Episcopate, and there is no evidence that he agreed with its conclusions. Dom José Maurício da Rocha, Bishop of Bragança Paulista, and Dom Germano Campón Vega, Titular Bishop of Oreó and resident in the State of São Paulo, both refused to attend the meeting and publicly endorsed AR-QC.

The statement of the São Paulo bishops gave rise to uncertainty as to what attitude the simple layman should take in the face of such differences between his Pastors. For this reason, on Dom Mayer’s orders, the Secretary of the Bishop of Campos, Father João Bloes Netto, published a *Clarification* in which he recalled the teachings of Sacred Theology about the Magisterium of Bishops. In this *Clarification*, he emphasized that although each bishop may speak with the authority conferred upon him by Jesus Christ himself, his teaching does not have the privilege of infallibility, which belongs only to the Sovereign Pontiff. Whenever there are differences between various bishops as far as their teaching of doctrine is concerned, the faithful should seek to know the pontifical teaching and should adhere to it (cf. *Um homem, uma obra, uma gesta* [A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga], Edições Brazil de Amanhã, Artpress, São Paulo, 1988, pp. 69 ff.)

Whether because of this horror show or because the book had already reached such a large number of people, the scene did not affect the public but created a lot of displeasure among the rural landowners.<sup>1719</sup>

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A brief comment in passing on the Nuncio, Archbishop Armando Lombardi.

He and Dom Helder Câmara had lunch every Sunday at the Apostolic Nunciature, then in Rio de Janeiro. During these lunches, they “cooked up” the appointments of progressive bishops.<sup>1720</sup>

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### 3. Dom Sigaud Appointed Archbishop of Diamantina

We were amid all this controversy when something occurred that would mark our history.

I spent a few days in Rio and remember taking stock of our situation as I woke up in my hotel room and went down to the hall where Dr. Paulo Barros Ulhôa Cintra and Dr. Fabio Xavier da Silveira, who accompanied me on this trip, were awaiting me.

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<sup>1719</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1720</sup> RR 5/7/77. Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud decided to submit “to the high judgment of the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, the declaration of the Venerable Bishops of São Paulo of December 5,” in an official letter addressed to its secretary Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani (cf. Letter of Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud to Cardinal Ottaviani of December 20, 1960).

A few months later, they wrote another letter to Cardinal Ottaviani, stressing “the gravity of the situation created by the pernicious actions of His Excellency Dom Helder Câmara, in his capacity as Secretary of the CNBB. His Excellency, strongly supported by the Apostolic Nunciature, is gradually leading the bishops of the various provinces into taking up frankly socialist positions. ... The disorientation of the secretary and archbishops who run the CNBB is so great their concepts and theories regarding property rights are so riddled with socialism that their message of solidarity, sent in the name of the central committee of the Bishops’ Conference of Brazil to the bishops of the tormented island of Cuba, is full of the most amazing statements. ... Writing to Cuba, where Catholics must be supported firmly in their fight against Communism and for the institution of private property, the members of the [Central] Committee of the CNBB expressed themselves so much in favor of restrictions on property rights that Fidel Castro himself might have written their words. ... Our bishops are being forced to support a socialist concept of property by members of the central committee headed by Dom Helder Câmara. Unfortunately, this penetration of ideas is progressing quickly and is translating into egalitarian attitudes that find expression in scandalous support of strikes and left-leaning legislators. ...

We know that among several bishops, these attitudes are due to the trust they place in the persons who lead the CNBB, whose views they believe to be supported by the Nunciature. But in this way, they are breaking the resistance of Catholics and corrupting their ideas. The bishops who oppose these ideas are presented as schismatics and separatists, their credibility destroyed, and the faithful led to embrace socialist ideas and solutions on the pretext that such principles and solutions correspond to the doctrine of the Holy Church” (Letter written by Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud to Cardinal Ottaviani, dated February 4, 1961).

That was when Dr. José Fernando de Camargo called from São Paulo. I said to Fabio: “Could you do me a favor? Just pick up the phone and see what José Fernando wants.”

Fabio was laughing as he returned from the phone call:

“You will never guess what happened.”

“Tell me.”

“Dr. José Fernando called to inform us that the pope has appointed Dom Sigaud Archbishop of Diamantina.”

We concluded Dom Sigaud’s appointment as Archbishop of Diamantina was the Holy See’s way of indirectly expressing its approval of the book (*AR-QC*). To some extent, it altered the outlook, which had begun to appear rather unfavorable.<sup>1721</sup>

I remember we had a party to celebrate Dom Sigaud’s taking possession of Diamantina. We sent news of the event to newspapers and always underlined that he was one of the authors of *AR-QC*.

With the book in their hands, landowners understood the following: “These bishops of São Paulo believe one thing, but this other one, who the pope has just promoted to be the Archbishop of Diamantina, thinks otherwise. We are therefore entitled to doubt what the bishops of São Paulo are saying, and we will ignore them.”

And so, the rural population took an even firmer stance against the agrarian reform project.

#### **4. Promoting the Book at Fairs and Rural Exhibitions**

To increase sales, we started advertising the book at fairs, rural exhibitions, and other public events. This marked the start of a new phase in the history of the recently founded TFP.

Our people were not yet wearing the characteristic campaign insignia, the red cape and the standard. We only had the old lapel pin of the Marian Congregations.

The young men also began to travel throughout Brazil; they were the forerunners of our itinerant caravans.<sup>1722</sup>

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When the campaign began, the “pre-TFP” was very small.

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<sup>1721</sup> This appointment was set on December 20, 1960, but the news was only made known to the public on the 31<sup>st</sup> of that month. He took possession of his archdiocese on April 16, 1961. The June 1961 issue of *Catolicismo* (no. 126) published a report on the event.

<sup>1722</sup> SD 7/14/73.

With these successive public appearances, it gained prestige. The TFP's high point came later with street campaigns when it touched its zenith.<sup>1723</sup>

You might say this pre-TFP changed its status because it became a group known throughout the country and recognized nationally.

### 5. Farmers Are Relieved as the Catholic Left's Unanimity Myth Crumbles

At that time, a rural leader, hard-pressed by the circumstances, thanked us for the book on behalf of his association. He told us that before the book's publication, the farmers felt like householders facing a fire without help. When our book appeared, it seemed to them like the arrival of the fire brigade, with water and hoses to put out the fire.<sup>1724</sup>

Another effect was that Dom Helder Câmara, who had the most far-reaching press support ever granted to any Brazilian (not even the late president Getúlio Vargas was supported to such an extent), was threatening Brazil with his "Liberating Moral Pressure" movement, which was strongly in favor of land reform.<sup>1725</sup>

Our campaign showed the general public that this prelate was not the undisputed spokesman of the Church and that his opinions were by no means those held by the majority of Catholics.<sup>1726</sup>

### 6. Expected and Unexpected Criticism

From the beginning, we were sure the book would attract a lot of criticism. Since we assumed that among the critical voices, at least some would be presented courteously and under the standards of academic dispute, we looked forward to the rich intellectual pleasures that can always derive from ideological struggles if the standards of chivalrousness and logic are observed.

The expected reactions arrived, but how different they were from what we had expected! No serious, well-thought-out article appeared against our book, opposing our positions by presenting thesis against thesis and argument against argument, as dictated by the rules of an intellectual dispute in good taste.

Instead, we got numerous small articles in different papers, loaded with personal invective or false claims, which were so inconsistent that they neither merited nor, strictly speaking, permitted any answer at all.<sup>1727</sup>

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<sup>1723</sup> SD 12/8/73.

<sup>1724</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1725</sup> Lecture at Casa de Portugal, 9/12/68.

<sup>1726</sup> *The Church in Face of the Escalating Communist Threat*, op. cit.

<sup>1727</sup> One such statement was issued by the Secretary of Agriculture of São Paulo at the time, José Bonifácio Coutinho Nogueira, who considered the sale of the book in this State "untimely, since it may cause ideological trauma in the minds of Catholics." According to him, "only Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta has the authority to speak for the Church in São Paulo, and he must have the final word

In an attempt to create a basis for debate on a high intellectual level, I wrote an article (“Jules Verne, Homer and Agrarian Reform,” *Diário de São Paulo*, January 11, 1961) inviting the opponents of *Agrarian Reform, A Question of Conscience* to stop personal attacks, modify the tone of their denunciations, and provide them with more intellectual content.

I achieved nothing by this because although the work continued to be among the most sought-after in the bookstores, all criticism, which had already become less frequent, as far as I could ascertain, soon ceased entirely.

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All the same, I did not quite give up the hope of a real and serious debate on the matter. Before we published my appeal in the *Diário de São Paulo*, I heard that a certain Gustavo Corção was preparing a series of articles to “destroy, once and for all” all the arguments presented in *Agrarian Reform – a Question of Conscience*.

He was a prominent journalist, a lucid and efficient polemicist, intelligent and well-educated, and I confidently expected that his contribution would raise the debate to a new level and awaited the fearsome onslaught with a good deal of interest.

After some time, the articles – three of them – finally appeared.

I did not read them immediately because their publication coincided with the illness and death of my elderly and dear father.<sup>1728</sup>

I tried to study them as soon as I could. Unfortunately, they only brought more disappointment and a lively sense of bewilderment.

My disappointment was mainly because the attack was once again couched in a political pamphlet style. I had hoped the articles would reflect something of the author’s talent and be concise, bright and intelligent. However, the text was opaque, wordy, and gratuitously insulting, and it did not provide any substantial argument to refute our positions.

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on the subject [sic!]. We know that His Eminence has already indicated that he is in favor of the Agrarian Reform project, as is another churchman, Dom Helder Câmara of Rio de Janeiro. The authors of the book...belong to a reactionary group desirous of preserving obsolete systems” (*Última Hora*, São Paulo, November 25, 1960).

At the time there was considerable surprise that the Secretary of Agriculture of São Paulo, in his defense of Agrarian Reform, should not have used technical arguments from within his area of competence, but had instead chosen to present himself as a zealous champion of what he appeared to consider good order and discipline in the Church!

<sup>1728</sup> They also coincided with the realization of the First Latin American Congress of *Catolicismo* (January 25 to February 1, 1961). The articles of Gustavo Corção, titled “Agrarian Reform: A Question of Conscience;” “Agrarian Reform and Property Rights;” and “Harmonious Inequality,” were published in *O Estado de S. Paulo* on January 22, 1961, January 29, 1961, and February 5, 1961, respectively.

The worst disappointment was that it was obvious at first glance that this fiery critic had not even taken the trouble of reading *Agrarian Reform – A Question of Conscience* properly.

It was painful to say this publicly about an intellectual with whom I had often disagreed. He deserved genuine consideration rather than the intemperate fury with which he dealt with our work and, to a certain extent, with us.<sup>1729</sup>

## 7. Repercussions in France; Controversy with Cardinal Motta

Here is another interesting episode of this controversy. We had no more passionate opponent to our cause than Cardinal Motta,<sup>1730</sup> who resolutely favored land reform from the outset. Later, he resolutely supported Jango Goulart.<sup>1731</sup>

When cardinal of São Paulo, he gave an interview to a French magazine stating that, except for two dissenting bishops, the national Episcopate favored land reform.<sup>1732</sup>

Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer wrote to Dom Motta to protest his statements to the French press. However, the cardinal's courtesy did not apply to us, so he did not answer. His was the policy of the *fait accompli*: You either accept what he wants without discussion, or he accuses you of trying to split the Episcopate.

If I am not mistaken, Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer sent two more letters with the same content. In the last one, they announced they had no remedy but to go public. Again, the Cardinal did not reply.

They published a statement in the newspapers showing that the cardinal misrepresented the facts and that most bishops had not spoken in favor of land reform.<sup>1733</sup>

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<sup>1729</sup> Dr. Plinio responded to these attacks in three articles published in *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, on March 17, 18 and 19, 1961, and in the *Diário de São Paulo* on March 18, 21 and 23, 1961. *Catolicismo* published the first of these three articles under the title: “*Agrarian Reform – A Question of Conscience: a Book as Hateful as the Invasion of Hungary?*” (*Catolicismo*, No. 124, April 1961); the other two articles were titled “*Agrarian Reform - A Question of Conscience – The Book that Mr. Gustavo Corção Did Not Read*” (*Catolicismo*, No. 125, May 1961). These articles demonstrated that the illustrious journalist had formulated his criticism without first studying the book with due attention. The newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* published Corção's articles but did not publish Dr. Plinio's response.

<sup>1730</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1731</sup> SD 7/16/88.

<sup>1732</sup> The interview was granted to the left-wing French Catholic magazine *Informations Catholiques Internationales* (issue of December 15, 1961). The Cardinal affirmed that “the cardinals, archbishops and bishops of Brazil” were in agreement “concerning the urgent need for an agrarian reform worthy of the name,” despite “the dissenting opinion of two bishops, co-authors of a widely circulated book, who were rather in favor of the status quo.”

<sup>1733</sup> In their statement published as an ad in the press in Rio and São Paulo, Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer noted that only 49 of the 187 Brazilian bishops had made statements disagreeing more or less explicitly

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Shortly after this statement was published, I attended a birthday party where I met a distant relative also related to the cardinal. I asked her about the cardinal, and she said:

“As far as that is concerned, you have won. You will get no response from the cardinal, but the government will come out in his defense, something extraordinary.”

Sure enough, the state government organized acts of reparation for him on the steps of the cathedral, with firecrackers and fireworks, but without stating what the reparation was supposed to be about. The issue died out, and the public of São Paulo ignored it.

Such conflicts were unknown in the days before the Second Vatican Council. But thanks be to God, agrarian reform lost another battle due to this episode.<sup>1734</sup>

## Chapter V

# An Ideological Campaign's Political Repercussions

### 1. A Trip to Brasilia; 27,000 Farmers Oppose Land Reform

At that time, we launched a farmers' petition to the National Congress, asking it to reject an agrarian reform bill to be put to the vote; 27,000 farmers from all over Brazil signed the petition.

In July 1963, once this petition was complete, Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer, Dr. Luiz Mendonça, and I, accompanied by Dr. Plinio Xavier, went to Brasilia to deliver it to Congress.

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with the opinions expressed in AR-QC. The remaining 138, including two cardinals (of Rio and Salvador), made no statements on this issue. Moreover, the book they had co-authored advocated a healthy agrarian reform, which meant that it was wrong to claim that its authors were “in favor of the status quo” (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 136, April 1962).

<sup>1734</sup> SD 7/14/73.



We were very lucky because, on the plane, we met Ranieri Mazzilli, the then-Speaker of the House of Representatives.<sup>1735</sup> I introduced him to Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud and discussed the issue.

I met Ranieri Mazzilli in Paris at Gelot's hat shop at *Place Vendôme*. I had ordered a hat, and he was there, too. He came over and asked me, "Aren't you Brazilian?" – "Yes, I am, and you too?" – "Yes." We introduced ourselves and found that we were from the same State; he was from the city of Caconde in São Paulo.

The day after our arrival in Brasília, we presented the petition to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

We reviewed the petition carefully, making sure the signatures were in order. We also announced in the press that we were going to present it.

We arrived at Ranieri Mazzilli's office, and he received us at once. He is a very polite and pleasant man.

I made a little speech and handed over the petition in the presence of press representatives.

We talked a little, and I said:

"Well, Dr. Mazzilli, if you will excuse us, Dom Mayer, Dom Sigaud, Dr. Mendonça, and I will now visit the Senate President and show him the petition. We will bring it back to you afterward."

But he said, very politely:

"No, Dr. Plinio, the petition has now been delivered and will be handed over to the House technicians to examine."

This meant the technicians would examine whether the signatures were authentic, which farmers had signed, and what political influence these farmers had.

Thank God our conscience was clear.<sup>1736</sup>

We went down and passed by the cafeteria, where several congressmen were sitting. I saw Dom Sigaud stop and talk to a man I had never met but recognized from his photograph in the papers: Milton Campos.<sup>1737</sup>

From there, we went to the office of the Senate President, Senator Nogueira da Gama. He, too, was very pleasant and friendly. He called several senators to receive us and invited us to attend a Senate session from the official gallery; however, we did not spend much time there.

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<sup>1735</sup> Pascoal Ranieri Mazzilli (1910-1975), a Brazilian politician, temporarily exercised the presidency on two occasions, first, after the resignation of Jânio Quadros, from August 25 to September 9, 1961, during the absence of Vice President João Goulart, who was on a visit to Communist China. The second time was from April 2 to 15, 1964, shortly after the military coup, until the National Congress elected Marshal Castelo Branco.

<sup>1736</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1737</sup> RR 10/24/87.

As we left, he accompanied us to the exit of the Senate building. The whole trip was a huge success.<sup>1738</sup>

## **2. The Jango Era: Catholic Left Pushes Brazil to the Brink of Communism; Challenging Belo Horizonte's Catholic Action**

With the approach of the troubled “Jango” era, during which the country almost plunged into revolution,<sup>1739</sup> Catholic left-wingers who supported Goulart almost destroyed Brazil.<sup>1740</sup>

The dramatic controversy regarding the so-called basic reforms came to a head on the eve of João Goulart's fall.

On this occasion, Catholics from Belo Horizonte, inspired by the TFP, initiated a great and victorious movement to prevent a conference organized by CUTAL, a Communist-oriented body, from being held in the state capital.

Soon after, with TFP support, 210,000 Brazilians signed a formal challenge to Belo Horizonte's Catholic Action.

The latter violently attacked Catholics from Minas, who courageously prevented the holding of a Brizola rally supporting the ‘basic reforms’ while denying that such reforms involved a question of conscience.<sup>1741</sup>

## **3. The 1964 Revolution: Goulart Acknowledges Defeat**

We all remember the vitality and passion with which the various schools of thought, political parties, and professional organizations debated the pros and cons of President João Goulart's agrarian reform proposal.

Some in the press claimed that the boundaries between political parties had disappeared, leaving only two camps for and against agrarian reform.<sup>1742</sup>

An irrepressible opposition to the Goulart government's strongly leftist orientation eventually led to the 1964 Revolution.<sup>1743</sup>

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<sup>1738</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1739</sup> *The Church in Face of the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.

<sup>1740</sup> “About an Imaginary Dog,” op. cit.

<sup>1741</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, op. cit. This Catholic Action document affirmed that Catholics, as Catholics, had no reason to oppose the basic reforms. Obviously aimed at AR-QC, it received the high *placet* of Dom João Rezende Costa, Archbishop Coadjutor (and subsequently the titular archbishop) of Belo Horizonte, who approved it saying, “I willingly authorize this document's publication” (cf. *O Diário de Belo Horizonte* of February 29, 1964).

In light of this statement, our formal challenge asked Catholic Action to define its ideological position clearly and unequivocally and to substantiate its strange claim that there was no question of conscience in matters concerning basic reforms (see the full text in *Catholicismo* No. 160, April 1964).

<sup>1742</sup> “Manifesto to the Brazilian People on Agrarian Reform,” *Catholicismo* No. 169, January 1965.

<sup>1743</sup> João Goulart even asked Congress to allow him to declare a state of emergency, but a majority of the congressmen opposed it and it was withdrawn.

Prominent among the charges held against the deposed president by the vast majority of Brazilians was that most of the country disagreed with his government's land reform plans.<sup>1744</sup>

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What happened next is part of recent history and is known to all.<sup>1745</sup> A military movement widely supported by the civilian population whose anti-land-reform orientation was inspired by the book AR-QC ended Jango Goulart's government.

The TFP did not work to overthrow the government;<sup>1746</sup> it did not participate in the 1964 coup d'état<sup>1747</sup> or any plot or preparatory meeting, nor did it join any committee that promoted the famous "Marches."<sup>1748</sup>

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The TFP created an anti-land reform mentality without any ulterior motives. This spirit led many Brazilians to gather for the overthrow of Jango Goulart, whom they deemed irremediably committed to the left and the basic reforms, especially agrarian reform.<sup>1749</sup>

#### 4. The Holy See Removes Cardinal Motta

Before the Second Vatican Council, the Holy See used to act very diplomatically.

On April 16, less than a month after the March 31, 1964 coup, Cardinal Motta was transferred from São Paulo to the Diocese of Aparecida as its new archbishop.<sup>1750</sup> He was removed mainly because of the measures he had taken.

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<sup>1744</sup> *Private Property and Free Enterprise in the Land-Reform Typhoon*, Ed. Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 1985.

<sup>1745</sup> *The Church in Face of the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.

<sup>1746</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>1747</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1748</sup> Interview with *Última Hora*, Rio de Janeiro 2/3/83. These marches became known as "Family Marches with God for Freedom."

<sup>1749</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90. João Goulart himself confirmed this. In his last speech the day before he was deposed, he referred indirectly to the TFP's ideological-religious campaign, furiously stating:

"This reactionary minority's opposition to my government...was strengthened when I said that the Basic Reforms are an imperative of the times in which we live. ... Their accusations of anti-Catholic bias were directed not only against the president but even against the cardinal himself. At a time when we still feel the resonance of John XXIII's social encyclicals, it is insolent and unreasonable of these adventurers to take it upon themselves to speak for the Church. However, combatting this usurpation will not be my problem because Catholic Action in Minas Gerais and São Paulo has already taken the initiative to do so" (*O Globo*, March 31, 1964).

<sup>1750</sup> SD 7/14/73.

Previously, the whole episode of *In Defense* and the letter I wrote to the Episcopate asking for a verdict on the book had made him appear in a rather unfavorable light.

However, the matter that ended his career was most probably the question of land reform. At that time, the farmers opposed agrarian reform much more strenuously than they do today. The unexpected realization that a considerable part of the clergy had moved to the left under the cardinal's influence, which had rendered him more and more unpopular, may have triggered the Vatican's decision to remove him.<sup>1751</sup>

### 5. The Morro Alto Declaration

Amid all these battles, a rumor began circulating that the TFP was very negativist since its campaigns – allegedly – only opposed agrarian reform without offering any constructive alternative solution.

Of course, that was untrue—AR-QC dealt with this question. However, to stop this rumor, Dr. Fabio Xavier da Silveira brought together a group of farmers from the Amparo region, and we set up a committee that drafted the Morro Alto Declaration. We turned it into a booklet with suggestions on agricultural policy, widely distributed throughout Brazil.<sup>1752</sup>

## Chapter VI

# After 1964, “Jangoism without Jango”: Agrarian Reform In the Land Statute

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<sup>1751</sup> CSN 9/24/94.

<sup>1752</sup> SD 7/17/73. Launched in October 1964, it went through two editions in Portuguese, which amounted to a total of 22,500 copies, in addition to the publication of the complete text in the November 1964 issue of *Catolicismo* (No. 167). It was also translated into Spanish and included in the Spanish edition of *Agrarian Reform – a Question of Conscience*.

## 1. “Jangoism without Jango”

Meanwhile, the Brazilian nation learned that the House of Representatives had just approved the Agrarian Reform bill by Christian-Democratic Congressman Aniz Badra, amended by the integralist Ivã Luz, thanks to a mysterious alliance between “jangoist” and “antijangoist” congressional blocs.

The vast majority of Brazilians—including farmers—knew nothing or very little about the content of Aniz Badra’s bill.

Even among the congressmen themselves, many probably did not know the contents of the Ivã Luz amendment they acclaimed with such enthusiasm.

It was urgently necessary to enlighten Brazilian public opinion about this new law. As the country witnessed a magnificent and healthy reaction against Communism, the bill poured balm on [Communist] Mr. Luiz Carlos Prestes’s frustrations. It was a big step to reduce Brazilian workers to slaves of the State, just as in the USSR, Cuba, etc.

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Aniz Badra’s projected bill’s provisions authorized the confiscatory expropriation of rural properties.

While Ivã Luz’s amendment did not include confiscatory provisions, in all its essential elements, it was probably the most despotic and objectionable part of the entire Aniz Badra project.

Article 16 threatened confiscation without compensation of all “rural properties suitable for economic exploitation that remained completely untouched and unimproved for over ten years.” Not even the property of orphans, widows or invalids was exempt from this draconian penalty.

It established in Brazil an agrarian dictatorship that was a hundred times stricter than all authoritarian regimes the country had survived. It gave the President discretionary powers over all farmers. For all practical purposes, the latter were reduced to pariah status. It increased the power of the Union to the point of destroying the federal system.

A supreme paradox! This projected bill placed such powers in the hands of the head of state that, if approved, would merge all political parties that had overthrown João Goulart. The end result would have been a “jangoist” totalitarian economic and social dictatorship. Jango would have fallen, but “jangoism” would have triumphed.

We thus submitted a respectful and cordial appeal to the House of Representatives and the Senate, requesting that, after mature reflection and by

exercising their constitutional powers, they dismiss the socialist and confiscatory agrarian reform project that seemed about to be passed by the Senate.<sup>1753</sup>

## 2. The Land Statute

Months after taking office, the new president submitted to Congress a new Land Statute bill to prepare the ground for drastic agrarian reform in Brazil.

Marshal Castelo Branco's popularity and the winners' ill-advised optimism meant that everyone underestimated the possibility that such a statute might be enforced.

When attempting to explain its enactment, they offered all kinds of explanations—except for the most obvious and logical, namely, that the government was determined to push through agrarian reform.<sup>1754</sup>

A general cooling of political fervor among all public sectors could be seen in stagnation among land reform opponents and in the lukewarm applause of those who supported the reforms, who only had the easy and pleasant task of welcoming a measure highly desired from above.

Such sudden apathy is by no means rare in history. It usually results from a euphoric confidence coupled with the exhaustion of a public just emerged from great upheavals.

The nation found itself facing Communism from one day to the next. It reacted against the threat by mobilizing all its forces for a battle that threatened to be titanic proportions.

The crisis's unexpected outcome—saving the country from imminent disaster, sweeping away the corrupt pro-Communist regime, and appointing the illustrious and widely respected Marshal Castelo Branco—resulted in a sudden and profound relaxation.

This attitude, adopted by “Greeks and Trojans,” was a mistake.

It led most people to hardly pay attention to news snippets the press published from time to time about governmental initiatives toward implementing agrarian reform. Huge population sectors, “doped” by the post-revolutionary period's euphoric unconcern, tacitly acquiesced in the Land Statute's passing.

The debate during the legislative process would normally allow the public to learn about the proposal's content. However, the government's urgency

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<sup>1753</sup> “The Aniz Badra-Ivã Luz Agrarian Reform Equals Jangoism without Jango.” This appeal was published in full in the *Diário de S. Paulo* on April 8, 1964, and in the *Estado de Minas* on April 11, 1964. Numerous other newspapers published summaries. The statement denounced the bill's approval by the House of Representatives and was hand-delivered with a message to every senator and congressman. Also widely disseminated by the press, it helped to sway some congressmen. The projected bill, which had already passed the House during the session held on April 7, was blocked by the Senate.

<sup>1754</sup> *Private Property and Free Enterprise in the Land-Reform Typhoon*, op. cit.

in pushing through this bill's enactment smothered discussion and prevented the public from being informed about the project.<sup>1755</sup>

The proposal was approved after no more than twenty-two days of discussion and voting. Ironically, by approving the Land Statute with the support of "Jangoist" blocs, the representatives of the groups that had overthrown Jango achieved the very "reforms" he had sought.

They thus rushed through one of the most important changes in the nation's life since independence.<sup>1756</sup>

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After Congress hurriedly approved the Land Statute and the federal government promulgated it, TFP left a historical record of its respectful but formal disapproval.<sup>1757</sup>

Ignoring the possible punishment the dictatorial regime might have seen fit to impose upon us, we published in *O Estado de S. Paulo* a paid, full-page manifesto in which I denounced the new Land Statute law as rehashed "Jangoism" without Jango.<sup>1758</sup>

The categorical manifesto said all that had to be said. There was no reply, not the slightest reaction: nothing!<sup>1759</sup>

The TFP was the only voice courageous enough to warn the country to be cautious and alert in the face of this Jangoism without Jango that had just penetrated rural life.<sup>1760</sup>

Later, when the military regime began expropriations under the law signed by Castelo Branco, it did so on the sly and so discreetly that most people did not realize they were taking place.<sup>1761</sup>

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One undeniable fact remained throughout this agrarian reform battle: The TFP was growing, and from the trenches of anonymity, it fired some fine shots

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<sup>1755</sup> Before approval was granted, the authors of *AR-QC* sent to all congressmen and senators a document titled "The Right to Property and Free Enterprise in the Draft Amendment to the Constitution No. 5/64 and in the Land Statute Project," in which they analyzed the strong confiscatory and socialist features of the proposed constitutional amendment and the bill in question. This document was dated November 4, 1964.

<sup>1756</sup> "Manifesto to the Brazilian People on the Agrarian Reform," op. cit.

<sup>1757</sup> "Private Property and Free Enterprise in the Land-Reform Typhoon," op. cit.

<sup>1758</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90. The document, titled *Manifesto to the Brazilian People on the Agrarian Reform*, was published, beginning on December 25, 1964, in twenty-two newspapers around the country (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 431-432, November-December 1986, pp. 11-20).

<sup>1759</sup> SD 7/14/73.

<sup>1760</sup> "Private Property and Free Enterprise in the Agrarian Reform Typhoon," op. cit.

<sup>1761</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana, 6/21/90.

directly into the heart of the enemy. Agrarian reform was prevented, and the TFP became known throughout Brazil.<sup>1762</sup>

## Chapter VII

# Pius XII's Death and John XXIII's Election

### 1. The News of John XXIII's Election

I remember the day I received the news of John XXIII's election. We were at the Vieira de Carvalho Street headquarters, listening to the news of Pius XII's death and his successor's election on the radio.<sup>1763</sup>

I had a faint hope they would elect another Pius XII who, at least, had more or less maintained the status quo in the Church's affairs.<sup>1764</sup>

Then we heard the Vatican Swiss Guard music preceding the *urbi et orbi* announcement of the new pope's election. A cardinal took a microphone to proclaim: "I announce to you a great joy: *Habemus Papam* in the person of Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, who has taken the name John XXIII."

As the Swiss Guard played new music, I felt a presentiment of an imminent collapse of all traditions.<sup>1765</sup> I knew very well who Cardinal Roncalli was<sup>1766</sup> and immediately saw what was coming. It was a moment of great bitterness.

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<sup>1762</sup> 7/14/73.

<sup>1763</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 12/4/77. Pius XII died on October 9, 1958. On October 28, Cardinal Angelo Roncalli was elected pope and took the name John XXIII.

<sup>1764</sup> CSN 7/10/82.

<sup>1765</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 12/4/77.

<sup>1766</sup> RR 4/4/92.



A great sadness followed; all that remained was to accept this sadness, which, potentially, had already been accepted.<sup>1767</sup>

## 2. The New Pope Announces His Intention of Convening the Council

Three months after his election, on January 25, 1959, John XXIII announced that he intended to convene a Council to meet in St. Peter's in Rome. It would be the Council with the most participants in the Church's history.

It is easy to imagine my chagrin when I learned that John XXIII had invited observers from all religions, including the O.C. – the pro-Communist Russian “Orthodox” Church.<sup>1768</sup>

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The news of the Council’s convocation reached me during a session of Catholicismo’s 7th Study Week, held at a now-demolished palatial house called *Imperial Camargo*.<sup>1769</sup> It was located on the corner of Angelica Avenue and Alameda Barros in São Paulo.<sup>1770</sup>

Dom Sigaud and I were presiding over a meeting<sup>1771</sup> when someone behind the desk handed me a newspaper containing the news of the announcement.

I read the news item and passed the paper to Dom Sigaud under the table.

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<sup>1767</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 12/4/77.

<sup>1768</sup> “The O.C. in the Water Shoot,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, October 3, 1971. In a series of articles he wrote for the *Folha de S. Paulo* starting July 25, 1971, Dr. Plinio used the abbreviation “O.C.” referring to the Greek-“orthodox” Russian Church. He explains why he always placed “orthodox” in quotation marks and added the adjective “Kremlinian”:

“Some readers may wonder why I always write ‘orthodox’ in quotation marks. I certainly do not do so to goad or attack. I do it because, as a Catholic, I cannot, for logical reasons, recognize as orthodox (which, in the original Greek, means “of the right opinion”) any except the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church.

“It is true that its common use has led countless Catholics to dismiss the quotation marks as unnecessary because it is considered obvious that a Catholic cannot accept any church that is separated from Rome as truly orthodox. But in these times of delusional ecumenism, it seems perfectly legitimate that Catholics loyal to the faith and straight-thinking ‘orthodox’ Christians should wish to avoid any confusion and take exceptional measures to do so.”

“And why do I use the neologism ‘Kremlinian’? I do so, quite simply, because the facts oblige us to point out (and I say it with great pleasure) that considerable numbers of ‘orthodox’ Russians and non-Russians reject any connection with the Kremlin’s mitered flunkies placed at the head of the state-recognized mock church and hierarchy established in Moscow under the auspices of its atheist administration. ‘Orthodox’ Christians who reject the Kremlin’s influence – members of the hierarchy and laymen suffering persecution and pressures of all kinds – stand firm in their conviction that ‘Kremlinian’ Christians are no more than sinister frauds. These ‘orthodox’ Christians’ noble firmness deserves great acclaim, which every true Catholic will be happy to give” (“Lessons from the Neighbor’s Garden,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, July 25, 1971).

<sup>1769</sup> RR 4/20/85.

<sup>1770</sup> RR 5/11/85.

<sup>1771</sup> RR 4/20/85.

He, too, read it very carefully.

Later, he told me what he thought: “It’s all solved: the Holy Father will now set straight all the bishops’ little heads, and the Church’s problems will be solved.” The Holy Father was Pope John XXIII.

I thought the opposite: “This is the summoning of the Church’s Estates-General, the beginning of the revolution in the Church.”<sup>1772</sup>

I wanted to tell him but realized he would not echo my sentiments.<sup>1773</sup> I saw the French Revolution while he saw the approaching Reign of Mary.<sup>1774</sup>

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Not long after, I noticed that Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud were not studying or preparing for the Council debates. I expressed my concern to each of them separately.

To Dom Sigaud, I said, “This is an unparalleled opportunity to exercise our apostolate. Now, if Your Excellency does not prepare in-depth...”

I remember saying this to Dom Mayer in a low voice as we crossed Republic Square in a taxi, just as we passed in front of Caetano de Campos School.

They arrived in Rome unprepared and were completely overwhelmed by the Council’s environment.<sup>1775</sup>

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<sup>1772</sup> RR 9/9/89.

<sup>1773</sup> RR 4/20/85.

<sup>1774</sup> RR 6/25/88.

<sup>1775</sup> Meeting with the oldest members of the movement, March 2, 1987. In an interview with *Catolicismo* (March 2011), Professor Roberto de Mattei, former vice president of the Italian National Research Center, professor at the European University of Rome and author of the notable work *The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story*, discussed “the network of relationships within this progressive sector, which pre-dated the Council.” He stated this network was “strong, widely branched out, including not only some heads of bishops conferences but also some ‘avant-garde’ religious orders and linguistic groups; in particular, it included mainly ideological laboratories, such as Cuernavaca in Mexico, Bologna in Italy, and Louvain in Belgium.” Replying to the reporter’s question of whether any such network existed on the conservative side, he was adamant: “There was nothing at all! *The bishops and theologians who were faithful to Rome reacted too late and lacked their opponents’ strategic skills.* According to American researcher Melissa Wilde, the progressive minority prevailed thanks to their better strategy and organization” (emphasis added).

## Chapter VIII

# Our Rome Secretariat

### 1. A Series of Disappointments

My presence in Rome<sup>1776</sup> during the Council was not a juxtaposition of pleasure and contentment on the one hand and severe regrets on the other.<sup>1777</sup> Rather, it was an endless series of irritations and disappointments.<sup>1778</sup>

This stay was so painful that I felt relief when I returned to São Paulo: “Thank heaven it is finally over!”

Why did I feel this way? The reason is that in the Council and, therefore, the Church, things moved in the wrong direction throughout that time.

### 2. Many Bishops’ Shocking Attitudes

At first, I intended to attend all Council sessions because it meant seeing the Church in its greatest pomp, with two thousand bishops gathered in the colossal St. Peter’s Basilica, all with their miters and croziers. I could have stayed there for four to five hours, looking at all that protocol and splendor.<sup>1779</sup>

But I only went once. After that, I only returned to the basilica once, at the end of the Council’s first phase, when I attended a Mass Dom Mayer celebrated at the altar of St. Pius X.

We were about to leave Rome, and he celebrated the Mass to mark the end of that phase of activities. But apart from that one occasion, I could NOT bear to enter the basilica because I was so saddened by what was happening at the Council, to put it mildly.<sup>1780</sup>

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I was particularly displeased seeing the bishops arrive for the sessions on group transportation and not by car.

Sometimes, they arrived on buses bearing the name of a girls’ school: *Collegio delle Bambine, Collegio del Sacro Cuore.*

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<sup>1776</sup> Dr. Plinio arrived in Rome on October 10, 1962, the Council’s opening day. He came with Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer, Friar Hieronymus Van Hinten, Prince Bertrand of Orleans-Braganza, Dr. Fernando Furquim de Almeida, Dr. Paulo Corrêa de Brito, Dr. Luís Nazareno Teixeira de Assumpção Filho, Dr. Sérgio Brotero Lefevbre, Dr. Fábio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, Dr. Murilo Maranhão Galliez, Dr. João Sampaio Neto, Dr. Otto de Alencar de Sá Pereira and Messrs. Dominique Pierre Faga, Umberto Braccesi, Emílio Scherer, Carlos Alberto Soares Correia, and Pedro Paulo Figueiredo.

<sup>1777</sup> Tea 2/21/95.

<sup>1778</sup> Lecture 8/26/70.

<sup>1779</sup> Tea 2/21/95.

<sup>1780</sup> SD 5/5/73.

The Eastern bishops would descend from these buses and put on their vestments in the square. It seemed unbelievable that they would agree to do this.

The same thing happened when the sessions were over: They would quickly take off their vestments in the church's vestibule because they had to be in time for lunch, so they did everything in a hurry, running around and joking.

### 3. The Greek-Schismatic Bishops' Unwelcome Presence

What I disliked most, however, was the presence of Greek-schismatic bishops on a platform in the Vatican.

Present were seven or eight *popes* wearing those black hats, with long, full beards and shining, malevolent black eyes.

They said nothing but paid attention to everything.<sup>1781</sup>

They were Kremlin representatives, slaves to Communist atheism, and yet they were there, along with all the bishops of the Earth.<sup>1782</sup>

### 4. Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer and the “Coetus”

We rented an office in Parioli, one of Rome's best residential districts. We also had a large house where several members of our group stayed.

Dom Mayer came to these headquarters every afternoon and participated in our two-part daily meetings.

The first part consisted of a discussion of what had happened in the Council's plenary assembly, while the second focused on the behind-the-scenes work of the right-wing *Coetus*<sup>1783</sup> -- what plans they had, how successfully they implemented their plans that day, and what they intended to do the following day -- a very interesting subject and the real reason for which we were there in the first place.

Dom Mayer also told us about some funny things during the day's session, including the fact that many small snack bars were set up inside the basilica for the bishops to take refreshments: coffee, tea, soft drinks, and small snacks.

Since “bar” in Hebrew means “son of,” the bishops began to name these bars Bar-Jonah, son of Jonas, and Barabbas. They used these places to chat and

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<sup>1781</sup> Tea 2/21/95.

<sup>1782</sup> SD 8/10/83.

<sup>1783</sup> The *Coetus*, referred to by Dr. Plinio, also called the “*Petit Comité*,” was a study/workgroup consisting of participants in the Second Vatican Council who did not approve of the progressive tendencies felt there. The committee members increased until October 1963, when the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum* was set up.

exchange jokes in a way that was irreconcilable with their responsibility as participants in a Universal Council.

When they tired of that, they would return to the plenary assembly to participate in the discussions.

Of course, the Vatican completely controlled these discussions. Anyone who did anything not entirely according to the guidelines could expect a severe reprimand. All bishops toed the line.

Right-wing prelates of the *Coetus* made plans but then allowed themselves to be tricked absurdly.<sup>1784</sup>

There was a whole series of facts like that.

We suggested to Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer that they should adopt such an attitude, but they paid no attention. Any hotel concierge had as much influence in the Council as we did after we had spent an enormous amount – but enormous! – to be present and have our views somehow represented at the Council.

## 5. Press Conference Sabotage: “Too Conservative”

Journalists and politicians invited right-wing and left-wing laymen to hold press conferences on the points they wished to be informed about.

These meetings were scheduled to occur at the house of the Society of the Divine Word, the religious congregation of which Dom Sigaud was a member.

I, too, was invited to attend, and so I went.

Father Ralph Wiltgen, a German priest of the Society of the Divine Word, greatly sympathized with us and warmly welcomed me. He was a great friend of Dom Sigaud’s.<sup>1785</sup>

This priest told me:

“According to the schedule, you have a conference now. Let’s go to the hall, as people are waiting.”

We went in, and at once, there appeared a priest who said:

“Who is this man?”

“He is Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, from São Paulo.”

The priest said, very rudely:

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<sup>1784</sup> A good example of this was what happened to the petition to condemn Communism, which hundreds of bishops had signed; this story is told below.

<sup>1785</sup> Father Ralph Wiltgen (1921-2007) was an American Society of the Divine Word priest. Present at the Second Vatican Council and noting the gaps in the information distributed by the Vatican, he set up his own *Divine Word News Service*, with 3,100 subscribers in 108 countries. He provided detailed reports on the press conferences given by several bishops boycotted by the media. He was pressured to stop this service, but other bishops encouraged him to continue.

“There is no need for him to speak. Why does he want to speak?”

Our friend replied, very courteously:

“He is on the list of people invited. There is no reason why he should not speak.”

“No! No! He is far too old-fashioned, far too conservative. Is there no way to keep him quiet?”

Father Ralph Wiltgen said:

“No, there’s no way! Professor, please go up to the rostrum; everything is ready for you.”

I went on to hold a press conference for people I knew nothing about, which was very poorly organized.<sup>1786</sup>

After the conference, one of those priests said to me:

“You’re excused from attending other conferences. There has been a mistake, and your name is not on the list.”<sup>1787</sup>

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Father Ralph Wiltgen wrote a celebrated book, the title of which might, at first glance, appear somewhat extravagant but is very appropriate: *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*.

Since these rivers do not meet geographically, this was a way of saying that the theological and philosophical ideas of the worst German modernists were widely represented by theologians and philosophers at the Council and that, therefore, these ideas had a wide audience and held great sway.<sup>1788</sup>

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<sup>1786</sup> This press conference took place on October 16, 1962, on the subject of agrarian reform.

<sup>1787</sup> At a plenary TFP session on June 30, 1984, Prince Bertrand narrated a similar boycott:

“Monsignor Zanini, the editor of the *Osservatore Romano*, held many meetings with Prof. Fernando Furquim de Almeida and interviewed Dr. Plinio at the Hotel Excelsior on the crisis in South America. Dr. Plinio gave the most orthodox description of the moral and religious crisis, saying there would be no crisis in the country if 97% of Brazilian Catholics lived according to the Ten Commandments. It was an absolutely outstanding interview. Monsignor Zanini was very happy and took it to the *Osservatore Romano*. However, an absolute veto was issued concerning its publication. ... Although it did not attack progressivism, neither Dr. Plinio’s name nor his views on the religious crisis were allowed to be published.”

<sup>1788</sup> Tea 2/21/95. The book received a *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* from Terence Cardinal Cooke, the future Archbishop of New York. Father Wiltgen was heavily pressured to stop its distribution.

## Chapter IX

# Two Historic Petitions Left Unheeded: Russia's Consecration And the Condemnation of Communism

### 1. Origins and History of the Petition for Consecrating Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Two initiatives of historical relevance, in which we were deeply involved, were also boycotted during the Council. The first was a request for Russia's consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the second was that the Council issue a condemnation of Communism.

The idea for the first initiative had its roots in a conversation—which should be recorded in the annals of our history—with Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer in the living room of the Morro Alto farmhouse in Amparo.

During that meeting, I reminded the two bishops that promoting a plea for Russia's consecration was highly advisable according to Fatima's message.

Sister Lucia said this consecration was one of the conditions imposed by Our Lady to ward off the threat of punishment hanging over the world. And the Blessed Virgin named specific conditions for that consecration to be valid.<sup>1789</sup>

Although Pius XII consecrated the world (in 1942) and “the peoples of Russia” (in 1952) to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, these consecrations did not fulfill the conditions that Our Lady requested.

I read about this in books published about Fatima and also heard it from the Archbishop of Coimbra, Dom Ernesto Sena de Oliveira, who was

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<sup>1789</sup> During her third apparition at the Cova da Iria on July 13, 1917, the Blessed Mother said, “I will come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays. If they listen to my requests, Russia will convert, and there will be peace; if not, it will spread its errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecution of the Church. The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer, and many nations will be annihilated. Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me; it will convert, and a certain period of peace will be granted to the world.”

And in an apparition to Sister Lucia in 1929, Our Lady came as promised to make her request: “The moment has arrived wherein God is asking the Holy Father to consecrate Russia to my Immaculate Heart in union with all the bishops of the world. He promises to save it by this means” (*Memoirs and Letters of Sister Lucia*, pp. 462, 464, apud Antonio Augusto Borelli Machado, *Fatima: Past or Future? The Unheeded Message*, third Irish edition, © 2006 by Irish Society for Christian Civilisation, Talbot Hall, P. O. Box 9701, Swords, Co. Dublin).

responsible for Sister Lucia. He told me that, according to her, these consecrations did not comply with Our Lady's requests. Sister Lucia also confirmed this in a letter to her Jesuit confessor, Father José Aparicio; he lent me the letter, and I read it in Sister Lucia's own words; it said that the request had gone unheeded.<sup>1790</sup>

The two bishops accepted our suggestion, and Dr. Castilho studied the whole subject carefully to see how the consecration should be made to draw up a petition, including all requirements necessary to fulfill Our Lady's wishes.

Accordingly, among the Council Fathers, Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud promoted the famous petition asking the pope to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Therefore, an extremely important event was added to Fatima's history: two Catholic Church bishops arose and managed to collect the signatures of 510 other bishops, requesting that consecration.<sup>1791</sup>

Their request was not granted, and Our Lady's wishes went unfulfilled.

However, we did ensure that a historical record was left to show that there was a movement, *Catholicismo*, that was sensitive to the voice of Fatima. That movement, via two bishops, did everything possible and impossible to ensure that Our Lady's voice was heard and reverberated within the Council in the most official and highly prestigious manner.<sup>1792</sup>

## **2. Repercussions of the Petition for a Condemnation of Communism**

During our meeting at the Morro Alto farm, Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer, and I discussed the subject of a petition for a condemnation of Communism,

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<sup>1790</sup> Our Lady had been very specific: She wanted the consecration to be made: 1) by the Pope; 2) in union with the bishops of the world; 3) of Russia; 4) and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Pius XI received the message, but for undisclosed reasons failed to perform the consecration. The consecration made by Pius XII was not "*in union with the bishops of the world.*" The "*consecration of Russia*" did not take place either. Two of the four conditions set by Our Lady were therefore ignored. In fact, when Pius XII consecrated *the Church and the human race* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on October 31, 1942, Sister Lucia wrote to the Pope to transmit a message of Our Lord, to the effect that since the act "*was incomplete, the conversion of Russia is postponed*" (cf. Antonio Augusto Borelli Machado, *Fatima: Past or Future? The Unheeded Message*, op. cit.).

On November 21, 1964, Paul VI "*entrusted*" (but did not consecrate) "*humankind*" (not explicitly Russia) to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The petition of the Council Fathers was therefore absolutely appropriate. We will leave aside the complex problem of whether the consecrations that followed the Council fulfilled the wishes of Our Lady. We only want to point out that John Paul II, on May 13, 1982, and on March 25, 1984, consecrated the world (not Russia) to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. So did Pope Francis on October 13, 2013.

<sup>1791</sup> On February 3, 1964, Dom Sigaud personally delivered to Paul VI this petition signed by 510 prelates from 78 countries.

<sup>1792</sup> SD 3/22/65.



which was eventually signed by 213 of the Council Fathers from fifty-four countries.<sup>1793</sup>

This petition contained several theses previously published in *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, which was unusual to hear from bishops. Many of these theses established the groundwork for the petition to have the Council condemn Communism.<sup>1794</sup>

### 3. Condemning Communism Would Hinder Ecumenism with Communists

What were the aims of the petition?

The Second Vatican Council was numerically the largest in history. Never before had so many bishops been reunited in a council. It would have been of the utmost importance to use this opportunity to issue an unequivocal condemnation of Communism.

Before that date, the Church had expressly condemned Communist doctrine across the board, prohibiting all Catholics from reading (without proper permission) Communist literature, joining the Communist party, or helping or supporting Communist organizations in any way.<sup>1795</sup>

The limp rigidity of this attitude was perhaps never expressed with greater coherence and clarity than in the famous decree of July 1, 1949, approved by Pius XII. By this decree, the Holy Office excommunicated all those who professed, defended or spread Communist doctrine and declared them apostates from the Catholic faith.<sup>1796</sup>

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<sup>1793</sup> The Italian and international media reported as front-page news Dom Mayer's delivery of the petition to the Secretary of State of the Holy See, Cardinal Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, on December 3, 1963. The document was widely distributed with the valuable cooperation of the *Divine Word News Service*, the news agency run by Father Ralph Wiltgen, SVD, which announced the news at the Council's Communications Coordination Committee to 650 journalists, including representatives of the international agencies who reported it all over the world.

At the same time, the *Catolicismo* group's Rome secretariat provided these journalists with English, French, Spanish, and Italian translations of the book *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State* for its close connection with the document's contents. The 2,200 Council Fathers also received copies of the book.

*Il Tempo*, Rome's leading morning paper, reporting the day after the petition's delivery, considered it an episode "of supreme importance to all Italian Catholics given the atmosphere prevailing at the Council." Naples' *Roma* daily published an article titled: "A Vatican News Bombshell," considering the petition "*una bomba vera e propria*" – "A real and true bombshell" (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 157, January 1964).

<sup>1794</sup> Lecture 8/20/64.

<sup>1795</sup> RR 8/24/91.

<sup>1796</sup> "The Unbreakable Overcomes Cunning," *Folha de S. Paulo* 7/9/84. This decree contained the following questions and answers: "1. Whether it is lawful to join Communist Parties or to favor them. Answer: *In the negative*: because Communism is materialistic and anti-Christian; and the leaders of the Communists, although they sometimes profess in words that they do not oppose religion, do in fact show themselves, both in their teaching and in their actions, to be the enemies of God, of the true religion and the Church of Christ. 2. Whether it is lawful to publish, disseminate, or read books, periodicals, newspapers or leaflets

Under the new circumstances, the Council's formal condemnation of Communist doctrine would have been a huge obstacle to ecumenical relations, which were obviously in preparation with Communist countries.<sup>1797</sup>

#### 4. The Holy See's Pact of Silence on Communism

John XXIII invited observers from all faiths to the Council, including those from the pro-Communist O.C.

As widely reported on that occasion, the O.C. would only condescend to accept this invitation on condition that any attack on Communism in the Council Assembly would be prohibited and the Second Vatican Council refrain from saying anything against Communism.<sup>1798</sup>

That was the commitment exacted from the Holy See for Russian observers to attend the Council.<sup>1799</sup> The non-condemnation of Communism opened the way for possible negotiations between the Soviet State and the Vatican and between the Russian "Orthodox" Church and Rome.<sup>1800</sup>

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which support the teaching or action of Communists, or to write in them. Answer: *In the negative*: they are prohibited *ipso iure* (cf. Can. 1399 of the *Codex Iuris Canonici*). 3. Whether the faithful who knowingly and freely perform the acts specified in questions 1 and 2 may be admitted to the Sacraments. Answer: *In the negative*, in accordance with the ordinary principles concerning the refusal of the Sacraments to those who are not disposed. 4. Whether the faithful who profess the materialistic and anti-Christian doctrine of the Communists and particularly those who defend or propagate this doctrine, contract *ipso facto* excommunication specially reserved to the Apostolic See as apostates from the Catholic faith. Answer: *In the affirmative*" (AAS, vol. XLI, p 334). We have put each answer next to the question, for the sake of convenience and to make this excerpt easier to read. In the original, the answers are given separately from the list of questions).

<sup>1797</sup> RR 8/26/89.

<sup>1798</sup> "The O.C. in the 'Water Shoot,'" op. cit.

<sup>1799</sup> RR 4/23/73.

<sup>1800</sup> RR 1/13/90. This commitment was agreed to during the meetings held on August 18, 1962, in the French city of Metz between Cardinal Eugène Tisserant, representing the Holy See, and the Metropolitan Nikodim, the schismatic Archbishop of Yaroslavl at the time, representing the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Communist press was the first to disclose this commitment in the weekly paper *France Nouvelle*, the French Communist Party's central bulletin (issue of Jan. 16-22, 1963): "Since the global socialist system is of undeniable superiority and enjoys the approval of hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of men, the Church can no longer limit herself to crude anti-Communism. She has committed during negotiations with the Russian Orthodox Church that there will be no direct attacks against the Communist regime during the Council."

These meetings gave rise to the Pact of Metz, detailed by journalist and writer Jean Madiran in his book *L'Accord de Metz ou pourquoi notre Mère fut muette* (The Metz Agreement or Why Our Mother Remained Mute), published in 2006. He denounced this pact six months after the Metz meetings in the magazine *Itinéraires* of which he was the director.

As a result of this pact, the Russian Orthodox Church graciously consented to send observers to the Second Vatican Council, as reported in the Catholic progressive paper *La Croix*, which revealed, in its issue of February 16, 1963: "As a result of this meeting, Monsignor Nikodim has agreed that someone may travel to Moscow to deliver the invitation, on condition that guarantees are given regarding the Council's apolitical attitude."

Thus, an imperious call to order was issued to the Council Fathers and laymen most closely involved with the Council: They could write all the articles they wanted in the newspapers but never speak out against Communism or encourage anyone else to do so.<sup>1801</sup>

The ban was only unofficial because Paul VI did not want the public to know he had made this commitment.<sup>1802</sup>

In other words, at that unprecedented historical moment, the Church had chosen not to speak out against the greatest heresy of our times.

That placed the Church in a completely absurd and paradoxical position: a Council is convened, and a heresy threatens to swallow up and destroy the Church—and at that paramount opportunity, the Church promises not to speak out against this heresy.<sup>1803</sup>

## 5. A Petition, the Only Possible Strategy to Try to Break that Agreement

Once the Holy See had committed to refraining from discussing the issue of Communism, the only way to circumvent this order was to organize a petition based on several doctrinal and historical reasons, which we listed, asking that a

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It is worth remembering that Russian Metropolitan Nikodim, with whom Cardinal Tisserant signed this agreement, was a KGB spy paid to infiltrate the World Council of Churches, of which he became president (cf. Gerhard Besier, Armin Boyens, Gerhard Lindemann, *Nationaler Protestantismus und Ökumenische Bewegung. Kirchliches Handeln im Kalten Krieg (1945-1990)* (National Protestantism and the Ecumenical Movement. Ecclesiastical Action During the Cold War, 1945-1990), Duncker und Humblot, Berlin, 1999, cited in: José Antonio Ureta, *Catolicismo*, No. 742, October 2012).

Later, Professor Romano Amerio revealed more details of this “almost secret” commitment in his momentous book *Iota Uno* (in *Studio delle variazioni della della Chiesa Cattolica nel secolo XX*, Milan-Naples, R. Ricciardi, 1985).

<sup>1801</sup> RR 12/16/89.

<sup>1802</sup> RR 8/26/89.

<sup>1803</sup> RR 12/16/89. In the updated edition of his book, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, Dr. Plinio clearly explained what this silence meant: “Within the perspective of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, the greatest success attained by the smiling post-Stalinist Communism was the Second Vatican Council’s enigmatic, disconcerting, incredible, and apocalyptically tragic silence about Communism.

“This Council desired to be pastoral and not dogmatic. Indeed, it did not have a dogmatic scope, but its omission regarding Communism might make it go down in history as the apastoral Council.... Did those in the Second Vatican Council who sought to scare away lesser adversaries but gave free rein to the greater enemy by their silence act as true pastors?

“Using ‘*aggiornate*’ (up-to-date) tactics (at least contestable in theory but proven ruinous in practice), the Second Vatican Council tried to scare away bees, wasps, and birds of prey, so to speak, but its silence about Communism set the wolves entirely free.

“This Council’s work cannot be inscribed as effectively pastoral in history or the Book of Life. It is painful to say it, but the evidence singles out the Second Vatican Council as one of the greatest calamities, if not *the* greatest, in the history of the Church. Since the Council, the ‘smoke of Satan’ has penetrated the Church in unbelievable proportions and spreads daily with the terrible force of expanding gases. To the scandal of countless souls, the Mystical Body of Christ entered a sinister process of self-destruction, as it were” (*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, op. cit.).

request to issue a condemnation of Communism be put to the vote in the plenary assembly.

The Russian Orthodox Church's representatives had certainly warned the Holy See:

"We have heard about this petition from the group of conservative bishops. If they continue with this, we will withdraw."

The Holy See could have solved the problem by telling the conservative bishops:

"We have made this agreement; therefore, the Holy Father wants you to withdraw this petition."

If that had happened, and if the conservative group members had been willing to draw the logical conclusion, they would have been obliged to say:

"Our conscience does not allow us to do that. If you wish, Your Holiness may exclude us from the Council, but we beg that you state your reasons for doing so."

Had they done so, the history of the Council, the Church, and the world would have taken a very different course.

The claim that there were not enough members to do so is groundless.

The conservative *Coetus* at the Council consisted of about thirty archbishops and bishops (including Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer, and Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre) out of about two thousand five hundred archbishops and bishops.<sup>1804</sup>

It would not even have needed thirty bishops. If only two had done this (Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer, for example), history would have taken a completely different course.

## **6. Petition Blocked by an Utterly Irregular Procedure**

Given all this, I suggested to Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer the possibility of petitioning to condemn Communism. They unofficially asked me to draft a motion, which I did.

This petition was signed by 213 cardinals, archbishops and bishops from 46 nations and presented within the proper deadline for the necessary procedures.<sup>1805</sup>

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<sup>1804</sup> At the Council's following session (1964), over 250 Council Fathers were members of the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum*.

<sup>1805</sup> RR 8/26/89. The petition essentially contained a request for the Council to vote "at its next session, [on] a new condemnation of Marxism, socialism, and communism in their philosophical, sociological and economic aspects while simultaneously reaffirming Catholic social teaching and condemning the errors and the mentality that prepare the minds of Catholics to accept those false systems." The Secretariat of State sent the petition to Monsignor Felici, the Council's secretary, for submission to the Joint Commission in

However, time went by, and we received no response.<sup>1806</sup>

## 7. A New Petition Against Communism Is Sabotaged

During the fourth and final session (which began on September 14, 1965), the *Coetus* submitted a new petition with 435 signatures of Council Fathers from 86 countries.<sup>1807</sup>

According to the Council's internal bureaucracy, the new document had to pass Monsignor Glorieux's desk, one of the many Vatican monsignors. I am pretty sure that he had not yet been made a bishop. He probably became one after rendering such a significant "service" to the progressive wing.<sup>1808</sup> He was the one responsible for processing the document.<sup>1809</sup>

However, Monsignor Glorieux ignored the petition.

Dom Sigaud and Archbishop Lefebvre talked to him and asked how the petition was progressing.<sup>1810</sup>

After several attempts to evade the issue, this monsignor said that he had lost the documentation, which was tantamount to admitting that it would not be processed.<sup>1811</sup>

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charge of drafting the Schema on the Church in the Modern World, the so-called Schema XIII, which culminated in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.

<sup>1806</sup> RR 1/13/90.

<sup>1807</sup> This new petition, an amendment to the constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, was submitted on October 9, 1965, by Dom Geraldo de Proença Sigaud and Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre to the Council's General Secretariat. It requested that "paragraph No. 19 of the Schema 'The Church in the Modern World,' which deals with the problem of atheism, should be followed by a new and appropriate paragraph dealing explicitly with the problem of Communism" (*Acta Synodalia*, vol. IV, pars II, pp. 898-900, *apud* Roberto De Mattei, *The Crusader of the Twentieth Century*, op. cit.).

<sup>1808</sup> Monsignore Achille Marie Joseph Glorieux (1910-1999) was indeed awarded several important positions: in 1966, he was appointed secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity; in 1969, he became titular Bishop of Beverlacum and Apostolic Pro-Nuncio for Syria, and in 1973, he was chosen as Pro-Nuncio for Egypt.

<sup>1809</sup> RR 8/26/89.

<sup>1810</sup> Monsignor Glorieux originally claimed he had not forwarded it to the committees working on the Schema's final wording because he did not want to disturb them. Dom Luigi Maria Carli, Bishop of Segni, then wrote a letter to the Council's Presidency denouncing the arbitrary behavior of the Joint Commission, which ignored such a crucial document. Monsignor Glorieux defended himself by falsely alleging that the petition had arrived after the deadline. However, the Council's Secretary, Monsignor Pericle Felici, denied that claim.

<sup>1811</sup> On November 23, 1965, the *Divine Word News Service*, closely connected with the conservative prelates, issued a long statement about the scandalous disappearance of a proposal signed by no fewer than 435 Council Fathers. So, as the scandal exploded in the press, Paul VI held a restricted meeting of his close aides during which it was decided that condemning Communism would be inopportune (cf. José Antonio Ureta, "The Mysterious Silence of the Second Vatican Council on Communism," *Catolicismo*, No. 742, October 2012).

The *Divine Word News Service* released this comment by Father Wiltgen: "The fact that one man had been able to keep such a significant document from reaching the conciliar commission to which it was officially addressed is one of the tragedies of the Second Vatican Council and may go down in history as

That is how the Second Vatican Council failed to condemn Communism, the greatest error of our time.<sup>1812</sup>

This Council was the largest in the history of the Church. It was agreed that all the major topics of the day related to the Catholic cause would be discussed. It was essential for the Church's attitude toward her greatest adversary at that time to be among those topics! In her nearly two-thousand-year history, the Church had never encountered such a powerful, brutal and cunning adversary, so completely opposed to her doctrine. A discussion of contemporary problems facing religion that fails to deal with Communism would be as flawed as a world medical conference convened to study today's major diseases but fails to mention AIDS.<sup>1813</sup>

### 8. Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud's Misplaced Optimism

Unfortunately, Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer had entered the Council with a certain optimism, seemingly failing to realize the extent to which the Revolution had penetrated the minds and souls of countless bishops.

Above all, they did not understand the extent to which many bishops were committed to implementing errors and how necessary it was to take a firm stand and confront them.

This lack of perception was one reason for their weak performance. Both were obligated to prepare themselves carefully and in great depth to arrive at the Council clad in impenetrable armor from head to toe against the errors they might encounter and make themselves heard loudly and clearly in the debates.<sup>1814</sup> Because of their lack of proper preparation, Dom Sigaud and Dom Mayer signed their names to the Council without restrictions.<sup>1815</sup>

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the greatest scandal that has damaged the serious deliberations of this sacred assembly” (cf. Roberto de Mattei, *The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story*, Loreto Publications, Fitzwilliam, NH, 2012, p. 477).

<sup>1812</sup> RR 1/13/90.

<sup>1813</sup> Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, “Communism and Anticommunism on the Threshold of the Millennium’s Last Decade,” <http://www.tfp.org/TFP-home/statements/communism-and-anticommunism-on-the-threshold-of-the-millenniums-last-decade.html>. At the time, they claimed that the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council had, *in a footnote*, referred to the problem of atheism and even quoted the Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* of Pius XI, as well as other documents of the Pontifical Magisterium condemning Communism, among other errors. Attempts were made to deduce that the Council had not entirely failed to condemn Communism. But this is a tenuous claim: Why omit any explicit reference to Communism and only talk about atheism? Why put this reference to the encyclicals only in a footnote?

<sup>1814</sup> RR 6/25/88.

<sup>1815</sup> RR 5/15/85. This led Prof. Roberto de Mattei to comment, very aptly, in *The Crusader of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*: “It is not difficult to imagine the concern of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira in the face of the conclusions reached by the Council, nor his perplexity when realizing that the two Brazilian prelates who were close to him, and even Archbishop Lefebvre himself, had signed all the conciliar acts, even the

When it became obvious in which direction the Second Vatican Council would go, I did all I could to impress upon them the importance of taking a public stand to stop this course.

They flatly refused. In the words of Dom Sigaud, “Plinio! There is a difference between what Dom Mayer and I want and what you want. We want to save the Council.”

I wanted to save the Church! All they “saved” was progressivism.

The history of the Church would have taken a different course if they had taken public action at the right time with the necessary energy.<sup>1816</sup>

But they did not do what I had advised them to do. Why?

There are several hypotheses. The most likely psychological hypothesis is that misled by their confessed optimism, which Archbishop Lefebvre also shared, they believed that whatever was happening would eventually work out in one way or another and that it was not worth going in for frontal combat.

It was the usual naive optimism of good people, reminiscent in its own way of Louis XVI's mood when facing the advance of the French Revolution.<sup>1817</sup>

Dom Mayer even claimed that he signed the Council acts because signing them did not mean anything. It did not mean he had agreed with the Council's conclusions! He said it was just a formality, like signing a notarial act.

But has there ever been a notarial act with no meaning or purpose?<sup>1818</sup>

## 9. The Self-Destruction Process in the Post-Conciliar Period

History narrates countless difficulties through which the Church had to pass over the twenty centuries of her existence – caused by outside enemies seeking to destroy her and by inside tumors she was forced to cut out, and which subsequently attempted to destroy her from the outside with great ferocity.

But at what time in history – before today – have we ever seen an attempted demolition of the Church, no longer by an adversary, but by a “*self-destruction*” process described in a papal allocution with worldwide repercussions?<sup>1819</sup>

A universal collapse has resulted in the Church and what remains of Christian civilization.<sup>1820</sup>

The fact is that we now have a considerable percentage of Catholics, or rather of “Catholics” in quotes, who are no longer willing to accept our religion

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documents that they had originally fought in the Chamber. We do know that Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira adopted an attitude of respectful silence, waiting for the facts to confirm all that he had long foreseen.”

<sup>1816</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 9/28/86.

<sup>1817</sup> RR 6/25/88.

<sup>1818</sup> RR 5/15/85.

<sup>1819</sup> Cf. Paul VI, address to the Lombard Seminary, December 7, 1968.

<sup>1820</sup> *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, op. cit.

as it was and fight for an “updated” (*aggiornato*) Catholicism inspired by Communism. This is the main problem we now have to face as far as Communism is concerned.

Indeed, this is roughly what Communist Allende said about the pre- and post-conciliar Church shortly after he was elected. He stated that he read the Bishops’ Declaration in Medellin, that their language was the same as that used by his party—the language of Marxism—and that the Church no longer opposed his party but had become an ally.<sup>1821</sup>

## Chapter X

# The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State (1963): Some Preliminary Remarks

### 1. Observations from My Period in the Marian Congregations

During the Council, I wrote a book titled *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*.

This book had its roots far back in the past.

Around 1930, several active anticommunist groups in São Paulo imported printed publications attacking Communism from a Swiss-based international organization.

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<sup>1821</sup> “Religion at the Service of Irreligion,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/11/71. These are his exact words: “The Catholic Church has undergone fundamental changes. Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has defended the interests of the powerful. Today, after John XXIII, she was guided to turn Christ’s Gospel into reality, at least in some places. I had the opportunity to read the statement of the bishops in Medellin, and the language they use is the same one we have used since our initiation in politics thirty years ago. At the time, we were condemned for using language now employed by Catholic bishops. I believe the Church will not be a factor against the Popular Unity government. On the contrary, they will be a factor in our favor because we are trying to make a reality of Christian thought” (Interview with *The New York Times*, reproduced by *O Estado de S. Paulo* on 04/10/70).



I was a relatively new Marian Congregation member when a priest gave me one of those publications and told me, “Look, here’s the last word in anticommunist propaganda; read this.”

I read it and immediately noticed their main arguments appeared to be that Communists were burning churches, killing priests and nuns, desecrating the Blessed Sacrament, destroying images and forbidding religious education.

I had recently read the *Treatise on Natural Law* of Taparelli D’Azeglio<sup>1822</sup> and studied Leo XIII’s encyclicals on social matters.

These very solid and safe sources pointed to another, more important issue concerning the incompatibility between Communism and Catholic doctrine. For example, they showed that Communism seeks to eliminate private property and affirmed the legitimacy of private property in such terms that it is impossible to conceive without private property a society organized according to the spirit of the Church.

Later, I went to see this priest and asked him:

“Monsignor, this literature mentions the incompatibility between Communism and Catholic doctrine, but only concerning issues of communist attacks against worship. However, they do not mention attacks against private property. How is this?”

I added:

“If, someday, a Communist regime appeared saying to the Church: “We will organize society without private property but grant religious freedom,” will the Church approve this regime? Would this solve the conflict with Communism?”

This good priest, considered one of the best-known in São Paulo, skated around the issue and gave me no answer. He was a man of great personality but not much intelligence. I thought, “He does not seem to have a very firm grasp on doctrinal issues; he probably never even thought about this question.”

Occasionally, I would ask the same question of some eminent priest of higher rank, and every time, I received the same evasive answers, although papal documents dealt with the matter quite clearly and unequivocally.

## 2. Observations from My Time as a Congressman

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<sup>1822</sup> Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio (1793-1862) was a Jesuit priest who deepened the role of the principle of subsidiarity in social organization. His religious vocation was awakened by spiritual exercises in which he participated, preached by Venerable Pio de Bruno Lanteri, founder of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. A co-founder of *Civiltà Cattolica* in 1850, his teachings on social matters inspired Pope Leo XIII as he wrote the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. He wrote the famous, five-volume *Saggio teoretico di dritto naturale appoggiato sul fatto* [Theoretical Essay on Natural Law Supported on Fact] first published in Palermo by Stamperia d’Antonio Muratori, 1840-1843. Dr. Plinio read its French translation.

This question became even more pressing during my time as a congressman.

Suddenly, they presented a proposal to include an article in the 1934 Brazilian Constitution providing that “All the country’s subsoil resources shall be State property.”

Until then, the Civil Code provided that all resources, including those underground, belonged to the landowner. The owner of the soil owned anything under the surface.

This article also contained a provision requiring a government license for the exploitation of underground natural resources.

There were many congressmen in the Catholic Electoral League, seventy or eighty if my memory does not deceive me, led by Tristão de Athayde. He was not a congressman but the representative of Dom Sebastião Leme among us.

I went to see Tristão and one or two others and said to them:

“Don’t you see? If today the State takes possession of the subsoil, tomorrow it will take the surface. If you vote this article into law, you end up admitting a Communist principle. Just see what pontifical documents have to say about this.”

“Yes, but Dom Leme is not in Rio; he is in Petropolis.”

“Well then, call him or go there; that’s what roads are for!”

“On weekends, he does not like to be disturbed.”

I took a car to St. Ignatius School to see Father Leonel Franca, Brazil’s greatest Catholic intellectual.

I got along very well with him. He was from Bahia, of medium height, bald but with baldness that gave him an air of great intelligence: sparks seemed to emerge from his head. He was sitting there quietly, with eyes long and narrow and pensive.

I went into his office full of books, notes, and datasheets. He greeted me:

“How are you?”

“Father Leonel, I’ve come to talk to you about a problem I am facing.”

And I explained my dilemma.

“Do not worry; it does not matter at all.”

“But, Father Leonel, this is a point of doctrine.”

“No, but these things should not be taken so seriously. Don’t worry.”

“But I do worry. And I will vote against the motion.”

He said:

“You are within your rights, as are those who intend to vote in favor. Suit yourself.”<sup>1823</sup>

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<sup>1823</sup> SD 5/5/73.

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I also went to see many other priests and asked: “Father, is Communism only bad as long as it is atheistic? If not atheistic, is it all right? If there was a Communist regime that did not persecute the clergy, would you oppose that regime?”

I got no explanation. What I did see more and more clearly was their willingness to soften Catholic doctrine in this matter as soon as possible.

The fact is that, from about 1935 onwards, the only opposition encountered in Catholic circles was to “godless communism.” No one spoke any longer about Communism in the context of the abolition of private property.<sup>1824</sup>

### **3. Observations from My Stay in Rome During the Council**

Many years later, I traveled to Rome for the first phase of the Council. Dom Sigaud asked me to assist him in establishing contact with right-wing bishops, so I attended many meetings with him.

During these meetings, I noticed, too, a very strong desire on the part of those bishops to bring about a reconciliation between the Church and Communism, once again based on the classic principle: Russia was to cease religious persecution, and in exchange, the Church would cease to fight for private property. I found this strange.

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I remember one meeting at the Congregation of the Divine Word’s headquarters, attended by Dom Sigaud, in an old building with high ceilings next to a park.

The night was falling, but the lights had not yet been switched on.

It was an impressive meeting with many prelates dressed in the old style, with chains and gold crosses, some with very intelligent faces.

We sat on chairs that must have been comfortable when they were new, but broken springs protruded on all sides. A cautious ‘policy’ was required for seating, just as some political acumen was necessary to talk: they were two concomitant policies.

The meeting was winding down in a kind of twilight atmosphere.<sup>1825</sup>

Maybe twenty of us were in the room, talking about one thing and another when someone made an idle comment regarding the Council’s policy in the face of Communism.<sup>1826</sup>

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<sup>1824</sup> Normal Meeting 3/1/65.

<sup>1825</sup> SD 5/5/73.

<sup>1826</sup> SD 8/10/83.

I confronted Archbishop Roberto Ronca, who had published Dom Mayer's pastoral letter in Italy and was present at the meeting.

Archbishop Ronca was a very intelligent man. In his fifties, tall, fat, ruddy complexion, with remnants of blond hair here and there, but with the eyes of a man capable of putting two and two together with a positive spirit. A real man.

I said:

“Your Excellency, I would like to ask a question: If the Russians were to invade Italy tomorrow and offer religious freedom in exchange for a Church promise to refrain from teaching the principle of private property, could the Church accept this offer? If she did, private property in Italy would be history, and Communism would have won. And then, poor Italy!”

As I said this aloud when the conversation was dying, my question caused a general silence. It was a “checkmate,” but instead of putting the king in check, I had done so to the archbishop...<sup>1827</sup>

General silence! Finally, one said, “In that case, the pope would certainly not leave the Vatican,” as if this were an answer to my question.

I politely said this was like a point within a circle, but knowing what the world's bishops would do in such a case would be interesting. What instructions would they be given? Just an order not to leave their dioceses? If this were the case, would they stay and speak out, or stay and keep quiet? That is the real question.<sup>1828</sup>

The Archbishop of Pompeii (Monsignor Ronca) looked at me and said, “I don't know, I don't know...it is a very important issue. But what do you want, professor? Here in Italy, we are so busy and have so many problems that we do not have as much time to study these issues as you have in South America, where life is much more peaceful than here.”

I thought, “All right, then I will publish a study on this subject and send it to them and all those like them. I can see a vacuum here that cannot disguise their lack of courage – not only the courage to address this issue but also, if the problem should arise, the courage to adopt the bold and fearless attitude that will be required. I will speak out on this issue.”

#### **4. Conversations with Bishops Ivan Bucko and Józef Gawlina**

While still in Rome, I tried to learn other ecclesiastical views and encountered a great diversity.

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<sup>1827</sup> SD 5/5/73.

<sup>1828</sup> SD 8/10/83.

One example is Bishop Ivan Bucko, later elevated by the Holy See to the rank of Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainians in Western Europe.<sup>1829</sup>

I met him in Rome in 1962 at a Ukrainian seminary in a very beautiful place with a picturesque name: *Passegiata del Gianicolo*.<sup>1830</sup>

The Janiculum is a hill that has been the site of innumerable events in Roman history. *Passegiata* means a walk, or rather a cheerful, carefree stroll. There, I found a way to obtain information on what life was like in Ukraine and news from behind the Iron Curtain.

When I asked him the same question I asked everyone else, he said:

“Professor, I would like to know how to solve this problem, but it is a very complicated question.”

I asked:

“So would it not be useful if someone studied this question in depth?”

“It would be extremely useful. It would be a great service to the cause of the Church.”

I said, “All right,” but I did not tell him I planned to do it.

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On that occasion, I also became acquainted with another bishop who had been director-general of the Marian Congregations and had been to Brazil but whom I had never met: Archbishop Gawlina from Poland.<sup>1831</sup>

A general in the Polish army during the First World War, he was later ordained a priest. Appointed bishop by Pope Pius XII, he lived in the Polish church in Rome.

I asked him the same question, and he answered the same way: Someone direly needs to study this matter.

So, I decided to do it.<sup>1832</sup>

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<sup>1829</sup> SD 5/5/73 Most Rev. Ivan Bucko (1891-1974). A Ukrainian priest, he became the Auxiliary Bishop of Lviv, Ukraine, later the Ukrainian community’s Auxiliary Bishop in the United States, and finally the Titular Bishop of Lefkas. He then went into the service of the Roman Curia, where he remained until his death.

<sup>1830</sup> “No, No and No,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/26/72.

<sup>1831</sup> Most Rev. Józef Felix Gawlina (1892-1964), titular Archbishop of Madito.

<sup>1832</sup> SD 5/5/73.

## Chapter XI

### The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State (1963): Why the Soviets Needed Peaceful Coexistence

#### 1. Old and New Communist Tactics

What problems did I face while writing this booklet? Most people had no clear idea that the Communist Party was not just a political association like all parties. Dispelling this error was very important.

Communism is not mainly a political party. It is a set of people with a philosophy of their own, which presents an “ideal” image of the universe,<sup>1833</sup> life, and man.<sup>1834</sup> Adepts of this philosophy seek to transform all culture, civilization and political, social and economic institutions to conform to that ideal image.<sup>1835</sup>

The Communists do not simply want to rise to power as an ordinary political party. They want to achieve a complete change in people’s lifestyles and implement their project in all countries without exception.<sup>1836</sup>

From 1917 until 1963, the year I wrote the book, Communists had failed to persuade people in the West and East, so much so that no Communist party had ever been able—so far—to win a free election.

However, this failure was incomplete, as they achieved two important goals.

The first was the triumph of the modernist conspiracy within the Church. The second was the creation of a certain insensitivity among the bourgeoisie about basic socialist reforms, weakening the resistance Communism had encountered in the minds of Westerners.

That is why it was convenient for the Communists to retain the old tactic of explicit and marked indoctrination, underpinned with a threat of violence, while employing a completely new tactic – the alleged peaceful coexistence.

#### 2. Reasons for the Russian Policy of Detente with Religion

The employment of this new tactic intensified notably right after

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<sup>1833</sup> Lecture in Belo Horizonte 8/15/65.

<sup>1834</sup> SEFAC 1/25/65.

<sup>1835</sup> Lecture in Belo Horizonte 8/15/65 & SEFAC 1/25/65.

<sup>1836</sup> SEFAC 1/25/65.

the Yalta Treaty was signed.<sup>1837</sup>

When Stalin returned from the Yalta meeting, his first priority was to set up an “orthodox” church led by schismatic priests who became communists for fear of dying. These were the schismatic church’s representatives the Catholic Church invited to the Second Vatican Council.

Why did Russia suddenly adopt this lenient attitude toward these schismatics?

The Yalta Treaty – later supplemented by the Potsdam Agreements – established expressly or tacitly (nobody really knows) which European peoples – who later groaned under the Communist yoke – would be delivered up to Russia.

However, Stalin realized this domination would create major strategic problems for Russia.

It is one thing to dominate a people accustomed for centuries to the absolute, fierce rule of the czars. However, it is quite a different thing to dominate civilized peoples hostile to Russia, such as Poles, Germans, Czechs, or Hungarians.

If Russia had failed to make some concessions, particularly on religion, it would have faced disturbances that would have threatened its rule because Communism did not have much support even in Russian territory.

These were the two main reasons that led Russia to adopt a policy of tolerance toward schismatics within its territories and to Catholics and Christians in general in other countries.

### **3. Catholic Poland, a Key Country to Implement “Peaceful Coexistence”**

Poland was the most sensitive point for the new Russian policy of detente.<sup>1838</sup> With its thirty million Catholics, it was the most compact and influential Catholic bloc beyond the Iron Curtain.

Soviet domination plans confronted two obstacles there: the Poles’ centuries-old aversion to Russian colonialism and, to an even greater extent, the incompatibility between the profoundly Catholic Polish population and the Marxist regime, which is atheist, amoral and egalitarian by definition.

These obstacles meant that Moscow’s Communists faced two alternatives: to recolonize and brutally suppress Poland by an iron-fisted administration of Russian proconsuls while unleashing religious persecution of Neronian proportions or give it a minimum of autonomy, have it governed by

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<sup>1837</sup> Held in February 1945 in the city of Yalta, in the Crimea, the disastrous Yalta Conference brought together heads of state of the World War II Allies, Roosevelt (United States), Churchill (England) and Stalin (USSR), who divided up the postwar world between them. The most catastrophic result of this treaty was the shameful abandonment, on the part of Western countries, of various nations of Eastern Europe to the Soviet empire.

<sup>1838</sup> Normal Meeting 3/1/65.

Polish rather than Russian Communists, and grant the Church such precarious freedoms so the communists could, over time, extinguish faith and patriotism in the Poles. For the Soviets, if this plan failed, granting that minimum of religious freedom would have been tantamount to capitulation.<sup>1839</sup>

The Polish communist leader Gomulka was the driver of this new Russian policy in civil society.

When he took over the Polish government, Gomulka granted his compatriots some tax relief, a little independence regarding the political organization, and a little religious freedom.

He justified his stance to the Polish Catholics with this argument: “If you don’t want to lose the little you have, you had better support me instead of fighting me. If I fall, the Russians will come.”<sup>1840</sup>

Assessing the situation exactly as his Communist opponents, Archbishop Wyszynski chose to accept that minimum.<sup>1841</sup>

His stance was: “In the unfortunate situation in which Poland finds itself, we can no longer seek the greater good but must be content with the lesser evil. The absolute evil would be the abolition of our freedom. The lesser evil is Gomulka.”

As a result, much of the Polish Episcopate undertook to demoralize and severely crack down on anti-Gomulka and anticommunist Catholics who might have had thoughts of resisting.

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Another argument was used to support this policy: “If we rebel against Russia, people in the West will force their governments to come to our aid. This will create the risk of a thermonuclear war. Therefore, it will be best for Poland to bow its head and accept servitude to avoid a thermonuclear war that would affect the whole world.”

These calculations effectively led to the establishment of a policy of coexistence in Poland. The Polish government showed little or no signs of wishing to extinguish the Church, and the Church made little or hardly noticeable attempts to free itself from Communism. And so, they went on collaborating side-by-side.

These arguments applied to Poland and, with small changes, to the whole world.

In the West, this gave rise to the idea that it was possible to reach an arrangement with the Communists and that, in the countries they dominated, it

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<sup>1839</sup> “The Cunctator: A Maximalist?,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 8/24/78.

<sup>1840</sup> Normal Meeting 3/1/65.

<sup>1841</sup> “The Cunctator: A Maximalist?” op. cit.



was better not to fight but to save what little could be saved. In this way, Poland's problematic situation had a global impact.

#### 4. The Church's Silence, a Morally Unacceptable Compromise

What did Gomulka ask from Catholics in exchange for this pathetic travesty of freedom?

He claimed that for him to permit Catholics to preach in favor of private property regularly and systematically would be tantamount to political suicide.

So, he asked the Polish Catholics to make the same compromise on the subject of private property as the liberal State had asked from the Church on the separation of Church and State. In liberal states, Catholic seminaries taught that, in theory, it would be better if there were a union between Church and State, but in practice, nowadays, separation is the better system. Woe to the layman or priest who praised the union of Church and State! Even the slightest nostalgia for such a state of affairs was unacceptable, and the ecclesiastical authorities would ruthlessly liquidate anyone arguing in favor of the Church-State union.

The same happened in Poland regarding private property. According to the Ten Commandments, in theory, it would be better if there were private property. But in practice – said the supporters of coexistence – capitalism had led to so much abuse that it was preferable to establish a community of goods.

In simplified terms, this approach taught that all that is good in theory is bad in practice, and all that is good in practice is bad in theory. So, people were left with a “theoretical” religion and a Communist practice that was completely different from the theory the religious authorities defended.

The result was that Catholics who heard this passively for twenty years began to consider the existence of the community of goods as normal and to eliminate private property from their mental horizon.

In short, this was the Polish formula of peaceful coexistence. These considerations led me to write *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*, pointing out the errors in which such a state of affairs was rooted.<sup>1842</sup>

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<sup>1842</sup> Normal Meeting 3/1/65.

## Chapter XII

# The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State (1963): Theses, Distribution, and Controversies

### 1. The Book's Main Theses

In my essay, I tried to frustrate this maneuver already in 1963 by showing that the elimination or serious mutilation of the institution of private property is an essential aspect of the Communist regime and that this, in turn, is contrary to Church doctrine.<sup>1843</sup> No cardinal, bishop, priest, or faithful Christian who wants to keep his soul free from sin can accept this compromise because it is inherently immoral.<sup>1844</sup>

To be true to her mission, the Church must never cease to fight such a regime, even if it granted the Church unlimited freedom of worship. Such a fight would inevitably create conflict between Catholics and any Communist state.<sup>1845</sup>

The booklet was intended to divide Catholics between those wishing to bow their knees before the Beast and those who said, "I will never accept such a compromise, whatever the consequences."

That gave rise to great difficulties among theologians, moralists, bishops, and the public as a whole.

If a strain of Catholic devotees of Our Lady decided to accept the theses of *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*, they would go underground into the catacombs. They would die martyrs but would ensure the dawn of the Church and the future Reign of Mary.

### 2. One Night to Draft the Book

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<sup>1843</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, op. cit.

<sup>1844</sup> Normal Meeting 1/3/65.

<sup>1845</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, op. cit.

I was still in Rome when I wrote most of that essay in one night. In the morning, the book was practically complete.

I brought it back to Brazil and concluded that it was not yet time to publish it, so it spent six or eight months on the shelf.

I published it when it seemed the moment had come—about a month before the Council’s second session.<sup>1846</sup>

### 3. The (2,500) Council Fathers Receive the Work

I asked our Rome secretariat to distribute this analysis to all 2,500 prelates present at this second session of the Council.

In reply, I received complimentary letters from some bishops, but they were few.<sup>1847</sup>

I remember, for example, a letter from a bishop of the Chaldean rite based in a communist-dominated nation in Asia Minor. It was an excellent letter asking me to send the book to all his clergy so they could learn their duty under the Communist occupation.

I hardly received any replies at all from the Brazilian bishops.

Afterward, we sent the analysis to a large number of magazines. An excellent review appeared in a widely read theological journal, *Divus Thomas*, in Piacenza (Italy), which agreed with our theses.<sup>1848</sup>

### 4. An Unexpected Letter of Praise from the Holy See

At our request, Dom Mayer offered the book to all Roman Congregations. One day, we received a brilliant and completely unexpected letter from the Holy See’s Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities,<sup>1849</sup> addressed to Dom Mayer.

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<sup>1846</sup> Printed initially in *Catolicismo*, No. 152, August 1963, it was later reproduced in the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo* (April 1, 1964) and went through successive editions in Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, German, Italian, Hungarian and Polish, which reached more than 163,500 copies. Later, it was expanded and given a new title, *Agreement with the Communist Regime: For the Church, Hope or Self-Destruction?* It was also fully printed in forty newspapers and magazines in France, Germany, Italy, the United States, Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, and Angola, as well as in Brazil.

<sup>1847</sup> Writers included Cardinals Eugène Tisserant and Alfredo Ottaviani, then-Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office; Norman Thomas Gilroy, former Archbishop of Sydney (Australia); His Beatitude Paul II Cheicko, Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, and some other prelates.

<sup>1848</sup> The commentary was published in the journal’s April to September 1964 issues. The study was also reproduced in full in more than thirty newspapers and magazines in eleven different countries. Most telling was that the progressive magazine *Informations Catholiques Internationales* felt the need to publish a review of the work.

<sup>1849</sup> Normal Meeting 3/1/65.

I vividly remember that day – we met in the Pará Street headquarters when they called me. It was Dom Mayer, and after some desultory conversation, he told me:

“Look, I have a letter from Cardinal Pizzardo that concerns you.”

“What do you mean, a letter from Cardinal Pizzardo, Dom Mayer?”

“I will read it to you.”

He read me the letter from Cardinal Giuseppe Pizzardo, the Congregation Prefect, which his secretary, the future Cardinal Dino Staffa, had also signed, approving my book.<sup>1850</sup>

You may imagine my delight – a letter like this was the last thing I had expected.<sup>1851</sup>

I asked Dom Mayer to dictate its text over the phone and told the plenary about it. He sent a courier from Campos to São Paulo to bring us the letter.<sup>1852</sup>

This letter from the Holy See was the spear that pierced the wall, and it appeared to have been written deliberately for this purpose. On behalf of a high-ranking authority of the Holy See, it declared that our thesis was entirely orthodox.<sup>1853</sup>

This letter’s importance for our consciences and to help enlist the support of people to defend our theses was simply incalculable.<sup>1854</sup>

It was indeed an authoritative letter of unrestricted support and approval.<sup>1855</sup> Our opponents were shocked to realize that the TFP, allegedly frowned upon by the ecclesiastical authorities, had received a second letter of praise from the Holy See (the first was about the book *In Defense of Catholic Action*).<sup>1856</sup>

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<sup>1850</sup> SD 5/5/73.

<sup>1851</sup> Quick word 8/26/83.

<sup>1852</sup> SD 5/5/73.

<sup>1853</sup> This letter, dated December 2, 1964, stated that the author was “deservedly famous for his scientific, philosophical, historical and sociological science” and congratulated him on his “substantial essay, which is a most faithful echo of the documents of the supreme Magisterium of the Church, including the luminous Encyclicals ‘Mater et Magistra’ of John XXIII, and ‘Ecclesiam Suam’ of Paul VI, happily reigning.”

For a Catholic who loves the Church, this is the greatest compliment a high-ranking ecclesiastical authority can bestow.

This letter also said very significantly at the end: “May the Lord grant all Catholics the ability to understand the need to be united ‘*in uno sensu eademque sententia*’ to avoid the illusions, deceptions and dangers that now threaten their Church from within!”

The writer of this letter was well aware of “the illusions, deceptions and dangers” of concessions to Communism snaking their way into the heart of the Church and supported the author’s denunciation.

<sup>1854</sup> Normal Meeting 1/3/65.

<sup>1855</sup> SEFAC 1/25/65.

<sup>1856</sup> Normal Meeting 1/3/65. In connection with the marketing campaign for *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*, one should recall a highly symbolic event. During the release of this book’s third

## 5. *Kierunki*. The Controversy Behind the Iron Curtain

At that time, we also got involved in a controversy with the Catholic leftist weekly *Kierunki*, which left no doubt that our analysis had made waves behind the Iron Curtain.

The weekly paper *Kierunki* and the monthly magazine *Zycie I Mysl*, both published in Poland, violently attacked *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*. The controversy began when Mr. Zbigniew Czajkowski, a contributor to both journals, published long and detailed articles against my essay. I published my reply in *Catolicismo*.<sup>1857</sup>

That gave rise to a controversy during which a Paris magazine, *L'Homme Nouveau*, intervened in support of my work in an article by Henri Carton, one of its contributors. At the same time, *Témoignage Chrétien* – an inflammatory publication of the French Communist-progressive wing – took up the cudgels for Czajkowski.<sup>1858</sup>

Then Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki,<sup>1859</sup> editor in chief of the monthly magazine *Wież* and member of the Catholic *Znak* group in the Polish Diet, published an article in his magazine (no. 11-12, November-December 1963) in collaboration with Mr. A. Wielowieyski, purporting to be a reply to my analysis.<sup>1860</sup>

To this day, we do not know what triggered this controversy,<sup>1861</sup> for the Iron Curtain made it impossible for the book to have been widely distributed in Poland. If it became necessary for a newspaper to publish an article to refute it, someone must have smuggled the book into Poland, produced a clandestine edition in Polish, and distributed so widely as to cause disruption in collaborationist Catholic circles. That is why the magazine *Kierunki*'s directors needed to address the issue.<sup>1862</sup>

The fact is that our analysis spread far and wide. The TFP prepared translations and editions in several languages and distributed them everywhere.

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edition, on March 30, 1965, the TFP's crimson standards with the golden rampant lion were raised for the first time on Viaduto do Chá in downtown São Paulo.

<sup>1857</sup> The first article appeared in *Kierunki*, issue No. 8, March 1, 1964, titled "Open Letter to Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira." Dr. Plinio answered with the article "Open Letter to Behind the Iron Curtain," published in *Catolicismo*, No. 162, June 1964. Other articles followed and can be read in *Catolicismo*, Nos. 162, 164, 165, 166 & 170 of June, August, September, October 1964 and February 1965, respectively.

<sup>1858</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, op. cit.

<sup>1859</sup> Tadeusz Mazowiecki was a member of the Solidarity union's Pax movement and Poland's prime minister between 1989 and 1991.

<sup>1860</sup> *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*—enlarged edition, *Catolicismo*, No. 161, May 1965.

<sup>1861</sup> Normal Meeting 1/3/65.

<sup>1862</sup> RR 3/1/74.

We fulfilled our mission, told the truth that had to be told, and spread it everywhere. Now, it was up to others to render an account before God as to why, having been given this information, they still failed to act upon it.<sup>1863</sup>

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Twenty years after publishing our analysis, some minorities within episcopates from around the world, anticipating the problem of coexistence with Communism, proposed to solve it in the worst possible way. Some churchmen preached the unilateral nuclear disarmament of Western nations with the motto: “Better red than dead,” meaning “It’s better to become a Communist than to be killed.” So, they argued in favor of surrender.

In the United States, representatives of this episcopal minority defended this thesis: “Russia will not disarm, and there will be a nuclear war if we do not disarm. Nuclear war would be such a great evil that it would be better for Russia to take over the United States, so we will work to promote U.S. unilateral disarmament in the face of the nuclear threat.”<sup>1864</sup>

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<sup>1863</sup> SD 5/5/73.

<sup>1864</sup> SD 8/10/83. Another pearl found in this line of argument was the following: at the World Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 1977, the Archbishop of Saigon, Most Rev. Nguyen Van Binh, explained to the assembled bishops that since it was “impossible to hide from Vietnamese children the differences between Marxism and Christianity,” it was necessary “to explain these differences not with an attitude of opposition to Marxism, but emphasizing the aspect of justice.” He added that Vietnam’s Communist rulers “must be shown a new face, the true face of the Church” that “actively cooperates” with the government (cf. “The Archbishop of Ho Chi Min,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, October 9, 1977). It was truly amazing that this subservient attitude by the collaborationist Vietnamese Church aroused no protest among the 204 bishops present at the Synod.

On the contrary, here in Brazil, the Southern Regional Section II of the CNBB issued a statement seeking to show that the Vietnamese Church’s collaborationist conduct should inspire the Brazilian bishops and the faithful if the Communists were to take over Brazil: “The Vietnamese Church’s disposition suggests that she is not just making an ‘attempt’ at coexistence with the Communist regime. ... Who knows, this Church in remotest Asia may provide us with a first example of how the Church could exist and effectively carry out her salvific mission under a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’” (cf. *Voz do Paraná*, Catholic weekly of Curitiba, week of April 25 to May 1, 1976. Dr. Plinio transcribed this statement in his book, *The Church in the Face of the Escalating Communist Threat – Appeal to the Silent Bishops*, Ed. Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1977).

## Chapter XIII

# *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue (1965): Content and Repercussions*

### 1. Twisting the Term ‘Dialogue’ Prompted Me to Write this Essay

Two years after the publication of *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*, I wrote a somehow related book called *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue*.

The idea for this essay was born of what seemed a comparatively insignificant circumstance—we had long noticed how false the use of the word “dialogue” in certain circles sounded.

We felt an urgent need, almost a moral imperative, to protest against this transgression of the rules of proper linguistic usage.

Gradually, impressions, observations, and notes taken here and there made us realize that the many and varied twists in the meaning of the word *dialogue* had an internal logic that appeared to reveal something intentional, planned, and methodical.

That was the case not only with *dialogue* but also with other commonly used words from the repertory of progressives, socialists and Communists, such as *pacifism*, *coexistence*, *ecumenism*, *Christian democracy*, *third force*, etc.

Through observation, we realized that this twist always pursued the same aim: to weaken non-communist resistance to Communism, to inspire an acquiescent mindset, sympathy, non-resistance and even surrender. In extreme cases, they twisted words so successfully that they ended up transforming non-communists into Communists.

### 2. Unmasking This Stealth Ideological Shift

In my essay, I tried to show that Western Christian society's descent down the slippery slope, from one leftist position to the next, toward the ultimate goal of Marxism was an ancient and profound phenomenon. Its very essence was an ideological shift that passed more or less unnoticed but which this Christian

society, unfortunately, underwent for centuries and was inexorably leading it to Communism.

From this perspective, the phenomenon was not new. What was new, however, was the unprecedented momentum it gained because of the very special efforts by certain circles to accelerate this process by various stratagems.

Furthermore, their aim was not so much a step-by-step move from the center to the left or from a moderately leftist agenda to a more pronounced one but from the center or moderate left toward a categorically Communist state of affairs.

This process introduced a new touch, an intensely “red” agenda never displayed so openly. It was characterized by the aforementioned modern stratagems used to accelerate it but by an open, drastic and direct espousal of Marxism and the unprecedented speed and brazenness with which it promoted Communism.

Above all, the hidden ideological shift was new, and it transformed itself from an incidental phenomenon to the Communists' dominant tactic in their struggle toward an ideological conquest of the world.<sup>1865</sup>

The book also showed the surreptitious ways in which Communists use dialogue to weaken the ideological resistance of their opponents, especially Catholics.

The subject is far too complex and far-reaching even for a summary.

One of this study's most important observations of a practical order is that the Communists were using that false “dialogue” not so much to make Catholics renounce the Faith explicitly but to persuade them to accept a relativistic and evolutionary interpretation of Catholic doctrine.

That is how they succeeded in corrupting people's faith, which, by its nature, requires certainty incompatible with the state of doubt inherent in relativism and evolutionism. Having achieved that result, it would not be hard for Communist propaganda to induce Catholics to hope that a synthesis might come from dialogue with Communists—a synthesis that might well be the same Communism in another guise.<sup>1866</sup>

### **3. Chile: Frei's Christian-Democratic Police Confiscates the Book**

Four years later, a curious episode happened.

In August 1969, two telegrams published in the daily press reported a strange reaction by the Chilean government of Eduardo Frei to *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue*.

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<sup>1865</sup> *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue*, <http://www.tfp.org/TFP-home/books/unperceived-ideological-transshipment-and-dialogue.html>.

<sup>1866</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, op. cit.



I published this study primarily in Brazil. It sold everywhere and was criticized by some and applauded by others without any obstacles from the authorities. Everything was done most normally, particularly considering the kind of book it was.<sup>1867</sup>

It turns out that a short while earlier, the Argentine publishing house *Cruzada* sent about two hundred copies of the essay for distribution in Chile. They were very surprised to learn that Chilean customs had impounded the books.<sup>1868</sup>

I sent President Eduardo Frei a telegram protesting the arbitrary actions of his government's customs agents. However, displaying a haughtiness worthy of De Gaulle (incidentally, only permissible to the very few mortals whose achievements match those of the controversial former French President), he did not deign to answer me.

When I realized there would be no reply, I published the telegram in the Brazilian press.

Several days later, a Chilean government spokesman disclosed the reasons for the measure to the Associated Press. When reading about them in Brazilian newspapers, I could not help smiling at the ridiculous suspicions seemingly lurking in the minds of the Chilean regime's customs Gestapo.

According to the spokesman, I had “ostentatious and close contact” with Mr. Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, author of *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*, a deemed “insulting” to Frei and the Chilean Christian Democratic party by that country’s government. So, they assumed my book was also likely “insulting” (probably by osmosis) – to that overly sensitive head of state and his adherents.

Seeing insults where there are none and regarding a book with suspicion just because its author is a friend of the author of another book that you do not like: Was it surprising that this exaggerated sensitivity and distrust ready to adopt police measures reminded me of the Gestapo?

The Chilean government official also stated that his country’s TFP “violently” opposed his government, which was why Chilean customs authorities felt entitled to seize my book.

Soon after, another telegram announced that the Chilean authorities reviewed my book and found its contents to be merely ideological; therefore, they lifted the ban on it.<sup>1869</sup>

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<sup>1867</sup> The book had an impressive history: Fourteen editions, five in Portuguese, six in Spanish, one in Italian, one in German and one in English, a total of 132,500 copies sold. It was fully transcribed in seven newspapers and magazines in five countries (see *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*, op. cit.).

<sup>1868</sup> Cf. *El Diario Ilustrado*, Santiago, 8/7/69.

<sup>1869</sup> “Clarity, this Politeness,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 8/13/69; also published in *El Diario Ilustrado*, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, all from Santiago, 8/8/69.

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This book again made the news twenty years after it was first published.

The Chilean Weekly *Hoy*<sup>1870</sup> published a photograph of Pinochet and his ministers at a conference table. Each minister had a folder in front of him. On top of each folder, visible in all photographs, was a copy of *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue*. There were no other papers; it was the only topic to be studied, and the president was the one who ordered it.<sup>1871</sup>

#### 4. Once again, a Book Crosses the Iron Curtain

Just like *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*, *Unperceived Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue* found its way across the Iron Curtain.

The weekly paper *Kierunki* – the same that had commented on *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State* – published an article by Mr. Z. Czajkowski, with a rather singular title: “Within the Circle of a Psychological Deception, or: a Controversy with Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira – Continuation.”<sup>1872</sup>

Previously, when taking a stand against *The Freedom of the Church in the Communist State*, Mr. Z. Czajkowski had sent me his arguments against the theses in the book that he intended to refute.

This time, however, I only learned about his new attack from an article published in a Polish magazine that appeared in Warsaw and was edited by the Pax Association.<sup>1873</sup>

This magazine, which existed to inform (or misinform?) Western audiences about religious life in that country and particularly about the activities of the Pax group only came to my attention by accident, and even so, with a huge delay. This time, Mr. Z. Czajkowski had not made arrangements to ensure that his arguments reached the other party.

He had his reasons for not doing so: to make his task of refuting my arguments easier, he falsified, with the greatest effrontery, several passages that he wanted to disprove!<sup>1874</sup>

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<sup>1870</sup> Issue of September 2, 1985.

<sup>1871</sup> Dinner EANS 10/12/91.

<sup>1872</sup> This article was published in *Kierunki*, issues no. 51-52 and 53 of 1967.

<sup>1873</sup> That magazine was called *La vie catholique en Pologne–Revue de la Presse Polonaise*, January 1968.

<sup>1874</sup> Cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 244, April 1971.

## Chapter XIV

# The Battle Against Divorce And the Destruction of the Family

### 1. The Indissolubility of the Marriage Bond in the Constitution of 1934

The constitutional principle of the indissolubility of the marriage bond was introduced in the Constitution of 1934. As a member of the Catholic Electoral League on the Single Slate for United São Paulo, I had the joy and the honor of being one of the most enthusiastic fighters for this great Catholic victory.

Cardinal Sebastião Leme fought this battle with wit and commitment. He had the support of numerous congressmen appointed by the LEC throughout Brazil, whom he coordinated and encouraged, leading us to success.

That was in 1934. Dom Leme headed Brazil's national Episcopate, and LEC was bursting with vitality.<sup>1875</sup>

### 2. Divorce in the 1966 Draft of the New Civil Code: A Question of Conscience

In 1966, an attempt was made to abolish the inviolability of marriage. The TFP engaged in an ultimately victorious battle to defend the institution of the family against divorce.

The federal government presented a new draft of the Civil Code because it considered the 1917 Code obsolete. It was anything but obsolete. Enacted in 1917 and fully in force, the Code was less old than the president governing the country.<sup>1876</sup>

At that time, I set up a TFP Study Commission with lawyers who were members of our group to study this draft. They concluded it was a bad proposal, including the part referring to private property.

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<sup>1875</sup> "34-75-77," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/25/77.

<sup>1876</sup> President Castelo Branco was born in 1897.

In other words, it was a socialist project, but its worst part was the introduction of divorce sneaked unobtrusively into one of the articles of the Code.

We considered that the introduction of divorce would cause immense damage in Brazil first of all because it is a violation of Church law.<sup>1877</sup>

According to traditional Catholic doctrine, marriage and the family are based on principles inherent in human nature. These principles express the divine will since God is the creator of the universe and man. That is why they are embodied in three Commandments of the Decalogue, the perfect summary of natural law: IV—Honor thy father and mother; VI—Thou shalt not commit adultery; IX—Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

These principles—as immutable as all the fundamental ordering principles of human nature—are the basis of family, marriage, the unity and indissolubility of the marriage bond, and parental authority.

Only God can dispense from Divine Law. No human law – even canon law – can legitimately decree the opposite of what God has prescribed.

Our Lord Jesus Christ elevated the marriage bond to the dignity of a sacrament, confirming its indissolubility. This means that Christian marriage will be indissoluble until the end of time.<sup>1878</sup>

Secondly, having a divorce law would have been a scandal in an overwhelmingly Catholic country. Given the countless sins to which the approval of divorce would give rise, such a law would not only offend the glory of God but also bring a punishment of a religious and moral nature to the Brazilian nation.

Therefore, for me and the TFP, it was a matter of honor and conscience to do everything possible to prevent the introduction of divorce.

### **3. Bishops Shun the Idea of a Collective Pastoral Letter Condemning Divorce**

Before taking to the streets to fight against divorce, we tried behind the scenes to prevent the pro-divorce drive.

In April 1966, at my request, Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud held surveys among the bishops to see whether they would agree to publish a collective pastoral letter condemning divorce.

The Church's influence on the electorate was enormous in Brazil. We argued that if all the bishops opposed divorce, it would have been easy to remind the congressmen of the risk of not being re-elected if they approved the Civil Code containing the divorce provision. This would have rendered the approval of divorce very difficult.

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<sup>1877</sup> SD 1/19/74.

<sup>1878</sup> *Draft Constitution Anguishes the Country*, Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 1987.

Unfortunately, Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud found that the Episcopate was unwilling to publish such a letter even though it could save Brazil from divorce.

Faced with this refusal, we could only do one thing: wage a campaign against divorce.

The TFP was small then, and we had to prevent enormous damage under very difficult circumstances. We were up against no less than the most influential powers of the Brazilian nation that consciously or unconsciously favored the Civil Code draft containing the divorce provision—President Castelo Branco, who enjoyed enormous prestige, much of the press, intellectual and political circles, and even, in a way, the heads of the National Episcopate.

All these forces were somehow invested in ensuring approval for the new Civil Code allowing divorce.

Our situation was critical, but we had to follow our motto: Tradition, Family and Property. We could not afford to sit back and do nothing.

#### 4. The Campaign's Early Skirmishes

The first salvo in the campaign was an interview I gave *Jornal do Brasil*.<sup>1879</sup>

Since divorce promoters wanted a quick debate without giving the opposition a chance to organize, I sent the President of the House of Representatives a telegram asking that the vote on the new Code be postponed by a year to permit discussions on the matter.<sup>1880</sup>

I published this telegram in the papers, arguing that the Civil Code in force took years to approve and it was absurd to rush through such an important law without a proper discussion.

#### 5. TFP in the Streets; "Appeal to Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities on Behalf of the Brazilian Family"

At the same time, we started a well-organized street campaign to collect signatures for a petition asking the government not to introduce divorce in Brazil.<sup>1881</sup>

I found it appropriate to start the campaign at São Paulo's busiest thoroughfare, Viaduto do Chá— an overpass leading into Barão de Itapetininga

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<sup>1879</sup> This interview, published in this Rio morning paper on April 24, 1966, under the title "The New Code Is Corruptive," was later printed by many Brazilian newspapers.

<sup>1880</sup> The telegram was dated May 29, 1966.

<sup>1881</sup> This petition, launched on June 2, 1966, was an "Appeal to High Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities in Favor of the Brazilian Family" and asked the Senate and House of Representatives presidents to remove the proposal from the agenda. It asked the President to appoint a commission to draw up a text entirely opposed to the proposal and make it available for public debate. It also called upon the Venerable National Episcopate "to make its great and powerful voice heard" to stop the law permitting divorce in Brazil.

Street through which everyone would pass during shopping hours. It was the city's most animated part and the center of its fashionable quarter.

Eighty TFP members and volunteers, equipped with clipboards, tables, and posters, accompanied by large standards displaying the rampant lion and wearing red badges with this symbol on their lapels, established themselves on the four corners of the Viaduto do Chá and approached the people passing that way.

I ordered a stall to be set up near the Law School, a university considered pro-divorce, to begin the campaign with audacity.

We also launched the campaign in Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte.

The results far exceeded our expectations. Our goal was to collect 200,000 signatures during the entire campaign. We collected 60,000 in the three cities on the first day!

To the astonishment of many, the people on the streets who might, at first sight, have been considered largely pro-divorce, queued in large numbers to sign the lists. Our volunteers did not have enough clipboards for all those wishing to sign.

At a meeting in our Pará Street headquarters that night, we took stock of the campaign. The general mood was euphoric, and we were all ecstatic with surprise and joy at the work being done.

I warned our volunteers that the press would act like nothing had happened and ignore our campaign.

That is exactly what happened the following day. The only mention of divorce in the newspapers referred to a group calling itself the *League of Pro-Divorce Women*, which had taken to the streets to collect signatures in favor of divorce. It was such hollow news that the organization was never mentioned again. This League went up in smoke and disappeared from history. But not a single newspaper mentioned the TFP campaign!

We were waging a triumphal campaign with dozens of stalls in the city center and standards flying everywhere. All of São Paulo witnessed this, but we did not get a single mention in the newspapers!

## 6. Lectures in São Paulo and Minas on the Evils of Divorce

During the campaign, we initiated a series of lectures on the evils of divorce and invited judges of the São Paulo Court of Justice as lecturers. Minister Pedro Chaves of the Supreme Court delivered the last lecture. It was a much-discussed event in forensic circles.<sup>1882</sup>

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<sup>1882</sup> There were six days of lectures (between June 16 and July 4, 1966), all held in the auditorium of the São Paulo State Trade Federation. The inaugural session had as honorary chairman Judge Raphael Monteiro de Barros, president of the São Paulo Court of Justice. The speakers, on alternating days, were the Judges

The auditorium was packed. When the Supreme Court President entered with us to present his lecture, he and many judges expressed surprise at the numbers and quality of the audience.

The lectures were an impressive success. At that point, the media could no longer ignore us as the Vice President of the São Paulo Court of Justice, Judge Marcio Martins Ferreira, speaking on the court's behalf, officially endorsed our campaign.

On the last day, we hosted a banquet with speeches, a meet-and-greet, and a final press conference for the lecturers.

## 7. Support from Church Representatives

This made people flock to sign, and the campaign gained momentum. It spread throughout Brazil, and we began receiving news of high-ranking persons in the Church and civilian life who had signed.

One of our TFP campaigners, passing behind the São Paulo cathedral, saw the local archbishop and President of CNBB's Central Committee, Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, coming out of the church. He innocently approached the cardinal and said, "Your Eminence, are you against divorce? Do you want to sign our petition?"

The next day, all the newspapers published the news: "Cardinal Rossi has signed the TFP petition."<sup>1883</sup>

The TFP released the names of distinguished personalities from the political world, clergy and military who signed the appeal. Nineteen judges of the São Paulo Court of Justice were among the signatories.<sup>1884</sup>

Another one who signed our lists was Pelé, which, of course, brought us more publicity. The articles in the papers were headed: "Pelé: I kick divorce."

## 8. Under Pressure, the Government Withdraws the Proposal

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Joaquim de Sylos Cintra, Alceu Lamb Fernandes, Raul da Rocha Medeiros Junior, and Italo Galli, all from São Paulo, as well as Justice Pedro Chaves of the Supreme Court.

Dr. Plinio gave a lecture on family continuity and tradition in the Brazilian Civil Code, during which he brilliantly argued the meaning of "aseity" for human beings. Judge Marcio Martins Ferreira, the vice president of the São Paulo Court of Justice, gave an impromptu speech.

<sup>1883</sup> SD 1/19/74. High-ranking prelates signed our petition: Most Revs. Delfim Ribeiro Guedes, Bishop of São João del Rei; Epaminondas José de Araújo, Bishop of Rui Barbosa; Jerônimo Mazzarotto, Auxiliary Bishop of Curitiba; and Rodolpho das Mercês de Oliveira Pena, titular Bishop of Apollonis. In addition, statements publicly supporting the campaign were made by Most Rev. Jaime de Barros Cardinal Câmara, Archbishop of Rio; Most Rev. Geraldo de Proença Sigaud, Archbishop of Diamantina; Most Rev. Oscar de Oliveira, Archbishop of Mariana; Most Rev. José Angelo Neto, Archbishop of Pouso Alegre; Most Rev. Antonio de Castro Mayer, Bishop of Campos; and Most Rev. José Mauricio da Rocha, Bishop of Bragança Paulista.

<sup>1884</sup> "The TFP and the Pro-Divorce Onslaught in Brazil," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/26/66.

On June 14, 1966, when the campaign had collected almost 600,000 signatures, the papers published the unexpected news that the government had ordered the new Civil Code draft to be withdrawn.<sup>1885</sup>

On the same day, Congressmen Nelson Carneiro and Jose Maria Ribeiro reintroduced the text withdrawn by the President. When explaining his reasons for applying for the project's re-submission, Nelson Carneiro declared that people's reactions to the TFP petition campaign had decisively influenced the government's decision to withdraw its proposal.<sup>1886</sup>

I sent telegrams to all our groups in Brazil, exhorting them not to interrupt the campaign. I told them we should aim for one million signatures and not declare ourselves satisfied before reaching that figure.<sup>1887</sup>

## 9. CNBB Attacks, TFP Presents a “Reverent and Filial” Response

In the meantime, we had a surprise.

On June 17, the Central Commission of Brazil's National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB) held a meeting in Rio de Janeiro and published three press releases, one of which contained a frontal and comprehensive attack on the TFP.

In painful contrast, the other two contained a mild and benign reference to the draft Civil Code, surreptitiously introducing divorce into our legislation, and to the MEB (Grassroots Education Movement), which many considered a project to facilitate our children's indoctrination with Communist ideology.

There was no doubt whatsoever that the Central Commission had carefully timed the publication of its attack against the TFP to appear at the right time—just when the anti-divorce campaign was at its height.

Indeed, according to the statutes of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil, such resolutions require two-thirds of the votes present at the general meeting. The Central Commission is only permitted to speak on behalf of the General Assembly without consulting the latter in very urgent cases.<sup>1888</sup>

It was a perfect paradox: CNBB's Central Commission censored us as we campaigned against the introduction of divorce! Moreover, the document

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<sup>1885</sup> SD 1/19/74.

<sup>1886</sup> “The TFP and the Pro-Divorce Onslaught in Brazil,” *op. cit.*

<sup>1887</sup> SD 1/19/74. On June 26, Dr. Plinio and the National Council signed a manifesto titled “The TFP and the Battle to Introduce Divorce in Brazil,” published in *Folha de S. Paulo*. It briefly chronicled these latest episodes and emphasized the need to continue the campaign.

<sup>1888</sup> “Respectful Defense in Face of a Statement by the Venerable Central Committee of Brazil's National Conference of Bishops,” *Catolicismo*, No. 188, August 1966.



published by the Central Commission presented such confusing reasons that no one understood what it was trying to say.<sup>1889</sup>

It is equally inexplicable that on June 17, the illustrious Cardinal Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, in his well-known and popular radio program Voice of the Shepherd, declared about the campaign:

An ‘appeal’ formulated by the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property has come into our hands. People asked us: Can we sign this appeal? – But of course! We fully support it in this archdiocese. It is important to let the federal authorities know that the people of Guanabara, born in Rio or living here, repudiate divorce and the degradation of the Brazilian family and that they want God’s law to be respected.<sup>1890</sup>

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On June 24, I wrote a letter to Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, the president of CNBB’s Central Commission, which a messenger delivered to Pius XII Palace. In it, I expressed our surprise and pain at what had occurred.

I added that the TFP National Council was unaware of the facts on which the Central Commission based its attack against the Society. I also pointed out that if such allegations should ever be proven, the TFP National Council would not hesitate to apologize to the Central Commission and take all necessary measures to ensure that nothing like that ever happens again.

The letter stated that he had not decided to defend the TFP publicly in the press and was even considering the possibility that a private clarification might avoid such an extreme measure.

At the same time, on behalf of the National Council and in my own name, I affirmed that we had not resolved to defend the TFP through the press and considered that a private clarification might avoid that extreme measure.

This letter received no reply from its illustrious recipient.

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As the campaign against this Society waged in certain pulpits and church vestibules became increasingly acrimonious, Catholic publications started insistently reproducing unfair and spiteful comments about the TFP based on the Central Commission's statement.

Notably, *O São Paulo*, the official paper of the city’s archdiocese, edited by Auxiliary Bishop Dom José Lafayette Ferreira Álvares,<sup>1891</sup> printed in its June

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<sup>1889</sup> SD 1/19/74.

<sup>1890</sup> *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 6/18/66).

<sup>1891</sup> Dom José Lafayette Ferreira Álvares (1903-1997) was Auxiliary Bishop of São Paulo from 1965 to 1971 and Diocesan Bishop of Bragança Paulista from 1971 to 1976, when he resigned. Before his consecration as

26 edition a report with slanderous hints that the Central Commission attacked the TFP because it allegedly released a statement opposing the Second Vatican Council, labeling its decisions as “leftist.”

It was a calumny in the strictest sense of the word. The alleged statement did not exist, and the TFP had never considered publishing any such document.

His Eminence, the Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo, was immediately informed of this slanderous news item, but nothing was published to deny it.

Given all these facts, one after the other, and having exhausted all possibilities of avoiding the publication of a defense,<sup>1892</sup> I drew up a document known as the “Filial Message.”<sup>1893</sup>

This document took an entire page of *O Estado de S. Paulo* (July 26, 1966). It was the first official TFP manifesto showing that the ecclesiastical authority was on its way down the slippery slope, and thus, it took on a symbolic character in our history.<sup>1894</sup> It set the record straight, “dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s,” because it showed all the inconsistencies in the Episcopate’s attitude.<sup>1895</sup>

If all opponents of divorce in Brazil had fought divorce as suggested by the Central Commission’s communiqué, one should fear that the conjugal bond’s indissolubility would see its last days in Brazil.

By the time the statement came out, half a million Brazilians had chosen the TFP as their standard-bearer in the battle against divorce. It was impossible to trample the standard-bearer into the mud without simultaneously trampling the standard itself.<sup>1896</sup>

In the face of this statement, the CNBB remained silent.<sup>1897</sup>

The day this statement was published, we sent our people to Viaduto do Chá to survey the public. Almost everyone we spoke to had read the statement and agreed with it. It was a resounding success.<sup>1898</sup>

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bishop he was the private secretary of Dom José Gaspar and afterward of Cardinal Carlos Carmelo; he showed himself hostile to the Marian Congregations and the *Legionário* group on several occasions.

<sup>1892</sup> “Respectful Defense in Face of a Statement...,” op. cit.

<sup>1893</sup> In TFP circles, “Filial Message” was an abbreviated way to refer to the manifesto titled “Respectful Defense in the Face of a Statement by the Venerable Central Commission of Brazil’s National Conference of Bishops—A Filial Invitation to Dialogue.” This press communiqué was published as an ad on page 7 of *O Estado de S. Paulo* of July 26, 1966, and in several other newspapers around the country. *Catolicismo*, No. 188 of August 1966 also published it in full.

<sup>1894</sup> SD 7/26/69.

<sup>1895</sup> SD 1/19/74.

<sup>1896</sup> “Respectful Defense in the Face of a Statement...,” op. cit.

<sup>1897</sup> SD 8/14/76.

<sup>1898</sup> SD 7/26/69.

As I recall, it was one of the most difficult texts I ever had to write because it involved taking a stand against the ecclesiastical authorities—and arguing on your knees is the hardest thing in the world!

The Church is our mother, and we cannot, must not and do not want to criticize her representatives unless it is absolutely necessary. We must do so in the respectful and dignified language of a child speaking to his mother even when deeply disappointed and sad, keeping a distance from her representatives, feeling unloved and shut out from their affection.<sup>1899</sup>

### 10. Victory Celebrations at Viaduto do Chá and Ipiranga Monument

Despite this statement by CNBB's Central Commission, the campaign continued on its triumphant course. On July 25, the campaign peaked as we reached one million signatures.

On August 12, 1966, the TFP held a victory parade. The short route traversed the Viaduto do Chá during working hours. We left the Municipal Theatre and marched toward Patriarca Square at the other end of the overpass, occupying much of the central strip. A car with a loudspeaker sounded the march *Pomp and Circumstance*,<sup>1900</sup> and all TFP members marched in columns in a solemn procession. The demonstration ended at Patriarca Square, where we sang the National Anthem.

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, we held another demonstration outside the Ipiranga Monument, where Brazil's independence was proclaimed.

We drove there in a long motorcade from our Pará Street headquarters. There, we signed a prayer to Our Lady Aparecida, asking Her not to permit the introduction of divorce in Brazil.<sup>1901</sup>

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<sup>1899</sup> SD 8/18/73.

<sup>1900</sup> *Pomp and Circumstance* designates a set of five marches for an orchestra whose name is inspired by the third act of Shakespeare's *Othello*. The English composer Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934) is the author. March No. 1 was the one played in the TFP parade. On that occasion, Dr. Plinio, members of the National Council and TFP volunteers wore on their lapels a red badge on which the organization's symbol, the golden rampant lion, was printed.

<sup>1901</sup> This prayer ended thus: "In this place in which Brazil, newly born as a nation, received from you, O Mother of God, the first smile and blessing, we submit to you a humble and filial prayer. Preserve and increase the holy Tradition received from our ancestors. Preserve the institution of private property strong and thriving in the proud exercise of its social function. Keep Brazil free from totalitarian ideologies. And above all, Almighty Queen, we ask of you as a special grace to prevent the explicit or surreptitious introduction of divorce in our Brazilian homeland."

On August 28, I gave an interview stressing that the one million signatures collected by the TFP amounted to an unofficial referendum. The whole campaign had been an unqualified success.<sup>1902</sup>

### 11. Castelo Branco Receives TFP's National Council

I am happy to remember the high-mindedness that President Castelo Branco showed us.

Having submitted the draft Civil Code to Congress, he understandably should have felt hurt by the TFP's successful campaign.<sup>1903</sup>

After this campaign, I wrote him an amiable letter in which I nevertheless protested against a measure unrelated to divorce: the Media Law Project.

When visiting São Paulo, he invited the TFP National Council to an audience to express his pleasure at receiving our letter with suggested amendments to the projected bill.<sup>1904</sup>

I still remember vividly the day I received Castelo Branco's invitation.

As I was dining at home with my mother,<sup>1905</sup> my Lithuanian maid, Olga (she had a very distinctive voice) came in to say, "The head of the President's Military Office wants to talk to you."

At first, I thought it was a joke.

I went to the phone, and the head of the Military Office told me that President Castelo Branco wanted to meet with the TFP Board of Directors and me.

So, some members of the National Council and I went to the audience at the Campos Eliseos Palace.<sup>1906</sup>

We arrived at the appointed time, and they immediately presented us to the President.

He was very amiable and said that when coming to São Paulo,<sup>1907</sup> he remembered receiving a letter from the TFP that he found very "noble and kind"

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<sup>1902</sup> Campaigns were held in 142 cities, mobilizing 450 TFP members and volunteers as signature collectors. After dubious signatures were properly excluded, the total attained was 1,042,359. Together, the sheets formed a pile of paper that went from floor to ceiling at the Pará Street headquarters.

<sup>1903</sup> "A Dialogue That Became Impossible," *Catolicismo*, Nos. 196-197, April-May 1967.

<sup>1904</sup> The audience with the head of state occurred on January 25, 1967. In the letter sent to the President on the 13<sup>th</sup> of that month, Dr. Plinio and the TFP National Council asked him to subject the Media Law debated in the House to "substantial modifications, to guarantee the print and broadcasting media the freedom necessary to fulfill their purpose even if licentiousness is abolished." It added, "One must not coerce the media's legitimate expression, but rather protect it zealously" (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 196-197, April/May 1967).

<sup>1905</sup> SD 1/19/74.

<sup>1906</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1907</sup> SD 1/19/74.

(in his own words) and awakened his desire to get to know us personally,<sup>1908</sup> so he invited us to this audience.

We, too, were very polite. We talked a bit and exchanged greetings, and that was it. It was a way for him to show respect and consideration for our campaign, as if saying, “Don’t hold it [the pro-divorce project] against me; it’s over, and we’ll remain good friends.”

We took a photograph with him, which our press service later sent to all newspapers.<sup>1909</sup>

## Chapter XV

# Frei, the Chilean Kerensky (1967)

### 1. The Christian Democrat Government Expels Dr. Fábio from Chile

Let us return to the thread of our narrative.

After our campaign against divorce in 1966, we were again dealing with the distribution of the book written by our dear late friend, Dr. Fabio Xavier da Silveira, *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*.

Fabio, a young and dynamic member of the TFP’s National Council, was deeply involved in the fight against socialist and confiscatory land reform and was a member of the commission of experts consulted by Dom Sigaud, Dom Mayer, Mendonça de Freitas and myself in preparation of the Morro Alto Statement, that is, the positive (and thus anti-socialist and anti-confiscatory) agrarian reform program the TFP was proposing.

Because of his great interest in this question, Fábio Xavier da Silveira went to Chile to study agrarian reform.

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<sup>1908</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1909</sup> SD 1/19/74.

He was in the middle of his investigations when the Frei government arbitrarily ordered him to leave the country within forty-eight hours, even though he had neither said nor done anything to deserve such brutal treatment.<sup>1910</sup>

## 2. Dr. Fabio's Observations

It appeared as though Frei's police used telepathy, as the observations and reflections the visitor had collected – though never expressed – were not favorable to Frei's social and economic policies.

After his return to Brazil, Dr. Fábio wrote down what he had seen in Chile and what he thought about it. These jottings eventually became a book titled *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*.

The author maintained that what Frei was doing was similar to what Kerensky had done in Russia.<sup>1911</sup>

While this is not the time or place to discuss the details of Dr. Fabio's argument in his best-selling book, the facts show that when Allende replaced Frei as president, plenty of people spoke (deservedly so) about the young Brazilian author's prophetic clairvoyance.<sup>1912</sup>

That was how Frei became known in history as the Chilean Kerensky. Fábio's book served as a branding iron, marking him as such.<sup>1913</sup>

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<sup>1910</sup> Here is what happened: On August 29, 1966, Chilean farmers from Temuco invited Dr. Fabio to lecture on agrarian reform in Brazil during the João Goulart period, a lecture strictly limited to the Brazilian situation. However, the Chilean Christian Democrat government considered that in 1966 Chile, any discussion of the pre-1964 period in Brazil indirectly interfered with that nation's internal affairs.

Before leaving Chile, Dr. Fabio requested an audience with the Minister of the Interior, Bernardo Leighton, to whom he vigorously protested against the violent and arbitrary measure he was a victim of (cf. *Catholicismo*, No. 190, October 1966).

<sup>1911</sup> "A Brazilian's International Success," *Folha de S. Paulo*, January 8, 1969—Alexander Fyodorovich Kerensky (1881-1970), Russian revolutionary leader, played a key role in the fall of the Tsarist regime: In the provisional government established immediately afterward, he was prime minister for less than four months, during which time he prepared the rise of Communism to power with the help of Lenin's Bolsheviks.

<sup>1912</sup> "Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/2/72.

<sup>1913</sup> *The Church in the Face of the Escalating Communist Threat*, op. cit. Carlos Altamirano, secretary-general of the Chilean Socialist Party and one of the Allende government's biggest supporters, unexpectedly confirmed this. In an interview with the journalist P. Politzer, he stated about relations between Frei and Allende: "I think the book they published in Brazil, 'Frei, the Chilean Kerensky,' had a very brutal impact on Frei. It was the straw that broke the camel's back. That was when the long-lasting and good relationship between the two of them [Frei and Allende] was definitely broken" (Patricia Politzer, *Altamirano*, pp. 59-60, cited in Gonzalo Juan Larrain Campbell, *Catholicismo*, August 1997).

A similar comment, expressed with acute psychological insight and in a very "French style," can be found in the magazine *Paris Match* (September 22, 1973): "They put a terrible label on him: Kerensky. It made him deeply and disturbingly angry because, deep down in his heart, he is asking himself whether this might not be justified."

### 3. Writing the Book and Giving It a Title

I had the privilege of witnessing the development of this brilliant work.

A profound admirer and connoisseur of all Iberian-American peoples, the young TFP director was aware, to the highest degree, that all Latin peoples of this continent form one family united by the one Faith, tradition, race and community created by the same historic mission.

He saw the differences between the nations founded by glorious Iberia as secondary in the face of this majestic, fundamental unity. The survival of such differences in the twentieth century seemed a real anachronism to him.

This led him to consider, with true love, the prospects of advancement and problems in each sister country. It was the basis for his conviction that no serious problem could threaten any country without affecting all the others.<sup>1914</sup>

I was not the author of the book, but Fabio, who tragically died a few years later of painful cancer. I only collaborated on it to some degree and provided some guidance. He collected the data in Chile and did so very cleverly.<sup>1915</sup>

I helped him by suggesting how the book should be structured. Fabio wrote it in his own inimitable style and produced a very good book on current affairs.<sup>1916</sup>

However, the book's title—*Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*—was based on one of my suggestions.<sup>1917</sup>

I made this suggestion for a title with a lot of hesitation since I wanted him to choose the title of his book for himself. In fact, at one point he almost decided to reject the suggested title.

I was concerned about it for a moment and thought, “It would be a shame if he decides not to use it, but I cannot impose on his book a title he considers inadequate.”

But then I was very pleased to notice that he reconsidered and opted for *Kerensky*.<sup>1918</sup>

The fact is that Frei got that stamped on his forehead<sup>1919</sup> and was referred to as the Chilean Kerensky until his death by political circles and Chilean public opinion.<sup>1920</sup>

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<sup>1914</sup> “Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira,” op. cit.

<sup>1915</sup> Interview with *Cosas* magazine 7/19/91, *apud Tradición Familia Propiedad*, Santiago (Chile), No. 87, 1991.

<sup>1916</sup> Dispatch Argentina 8/9/91.

<sup>1917</sup> RR 10/2/93.

<sup>1918</sup> RR 1/31/76.

<sup>1919</sup> SD 1/23/76.

<sup>1920</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90. The leftist Mexican writer Jose Rodriguez Elizondo commented: “By providing deeper insights into Frei’s personality, the Chilean right would get

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Fábio's success was largely due also to his personality. For those who did not know him personally, it would be difficult to describe what made him so attractive. He was not only intelligent, educated, dynamic, shrewd and tactful; he also had a certain indefinable personal charm that was hard to resist.

He was vivacious, a very pleasant, jovial and witty companion. A conversation with him was always full of surprises, unexpected and penetrating observations, brilliant jokes, generous impulses and tough polemics.<sup>1921</sup>

When remembering him, it is impossible not to miss him.

I wanted Dr. Castilho to review *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*.

Fábio said he had the impression that Dr. Castilho cut into his skin. They went to Morro Alto Farm in Amparo to work on *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*. Afterward, Dr. Fábio acknowledged that this revision was an excellent idea and that the book benefited enormously.<sup>1922</sup>

#### 4. Feeling "Threatened," the Frei Administration Bans the Book

The book provoked a strong reaction in Chile. It was read and commented on in all cultural and political environments.<sup>1923</sup> The unofficial paper of the Christian Democrats, *La Nación*, the Communist newspaper *El Siglo*, and the socialist newspapers, *Clarín*, *Ultima Hora* and *La Tarde*, united to defend the "threatened" regime.

The Frei government felt the book's impact so much that it banned its sale, to no avail. Thousands of copies arrived in the mail from Buenos Aires, and the government confiscated them.<sup>1924</sup>

Chileans' curiosity about *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*, was such that the book circulated widely from hand to hand, eagerly sought and read with delight by an extensive public.<sup>1925</sup>

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better dividends from its attacks. One single touch was sufficient to pull the ground from under his feet ... [the right] published and distributed throughout the continent a book titled 'Frei, the Chilean Kerensky.' In the book – starting with the title – he was accused of having been the sorcerer's apprentice who unleashed the forces of the Bolshevik Revolution from a key position in Latin America. This touched the most sensitive spot of one who had presented himself – along with his party – as the real alternative against the socialist revolution, an alternative meant to serve as an example to all nations of the so-called third world" (Jose Rodriguez Elizondo, *Introducción al facismo chileno*, Editorial Ayuso, SA, Mexico, 1976, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., p. 62, apud Juan Gonzalo Larrain Campbell, *Catolicismo*, August 1997).

<sup>1921</sup> "Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira," op. cit.

<sup>1922</sup> EXT 7/31/73.

<sup>1923</sup> "Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira," op. cit.

<sup>1924</sup> The news of this ban was disclosed in bombastic headlines by the press of São Paulo and Rio on October 27, 1967. On the following day, October 28, the TFP Press Service issued a press release reporting the TFP's protest against this dictatorial measure (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 203, November 1967).

<sup>1925</sup> "A Brazilian's International Success," op. cit.



A real “black market” sprang up, with people trying to buy the book from the numerous Chilean tourists returning from Buenos Aires with the Spanish edition of the Argentine TFP in their luggage.<sup>1926</sup>

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In Buenos Aires, Mr. Krauss, Undersecretary of the Chilean Ministry of the Interior, lost his head and demanded that the local police arrest young local TFP members selling the book. Of course, the police did not do so. The local press even wrote about a diplomatic incident.

In short, the controversy was heating up, involving government agencies and VIPs.<sup>1927</sup>

The book had shaken Chile.

However, its effect was not confined to Chile. Offered for sale in street campaigns by members and volunteers of the TFP and similar entities in most South American countries, *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky* enjoyed rapid and dazzling success.<sup>1928</sup>

By dispelling the Christian-Democrat myth, Dr. Fabio’s book made an important contribution to changing the continent’s historical direction and demanding new alternatives and solutions.<sup>1929</sup>

### 5. Pressures on Foreign Ministry, Campaign Forbidden Also in Brazil

Something significant occurred when we launched *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*, in Brazil and began distributing it.

When the campaign reached a certain point, I received a call from Itamaraty, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. With the President’s approval, they told me that the Foreign Minister ordered us to stop our campaign.

I said I wanted to know the reason for the ban.

He said: “It’s a decision taken by the President of the Republic.”

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<sup>1926</sup> “Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira,” op. cit. For example, the Chilean magazine *7 Dias* published a cartoon that took up three-quarters of a page and showed a person reading an Argentine edition of the book, covering his face like someone who does not want to be identified. Below it, the columnist Andrés Cruz Arjona cites the comment of a friend who had obtained the book for him: “I do not understand why the government has put this book on the ‘index’ and banned the Chileans from reading it. Inevitably, the only effect of this measure has been to provide the most effective advertising possible for the publication, which is now circulating clandestinely in untold numbers. Each owner of a copy who has managed to avoid confiscation has had to draw a list of relatives and friends queuing up to read the book, to pass it around to them in strict order of registration” (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 204, December 1967, and No. 205, January 1968).

<sup>1927</sup> “A Brazilian’s International Success,” op. cit.

<sup>1928</sup> The book was published in Brazil (four editions), Argentina (six editions), Venezuela (three editions, one of which was published in the newspaper *La Verdad*), Colombia, Ecuador, and, finally, Italy for a total of sixteen editions and 128, 800 copies.

<sup>1929</sup> “Fabio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira,” op. cit.

I said, “But may I know the reasons underlying the President’s decision?”

He said: “We are in a military dictatorship, and so the President does not owe you any explanation.”

I said, “I would like to point out to the President, through you, that this dictatorship was implemented in Brazil to fight Communism. We are going out on the streets to fight Communism and are being reprimanded and restrained because we are anticommunist. Can there be a stronger contradiction than an anticommunist dictatorship banning anticommunist propaganda? I do not understand it.”

He replied, “I am sorry if you do not understand, but this is how it is. You must cease your propaganda, or you will be prosecuted.”

I hung up the phone, and there was nothing I could do.<sup>1930</sup> The TFP obeyed, not without protest, our authorities' unusual decision, which honored an unreasonable injunction by Chile’s Christian Democrat government.<sup>1931</sup>

This ban came after we sold twenty-five thousand copies of the book here in Brazil.

## 6. Attempts to Ban the Book throughout South America

Chilean diplomats tried unsuccessfully to block the campaign in other Latin American nations.<sup>1932</sup>

I will deal later with the book's impact on the rise to power of Marxist Allende.<sup>1933</sup>

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<sup>1930</sup> SD 9/20/91.

<sup>1931</sup> Diplomatic pressure from Chile’s “Christian Democrat” government came from its ambassador in Brazil, Hector Correa Letelier. In the September 1967 issue of *Catolicismo* (No. 201), we published the full text – including a full refutation – of a letter he addressed to the paper’s editor on August 7, 1967. Such pressures disclosed the unease caused by the allegations in the book *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky* on Eduardo Frei's role in preparing Chile for the rise of Communism, which took place over three years later under the Marxist Allende.

<sup>1932</sup> In Argentina, the Chilean Ambassador Hernán Videla Lira presented himself at the Foreign Ministry to express the “*concern of the government*” of Chile regarding the sale of the book in Buenos Aires (cf. *La Prensa*, Buenos Aires, March 7, 1968 and *La Tarde*, Santiago, March 8, 1968).

In Peru, Ambassador Horacio Walker Larrain engaged in a controversy with a columnist of *La Prensa* of Lima (November 23, 1967), who had praised the work.

In Caracas, the Chilean chargé d'affaires sent letters to *La Verdad* (November 10 and 17, 1967) to protest against an article titled “The Index of the Revolution in Freedom,” signed by its editor.

<sup>1933</sup> cf. *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*, op. cit.

## Chapter XVI

# Articles for *Folha de S. Paulo* (1968-1990)

### 1. An Unexpected Invitation

For over twenty years, I was a columnist in *Folha de S. Paulo*, the most widely read daily paper in São Paulo.

The numerous articles I wrote for this paper were the most boldly Catholic and counter-revolutionary imaginable.<sup>1934</sup>

The opportunity to publish these articles in the *Folha* came about in an entirely unexpected way. One day in 1967, before I suffered a crisis with diabetes at the end of that year, Dr. Plinio Xavier went to see Otavio Frias, the editor of *Folha de S. Paulo*.<sup>1935</sup>

During the conversation, Frias said, “You represent a voice that deserves to be heard, and so I will open my newspaper to you. Can you ask Dr. Plinio to write a weekly article for the paper?”

This was a huge surprise for us because, until then, it had been very difficult for us to access the media. We had to pay very dearly for anything we managed to publish. And suddenly, the editor of a newspaper of the importance of *Folha de S. Paulo* was offering us a column<sup>1936</sup> – and, what is more, offering it unsolicited.<sup>1937</sup>

Shortly after, in December 1967, I suffered a violent diabetes attack.<sup>1938</sup> I fell very seriously ill and was *hors de combat* for about six months. When I was

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<sup>1934</sup> Sup 10/9/94. This collaboration began on August 7, 1968, with an article titled “6 Lessons of the 600,000” and ended on February 9, 1990, with the article “A Topical Commentary, an Ancient Prediction.”

<sup>1935</sup> Otávio Frias de Oliveira (1912-2007). Brazilian journalist, editor, and businessman, he belonged to a traditional family in Rio de Janeiro, where he was born. His great-grandfather was the Baron of Itambi, an influential politician in the Second Empire. When his family moved to São Paulo, Frias studied at the São Luis School of the Society of Jesus. He stood out by turning *Folha de S. Paulo* into one of the most influential media outlets in the country. Under his direction, *Folha* endorsed the military regime’s idea of political openness, opened its pages to all tendencies of opinion, and increased the critical content of its issues. From 1986, it became the morning daily with the largest circulation nationwide.

<sup>1936</sup> SD 8/18/73.

<sup>1937</sup> RR 8/11/73.

<sup>1938</sup> Dr. Plinio’s statement to the magazine *Madre del Buon Consiglio*, published by the Augustinian Fathers of Genazzano (Italy), July-August 1985, p. 28.

well again, I remembered the offer, but it seemed so unlikely that I had put it aside and not thought about it anymore.

A few months later, Dr. Plinio Xavier again visited the offices of the paper. Frias told him, “I offered Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira a column, but he apparently did not think it worth his while to get back to me. Tell him to write something, for the column is still open if he wants it.”

My health was still rather fragile, and I was afraid to commit myself. I tried to get another member of the TFP to write the column in my place.

However, when talking to Dr. Plinio Xavier, Frias was adamant: “I want the cooperation of Dr. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira and none other. I will either publish an article written by him – or nothing.”

Nothing like this had ever happened to me, so I sat down and started writing.

## **2. Adopting a Polemic Style, Like a Swordsman**

For me, there were two possible ways of doing this.

One would have been the diplomatic way—trying to displease no one and avoid complaints. Would not it be better to publish bland, inoffensive, “watered-down” articles? From a purely human, worldly, prudential point of view, it would certainly be the better option.

However, man cannot live solely by practical reasoning; many more things move his soul and deserve his attention.

Had I chosen to write articles that were less than categorical, pugnacious, and peremptory from the doctrinal standpoint, I would have felt somehow untrue to myself.

Even worse would have been the feeling that I was betraying our cause and doctrine, thus doing something seriously and categorically illicit. I would have had the difficult-to-define impression that I was acting against Providence's designs, pushing me, in an indefinable way—as Providence is sometimes wont to do – to act with courage and show my true colors irrespective of the outcome.

So, my articles were always controversial. I wrote what I wanted and said what I had to say.

Our Lady blessed this anti-strategic strategy and provided years of continuous battles during which, strictly speaking, not one article failed to contain a direct and undisguised attack against our ideological opponent, relentlessly exposing his weaknesses.

## **3. Clarity, Logic, Depth, and Integrity**

What did I want my *Folha* readers to think?

Above all, I wanted them to see TFP positions very clearly defined and understand them as long as they had the minimum culture the article required.

So, my first goal was clarity. The article should be easy to understand and clearly express my thoughts. I wanted to write articles that left no one in doubt about my ideas and sentiments.

Secondly, there should be logic so that readers would understand that my articles were connected by a common thread, a logical and consistent sequence of ideas rather than aimlessly wandering or changeable opinions.

The third criterion was depth: The issue addressed should be discussed in depth as far as possible, within the constraints of a newspaper article, and not just treated superficially.

Finally, there should be integrity: Never allege anything but what is entirely true; never give an argument that would force anything; never make an accusation that is not strictly verifiable. The idea was to communicate with absolute honesty and come across as advocating a cause holy enough to dispense with any tricks or ruses to persuade and convince.

#### **4. A Lively Style Combined with Elevated Language**

What did I try to avoid in these articles?

Since the articles represented Tradition, I was careful not to use “old hats” and always discussed current issues.

Moreover, I wanted to use elevated language that was true to our principles without sounding pretentious.

For example, it would have sounded pretentious for a preacher speaking of bread produced under the ashes, as referred to in the Old Testament, to use the expression *panis subcinericius*. *Cinere* means ash; *subcinericius* means under the ashes. The word is correct but not part of the common language. That is what I call pretentious and sought to avoid.

I made the issues come alive by presenting them as I would have done in a conversation. It was crucial to avoid a cold and academic tone, inviting the reader to turn away from real life to enter an icy museum of ideas. Thus, I attempted to present a logical way of thinking—as traditional as possible—while wording thoughts and conclusions to make them lively and attractive to the modern reader.

#### **5. Sights Set on the “Intelligentsia”**

When writing the articles, I always kept in mind what is called the “intelligentsia,” that is, the class of people who dedicate themselves particularly to study and intellectual life and whose main occupation is not to pursue a profession to make money but to study and acquire a high degree of culture, at least with the society in which they live.

In the Brazilian society where we lived, many university professors, newspaper contributors, and highly educated professionals such as lawyers, doctors, engineers, economists, and others fit that description. They could also include members of the clergy, the Armed Forces, and certain artists.

One could, therefore, define a country's intelligentsia as a particularly literate class that influential men listen to, although this class has a small direct impact on the public.

Who are these influential people? They are those who achieve great success in their chosen careers. They listen to intellectuals, and through them, the intellectuals influence the country's political development.<sup>1939</sup>

## 6. "You Stir Up Controversy"

On a later date, when Dr. Plinio Xavier took the manifesto of Resistance to the Vatican *Ostpolitik* to the *Folha* for publication, the director who received him said, "The TFP provokes a lot of reactions from the public. Dr. Plinio's articles in the *Folha* generate an average of twenty letters a week. Of these twenty, seventeen are usually against, and three are in favor."

He added: "You are a minority, but a minority with many supporters. You stir up controversy, and that's why I am happy to publish your opinions."<sup>1940</sup>

## Chapter XVII

# Communist Infiltration in the Church: 2,025,201 Signatures Addressed to Paul VI (1968)

## 1. Father Comblin's Subversive Document

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<sup>1939</sup> SD 8/18/73.

<sup>1940</sup> RR 4/10/74.

By a happy coincidence, the publication of my articles in the *Folha* started just as we ran a high-profile campaign in 1968: The petition to Paul VI asking for measures against Communist infiltration in the Church.

From the purely strategic point of view of the struggle against the Revolution, the campaign against Communist infiltration in the Church and the Belgian priest Joseph Comblin's subversive document was the most important one we had undertaken.<sup>1941</sup>

## 2. The Catholic Left Initially Camouflaged Its Procommunist Position

It is important to remember that the historical precedents for this campaign occurred during our battle over liturgism and Catholic Action.

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<sup>1941</sup> This paper, known as the Comblin document, was titled "Notes on the Basic Document for the Second General CELAM Conference." It was first published by *O Estado de S. Paulo* on June 14, 1968, and caused a massive scandal in Brazil.

The Belgian priest Joseph Comblin (1923-2011) was ordained a priest in 1947 and came to Brazil in 1958. In São Paulo, he was a professor at the Theological School of the Dominicans in the Jardins neighborhood, where his students included Frei Betto and Frei Tito.

At the invitation of Dom Helder Câmara, he took over as teacher of the Theological Institute of Recife, where he wrote the infamous document that was leaked to the press and caused stupor in Brazil by its recommendations to use as a valid means of overthrowing the existing social structures, a revolution in the Church, subversion in the country, the toppling of the government, the dissolution of the armed forces and the institution of an iron-fisted socialist dictatorship shored up by special courts and equipped with powers to silence any malcontents by terrorizing them.

Dom Helder Câmara, questioned by the press, said that "the document sent by Father Comblin, of the Theological Institute of Recife, is perfectly valid within the context of a personal study of CELAM's base document" but that he did not quite agree "with all the statements contained therein" (cf. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, June 13, 1968, p. 4). However, those who did not agree "with all of the said statements" did agree with some of them. At any rate, the document as a whole was entirely unacceptable.

The following are some of the points of this subversive program:

"It is not enough to make laws. It is necessary to impose them by force. To start with, power will be authoritarian and dictatorial. You cannot carry out radical reforms by consulting the majority: the majority prefer to 'sit back and relax,' they prefer to avoid problems."

"Power must rely on force. Where will this force come from? Sometimes, you can count on the military; sometimes, it is necessary to dissolve them. Sometimes, it may be necessary to distribute weapons to the people. Sometimes, calling a referendum under carefully prepared circumstances will be sufficient. At other times, the propaganda media center will suffice. In any case, it will be necessary to mount a repressive system: new special courts with powers over those who oppose the reforms. The ordinary procedures of justice are slow. The legislature cannot rely on deliberative assemblies."

"Power must be used to neutralize the forces of resistance: neutralization of the armed forces if they are conservative; control of the press, TV, radio and other broadcast media; censorship of destructive and reactionary criticism."

"...It will be necessary to make alliances, work out compromises, 'get our hands dirty by entering into dirty alliances' to enable progressives to overthrow the government and seize power" (cf. "O incólume" [The Unscathed], *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/7/69).

This priest, whose ideas would have deserved the most energetic censure from his ecclesiastical superiors, received instead warm praise from the archbishop of the archdiocese in which he was working, Dom Helder Câmara, and his Auxiliary Bishop José Lamartine Soares (cf. *REB – Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira*, September 1972, p. 697).

Since 1940—years before the publication of my book *In Defense of Catholic Action*—members and supporters of that leftist current had priests, nuns and lay people. They were supported by the sympathy or naiveté of many bishops and priests who openly belonged to it and began to be appointed by these bishops and priests to positions of authority in the Catholic Movement, while the same bishops and priests harshly persecuted the *Legionário* group.

We knew this was a leftist current. After analyzing its tendencies, we realized that it would inevitably result in some form of Communism.

We knew about this from conversations with them and from what we could read between the lines of articles published in their newspapers and magazines. Their true thoughts and intentions were only found between the lines because they were well aware that Brazil was very anticommunist and that an openly favorable attitude toward Communism would lose them a good number of grassroots and sympathizers.

For this reason, their public positions were only vaguely leftist. They dwelt insistently on the idea of supporting the poor, which is a great and wonderful goal. But they discussed this issue using demagogic terms with intemperate and ambiguous attacks on the “evil rich.”

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The man who stood out as a figurehead during this period, founding charitable works and making demagogic speeches, was a priest from Ceara who had been a staunch “integralist” (i.e., a fascist): Dom Helder Pessoa Câmara. They even say that during his priestly ordination, he wore a green shirt underneath his cassock.

He was good with people, talkative and jovial, and quickly became the symbol of the Catholic Left in Brazil, idolized by many in the upper classes of Rio de Janeiro and to some extent in São Paulo and elsewhere in Brazil.

We knew these people were Communist sympathizers but had no proof.

And so, things dragged on. They continued talking, and we remained more or less silent, making only a few insinuations against them, as veiled as their propaganda; only a few people were even aware of this.

### **3. In the 1960s, Removing the Mask**

In 1960, these people openly began to publish Communist propaganda. That was when small groups of the conservative bourgeoisie (much more anticommunist then) began taking action against the leftist clergy.

People did talk about the issue occasionally, but always with some reservations, choosing their words carefully. The clergy had hitherto led morally unassailable lives, observed the rules of Canon Law and preached orthodox



doctrine, so there was great respect for them. At the time, they were perhaps the greatest power in Brazil.

All politicians trembled before a statement by the Episcopate, and the public accepted and obeyed any such pronouncement as indisputable. A word from the bishops could close any discussion. In Catholic circles, even the word of a simple priest could suffice to resolve an issue.

That should be the normal order of things. Organizations have their authorities, and the authorities are well respected. When they pronounce upon a question, it ought to be considered solved.

That normal order did not exist in the Church anymore. However, the authorities continued to enjoy a semblance of prestige that was a holdover from when the proper order was still in full force.

#### **4. An Ideal Moment to Denounce the Leftist Clergy**

How could one break this taboo and show the entire Brazilian public that the situation had changed and high-ranking clerics supported that veiled or open Communist propaganda while others, figuratively speaking, leaned back in their rocking chairs, eyes closed, and refused to take a clear position? In an Episcopate comprising about two hundred bishops at the time, at most, twenty bishops were prepared to take action against the danger that was raising its ugly head.

The two options open to the TFP were to ignore this danger or take advantage of an occasion where it revealed itself to deal it a blow.

We knew that we would not be able to achieve anything worth mentioning unless we were prepared to fight the leftist clergy. And we needed to catch the leftist clergy red-handed, with hands in their neighbor's pocket.

Such an opportunity presented itself when *O Estado de S. Paulo* published the famous Comblin document cited above, and that is when we decided to launch the campaign.

#### **5. To Paul VI: Stop Communist Infiltration in the Church**

The campaign consisted of a petition asking Pope Paul VI to intervene to stop Communist infiltration into the Church, giving the Comblin Document as an example of that infiltration.<sup>1942</sup>

Our initial idea was to get two or three hundred thousand signatures, to provide proof that a considerable number of Brazilians had realized that there were Communists among the clergy, and thus tear off the mask of Catholic

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<sup>1942</sup> SD 1/26/74. This petition was titled "Reverent and Filial Message to Pope Paul VI." Its full text, as well as extensive coverage of this campaign, can be found in *Catholicism*, Nos. 211, July 1968; 212/214, August-October 1968; 216, December 1968; and 218, February 1969.

Crypto-Communism, that enormous power which made all politicians shake in their boots.

The campaign intended to spread this petition throughout Brazil, in full awareness that a tremendous backlash would ensue. We knew we would have to hold out against that.

## 6. A Chronology of Significant Events

First, I wrote a letter to Dom Helder, pointing out the dangers inherent in the Comblin Document and asking for this priest's removal from the Archdiocese of Recife.<sup>1943</sup>

If Dom Helder dismissed the priest, he would have to admit that he had appointed a subversive priest as a professor in the seminary.

Since he had no arguments, he gave an interview three days after my letter was published, saying he would not answer the TFP. He kept that promise and said nothing.

This meant he had seen the letter and knew he was in a tight corner. So, when we launched the campaign, Dom Helder was already somewhat in trouble.

On June 25, 1968, Congressman Cunha Bueno of São Paulo, without telling us, took our document and read it out during a speech in the House of Representatives, heaping high praise on our arguments. That brought the document to the attention of politicians from all over Brazil.

Shortly before that, on June 23, Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud wrote a letter to Cardinal Rossi with copies to all bishops urging them to purge Father Comblin's ideas from all Catholic media. That letter, published on June 30, meant pressure exercised by the two bishops, another way of supporting our campaign.

On 9 July, Cardinal Rossi replied via the press, stating that the Comblin document was not an official Church document and that the hierarchy was not required to comment on these ideas.

On June 23, we also started distributing my letter to Dom Helder at the exits of churches in São Paulo and other capitals and cities where the TFP had established groups. The reactions were all very encouraging.<sup>1944</sup>

On July 7, Father Comblin finally gave a statement. His way of weaseling out of the controversy was to allege that the document was not written for the public but only for specialists.

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<sup>1943</sup> This letter, dated June 21, 1968, was published in São Paulo and Recife newspapers on June 23, 1968.

<sup>1944</sup> One of the slogans used during this campaign was, "We venerate the clergy but do not want subversive priests." This slogan was adopted by the Brazilian press and quoted, for example, by Ibrahim Sued, a well-known gossip columnist for the Rio newspaper *O Globo*.

While responding to leftist attacks in the newspapers, we made preparations for taking to the streets, studying how to distribute stalls in groups, and giving instructions.

On July 17, 1968, we all went to Patriarca Square, where we launched the petition campaign with a bang that no one had expected.

On the first day alone, we collected 80,000 signatures – clearly showing the extent to which people supported and identified with our position. The next day, July 18, the newspapers published the text of our message to Paul VI.

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At a CNBB meeting on July 20, Dom Helder launched a movement called *Liberating Moral Pressure* to get himself re-elected secretary-general of that episcopal body. But he was discredited to such an extent that he got no more than seven votes. That was due to the shock his pro-communist attitudes caused among the bishops, aggravated by the scandal of our public campaign. So, they decided not to re-elect him.<sup>1945</sup>

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That meant that Dom Helder had lost a key position: He, the true leader of the CNBB, was reduced to his office as Archbishop of Olinda and Recife and was no longer the mastermind behind the entire Brazilian episcopate.

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On that same day, Mrs. Yolanda Costa e Silva, the country's first lady, signed our document, and we immediately published the news in all the papers. Every day, more news appeared of important persons in São Paulo, Rio, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Fortaleza and other cities who signed our petition.

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On July 21, the campaign launched in Chile; on July 22, it reached Argentina.

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On July 23, on a motion by Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud, 19 archbishops and bishops wrote a letter to President Costa e Silva stating that they disagreed with the attitude of leftist Catholics in Brazil; this greatly supported our cause.<sup>1946</sup>

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<sup>1945</sup> Dom Helder was CNBB general secretary from its foundation in 1952 until 1964, when he was replaced by Dom José Gonçalves Costa, then Auxiliary Bishop of Cardinal Jaime Câmara. Dom Costa held the position until the 1968 meeting, which saw the election of Dom Aloisio Lorscheider, then Bishop of Santo Ângelo (RS).

<sup>1946</sup> Three days later (on July 26, 1968), Dom Sigaud participated in a television debate in Rio, during which he talked about a confrontation he had with Dom Helder Câmara concerning the type of social structure the latter was advocating for Brazil. *O Cruzeiro* magazine, in its issue of August 24, published an

Shortly after, during the Ninth General Assembly of the CNBB, another document was published in which 40 archbishops and bishops addressed Dom Agnelo Rossi, then Archbishop of São Paulo and president of the CNBB, and denounced the serious errors that were circulating among Catholics. This document, too, was owed to the efforts of Dom Mayer and Dom Sigaud. It was obvious that some of the archbishops and bishops of Brazil shared our point of view and supported us.<sup>1947</sup>

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On August 1, 1968, the TFP commended and declared its support for the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Pope Paul VI, prohibiting birth control pills.

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On August 28, the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia. The TFP protested against this invasion and, on the next day, had a Mass celebrated in Rio de Janeiro for the souls of the Czechs killed. I sent a telegram to the Foreign Minister expressing my outrage.

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interview with Dom Sigaud about this episode. During that interview, when asked for his opinion of Dom Helder's Liberating Moral Pressure Movement, Dom Sigaud said:

"I consider this movement a methodical organization of nationwide leftist agitation. On July 18, Dom Helder held an informal meeting ... that was a CNBB meeting. ... After his lecture was over, several questions were raised. I asked Dom Helder for clarification concerning the following questions: 1 – Does Your Excellency admit private initiative? 2 – Does Your Excellency consider it lawful for private individuals to own the means of production? 3 – Is Your Excellency in favor of private property? 4 – Concerning social and economic issues, what should be the State's role: should it be supplementary, or should the State own the land? 5 – Would the 'evangelical society' advocated by Your Excellency allow a free market?"

"Dom Helder could not, was not able to or did not want to answer me, so I asked him to answer at least one question: In the society of his dreams, would individuals be permitted to own means of production? For example, would an individual be allowed to own a factory or a workshop, or would the State own everything?"

"Dom Helder replied that he would entrust this question to the universities for study. I then pointed out that the popes had spoken on this issue since Leo XIII and gave the response of genuine sociology. Dom Helder said it would be better if I appointed a committee of experts and he another and that we should discuss this question one day. I answered that he had been agitating all over Brazil for fifteen years, talking about structural reforms without stating clearly what structures should be changed, where and why, and that he should finally let us know what kind of society he wanted to create.

"Dom Helder could not, was unable to or unwilling to answer me. I told a friend who asked me whether I would join the Liberating Moral Pressure Movement: 'My friend, I do not take a tram unless I know its destination. I say to Dom Helder, Dom Padim, Dom Jorge Marcos, Dom Frago: Let's put the cards on the table! Tell me, once and for all: Where do you want to take Brazil? My friends and I have no secrets. Why do Your Excellencies have secrets? Why do you want to lead the nation to an unknown destination? Or is your answer found in Father Comblin's work?'" (Cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 212-214, August-October 1968).

<sup>1947</sup> These documents can be found in *Catolicismo*, No. 212-214.

I also sent a telegram to Paul VI, who was attending the Eucharistic Congress in Medellín, Colombia. I expressed my homage and filial obeisance to the Pontiff, telling him about our petition campaign and apologizing for not submitting the petition to him immediately because our campaign was still ongoing. He did not answer.

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In September 1968, calumnies against the TFP started popping up.

Day 6: "Security Police Identify Nazi Techniques in TFP organization."

Day 7: "Government Orders Investigation of TFP." Needless to say, nothing of this kind ever took place.

Day 9: "TFP Might Have Placed Bomb in Brazil School." I do not even remember what "Brazil School" it was.

These news items were so improbable that no one paid much attention.

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On September 11, 1968, we announced we had obtained one million five hundred thousand signatures. The magazines *Veja* and *Realidade*, which had a wide circulation, published news reports.<sup>1948</sup>

On September 12, the campaign officially closed; the number of signatures collected was still slightly over 1,500,000.

## 7. Wonderful Closing Session in São Paulo

A brilliant closing session was held in the House of Portugal in São Paulo. Many representatives of high society attended in a crowded auditorium that held two thousand people.<sup>1949</sup>

Dom Mayer, Dom Sigaud, and I were the speakers at that meeting.

At one point during the session, I interrupted my speech to say that I had received notice that the young volunteers who had traveled all over Brazil to collect signatures for the petition had just arrived to attend. Such was their heroism that I proposed that the audience receive them with a standing ovation.

The hall burst into applause. Everyone got up, clapping as caravan members entered with their standards and stood on both sides of the auditorium.

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<sup>1948</sup> SD 1/26/74. The petition had spread across South America, with 266,512 signatures in Argentina, 121,210 in Chile, and 37,111 in Uruguay. In the final count, when these added to the 1,600,368 signatures obtained in Brazil, we had a total of 2,025,201 signatures (cf. *A Man, A Life Work, an Epic Saga*, cit.).

<sup>1949</sup> *Catolicismo* (No. 212-214, August-October of 1968) published a triple issue with a 25-page report on this campaign against communist infiltration in the Church, covering the solemn campaign closure on p. 18.

Another very beautiful moment came when two soldiers of the Military Police played a bugle call with their trumpets to honor all victims of communism. Everyone again rose to their feet, a wonderful gesture.

When the session ended, another standing ovation lasted for a long time.

It was the most brilliant session the TFP had ever held, more brilliant than anything I had ever seen at any indoor event in my entire life.

The campaign caused a stir throughout Brazil.

When we declared it closed, more than one million five hundred thousand Brazilians had supported us.

For the Catholic and non-Catholic left, protesting against it was useless—the campaign was victorious. One million five hundred thousand had agreed with us, and the campaign was a resounding success.<sup>1950</sup>

When the campaign was over, it was clear to all Brazilians that one million five hundred thousand fellow countrymen from different social classes and leading personalities such as bishops, government ministers, admirals, generals, brigadier generals, university professors, journalists, congressmen, senators, the rich, the middle classes, the poor, all had become aware that communism had infiltrated the Catholic Church.

That meant that the Catholic left had been unmasked.

It resulted from a two-month campaign mounted by a small organization that knew how to take advantage of the right moment, moved swiftly, and was favored by Our Lady.<sup>1951</sup>

## 8. Petition Delivered; Paul VI Remains Silent

One of the problems we faced was getting the countless sheets full of signatures to the Vatican. Placed one above the other, they formed a stack about 10 meters high.<sup>1952</sup>

You could not entrust them to ordinary postal transport. The other possibility was to send them in a Vatican diplomatic bag.

Would the sheets not be too bulky to transport in the Nunciature's diplomatic bag? Yes, and the obvious solution was to microfilm all sheets.

We began microfilming, and it resulted in developing 85 rolls of film.<sup>1953</sup>

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<sup>1950</sup> *Time* magazine captured the profound meaning of this success. In its issue of August 23, 1968, it commented: "The ease with which TFP collected the signatures reflects the fact that a majority of Latinos either approve or at least tolerate [sic] Catholic conservatism."

<sup>1951</sup> SD 1/26/74.

<sup>1952</sup> Again, they totaled 2,025,201 signatures.

<sup>1953</sup> These rolls were packed in a box measuring 80 x 50 x 20 cm.

On June 20, 1969, I wrote to Archbishop Umberto Mozzoni, Apostolic Nuncio to Brazil, asking His Excellency to include this consignment of historical importance in the diplomatic bag.

I imagined the request to transport a petition of great significance in the diplomatic bag would not encounter great obstacles given the sheer number and high caliber of signatories (many archbishops, bishops, ministers of state, governors and state secretaries, senior officers of the armed forces, parliamentarians, academics, etc.) and the issue at stake.

However, in a letter of July 2, the distinguished Holy See representative replied that “Under the superiors’ instructions,” the Nunciature’s diplomatic bag was strictly reserved for official communications.

Several months passed as we searched for a reliable carrier. We finally found him in October.<sup>1954</sup>

That message went unanswered despite the seriousness of its subject matter, the high positions of many of its signatories and the number of those who signed it.<sup>1955</sup> The petition was met with the coldest and most complete silence, regardless of its filial, respectful and submissive style and the burning anguish that had led to it.

Nothing was done to stem the tide.

History will one day point out that this omission played a tragic role in the drama about to start.<sup>1956</sup>

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<sup>1954</sup> “SOS by Millions—The Small Bag—‘All’s Normal,’” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/30/69. The delivery was done personally by a friend of the TFP on November 7, 1969. The important documents were entrusted to an official record keeper at the Secretariat of State of the Holy See.

<sup>1955</sup> “Religion at the Service of Irreligion,” cit.

<sup>1956</sup> “The Whole Truth about the Elections in Chile,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/10/70 & *Catolicismo* No. 238, October 1970.

## Chapter XVIII

# The Red Archbishop Opens the Gates of America And the World to Communism

### 1. Dom Helder at the CICOP: Politics of Surrender to Communism

In late 1969, while our petition to Paul VI was still fresh in everyone's memory, Dom Helder Câmara embarked on a tour of the Old and New Worlds.

As usual, he missed no opportunity to promote his customary policies.<sup>1957</sup>

That was particularly obvious in his extremely serious statements in New York at the closing ceremony of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Catholic Program of Inter-American Cooperation (CICOP).<sup>1958</sup>

From beginning to end, these statements outlined a policy of surrender of the whole world, and specifically of America, to Communism.

Dom Helder asked that Communist China be admitted to the United Nations. Since China was one of the five permanent members with the right to veto the UN's supreme body, the Security Council, the admission of the Beijing government would necessarily mean that Chiang Kai-Shek's representative would have to be replaced by Mao Tse-Tung.

Dom Helder also called for "reintegrating Cuba into the Latin American community ... with due respect for its political views."

Among other things, Dom Helder asserted that "Humanity's first problem is not the clash between East and West but between North and South - that is, between the developed and the underdeveloped world."

This cryptic statement was intended to disarm the vigilance of anticommunists by relegating to a secondary level the great religious, philosophical and cultural controversy between the Christian and the atheist world and spotlight the economic problem of underdevelopment – an inversion of values entirely consistent with Marxist doctrine.

The TFP waited for Dom Helder Câmara to deny the claims the national press attributed to him. No denial came, and his track record made it very doubtful that he would ever deny those allegations, let alone with the clarity and accuracy that would have been essential.

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<sup>1957</sup> "Dom Helder Creates Problem—Communists Applaud," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/1/70.

<sup>1958</sup> This speech was made on January 25, 1969.



Given the extreme gravity of Dom Helder's statements, the TFP considered it a patriotic duty to disagree with his disconcerting suggestions and published a statement titled, "The Red Archbishop Opens the Gates of America and the World to Communism."<sup>1959</sup>

## 2. Paul VI Comforts Dom Helder Camara

It was very sad<sup>1960</sup> to see a bishop of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church use the prestige derived from his lofty dignity as a successor of the Apostles to try and destroy the Free World's most valuable military and political ramparts to defend against communism.<sup>1961</sup>

All this would not have been significant had it not gone beyond Dom Helder's personal importance.

The event's importance was not due to Dom Helder but to the pope. When he arrived in Rome, right in the middle of his propaganda tour, Dom Helder met with His Holiness and later gave his version of what happened during that meeting.

The fact that this version was widely published in Brazil and abroad was important because it implied a certain attitude on the part of the highest leader of Christendom toward Dom Helder's exploits.

First, according to an "official Vatican source," the meeting took place in an atmosphere of "great cordiality."

Dom Helder spoke with the Holy Father about his "past experiences" and "projects." The archbishop let fall that he did not meet the least censure but left the audience reassured, with "his soul as a bishop comforted."

He later said Brazil "should consider socialist models suitable to our particular needs." Brazilian socialism should not correspond to what is practiced in socialist countries, he added. "I dream of socialization, being able to create the conditions necessary for the comprehensive development of man, as stated in the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*."

Dom Helder's statements, although full of the usual double meanings, suppressions and evasions, created the general impression he had received Paul

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<sup>1959</sup> Indeed, opening the gates to communism would have been the outcome of Dom Helder's proposed measures. In this document, Dr. Plinio demonstrated that the foreign policy advocated by Dom Helder was fully consistent with the domestic policy proposed by the Belgian agitator Father Comblin, whom the TFP had denounced in a successful campaign against communist infiltration in Catholic circles. Dr. Plinio also appealed to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the government, and public opinion to cooperate to defeat a danger that the scope would have been wantonly naive to ignore. The manifesto was published in *Catolicismo* No. 218, February 1969.

<sup>1960</sup> "Dom Helder Creates Problem—Communists Applaud," cit.

<sup>1961</sup> "The Red Archbishop Opens the Gates of America and the World to Communism," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/1/69.

VI's placet and induced people to accept the idea that a "Catholic socialism" could be established in Brazil.

We held the exact opposite view. If wayward Catholics and a "dreaming" archbishop were to build a genuine socialist regime, it would automatically violate two of God's Commandments: "Thou shalt not steal" and "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." The fact that Catholics or clerics committed that violation rather than materialists would not have rendered it lawful.

By his socialist apologetics following a "cordial" papal audience that brought him "great comfort," Dom Helder gave the impression that nothing he said contradicted the instructions he had—very likely—just received from His Holiness.<sup>1962</sup>

That is why I felt it was indispensable for the TFP to publish its statement, which had a massive impact.

## Chapter XIX

# IDO-C and the "Prophetic Groups": A Secret Plot for Revolution in the Church (1969)

### 1. A Bold Campaign: Hidden Groups Plot Subversion in the Church

In 1969, *Catholicismo* published a double issue for April and May, which revealed two truly explosive documents concerning the present crisis in the Church.

The first, "Dossier on the IDO-C," was printed in the Catholic newsletter *Approaches*, published in London (Nos. 10-11, January 1968).

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<sup>1962</sup> "Dom Helder Creates Problem—Communists Applaud," cit.

The second, titled “Small Groups and the Prophetic Movement,” appeared in the Madrid-based magazine *Ecclesia*, No. 1423, January 11, 1969.

To facilitate the readers’ understanding, an introduction prepared by the paper’s staff preceded each document with a substantial summary of the text’s main points.<sup>1963</sup>

Based on this issue of *Catolicismo*, in 1969,<sup>1964</sup> we carried out a campaign against IDO-C and the “prophetic groups,” which reached a very wide audience.<sup>1965</sup>

These organizations were served by an advertising superpower working in tandem with progressive circles and even with persons alien and hostile to the Church to establish<sup>1966</sup> a pantheistic, demystified, desacralized, disalienated and egalitarian New Church placed at the service of communism.<sup>1967</sup>

We had never made such a serious accusation, taken so bold a step, never so thoroughly unmasked the enemy’s audacity.<sup>1968</sup>

There was no lack of well-meaning people to tell our young volunteers, during their long and successful days, that by denouncing this sinister plot, *Catolicismo* was throwing a very unflattering light on many progressive priests and laity and, *ipso facto*, provoking a dangerous trauma within Catholic ranks.

This objection was easy to answer. Naturally, atheism is the greatest enemy of the Church. If this enemy had found effective ways to sneak in, it is necessary to alert Catholics. Failing to sound the alarm for fear of traumatizing Catholic opinion would be like not crying out against a thief caught breaking into a house for fear of scaring the family.

Many Brazilian bishops did not share this frivolous objection and wrote expressing solidarity with our offensive against the said bodies of atheistic

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<sup>1963</sup> This double issue showed on its front page a picture of a beautiful baroque crucifix venerated at the headquarters of the TFP National Council, and its title categorically denounced: “Hidden Groups Plot Subversion in the Church,” *Catolicismo* No. 220-221, April-May 1969 (available in English at [https://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info/UK\\_1969\\_IDOC.htm](https://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info/UK_1969_IDOC.htm)). A leader highlighted the issue’s contents: “On the Cross, Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered not only because of the moral and physical abuse inflicted by His executioners. He also suffered in anticipation of all the sins committed until the end of time. Among these, the secret plot hatched by powerful Catholic circles to ‘reform’ the Church and turn her into a pantheistic, demythified, desacralized, and emancipated New Church at the service of communism – was undoubtedly one of the most atrocious torments of our Divine Redeemer. Yes, of Him who taught by His Life, Passion, and Death the opposite of all these egregious errors.”

<sup>1964</sup> RR 8/25/73.

<sup>1965</sup> Extra meeting with members and volunteers, 6/13/69. This issue of *Catolicismo* denounced the conspiracy of semi-secret organizations of remote origins that had infiltrated the Church and the traces of which could be found in Brazil since the days of *In Defense of Catholic Action*, in which Dr. Plinio described them in terms that were all the more impressive by the striking analogy with the information published by *Ecclesia* about the *prophetic groups*.

<sup>1966</sup> RR 8/14/71.

<sup>1967</sup> “Hidden Groups Plot Subversion in the Church,” cit.

<sup>1968</sup> Speech bidding caravans “Godspeed,” 6/23/69.

infiltration: Dom Orlando Chaves, Archbishop of Cuiabá, Dom Antonio de Almeida Moraes Júnior, Archbishop of Niterói, and Dom Antonio Mazzaroto, Bishop of Ponta Grossa.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Caracas, Dom José Humberto Quintero Parra, joined these authoritative voices soon afterward. In his pastoral letter of July 30, 1969 (when our campaign was half-completed), the cardinal showed he was not afraid to “traumatize” the whole of Venezuela but considered he was doing a great deal of good by warning Catholics against the “prophetic groups.”<sup>1969</sup>

## 2. IDO-C, A Progressive Propaganda Machine

IDO-C was presented as “an international group with headquarters in Rome and with a growing network of branches throughout the world.”

Its intended purpose was “to collect and distribute” to interested experts “documentation about the theological and structural effects of the continued implementation of the decrees and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.”

By its own account, IDO-C was founded in December 1965 by merging **DO-C**, the information center that served the Dutch Episcopate during the Council, with the Center for the Coordination of Conciliar Communications (CCCC), which, during the same period, had promoted the exchange of news among progressive journalists.

It is worth noting that IDO-C controlled the religious sections of newspapers of global significance, such as *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* in Paris and the *New York Times* in the United States.

It was very significant that countries dominated by communist governments, such as Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, accepted IDO-C’s activities without the slightest opposition.

This network was designed to inoculate Catholic circles, more or less covertly, with a doctrine entirely opposed to the Catholic Religion, using the press, radio, television, and lectures in public auditoriums.<sup>1970</sup>

Everything went in the same direction: the boldest, most shameless propaganda, religious “novelties,” and openly displayed leftism, all propagated by a discreet central office in the name of the “conciliar spirit.”<sup>1971</sup>

## 3. The Prophetic Groups, a Semi-Clandestine Network for Implementing Revolution in the Church

The article published in *Ecclesia* made us aware of the systematic effort of a

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<sup>1969</sup> “To Avoid Scaring the Family,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/1/69.

<sup>1970</sup> “Hidden Groups Plot Subversion in the Church,” cit.

<sup>1971</sup> “Progressive Propaganda: a Discreet Dinosaur,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/26/69.

movement increasingly gaining a foothold in the Catholic circles of many countries: the so-called “prophetic groups.”

Formed of myriads of small, scattered groups, the unity between these bodies was remarkable, at first glance, for the similarity of their shared ideological basis, goals and methods of action, and the notable degree of collaboration among those seemingly unrelated cells.

They constituted living cells of activists who infiltrated various Catholic organizations - seminars, universities, high schools, social works, etc. As was the case with IDO-C, they spread in a more or less veiled fashion the propaganda of an ideology radically opposed to Catholic doctrine.

These "prophetic groups" were a real power not only because of their great numbers but also because of their highly subtle membership initiation techniques, pressure on public opinion, and agitation techniques, which were deployed with great skill.

They formed within the Church an immense semi-secret network of anti-Catholic propaganda spread mostly verbally in face-to-face encounters.

The "prophetic groups" and IDO-C shared the same friendly attitude toward communism.

However, the IDO-C and the "prophetic groups" differed profoundly in their modes of action; this is how they complemented each other.

IDOC's target group was the Catholic masses, which it tried to influence by the most appropriate means, most of which we have mentioned: books, magazines, newspapers, television, radio, lectures, etc.

On the other hand, the "prophetic groups" sought out countless key environments that drove the Catholic movement using primarily discreet oral propaganda by well-placed and perfectly trained activists.<sup>1972</sup>

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One might say, roughly, that everything that has happened in the Church since then has been the implementation of IDO-C and “prophetic groups” programs.<sup>1973</sup>

#### **4. The Cape, a New Way of Distinguishing TFP Members on the Streets**

At that time, nineteen caravans of young volunteers traveled around the country for 70 days, visiting 514 cities (in twenty states) throughout Brazil. They sold 165,000 copies of the special issue of *Catolicismo*.

For the first time during this campaign, at my suggestion, the TFP approved using the crimson cape bearing the golden lion by its volunteers.<sup>1974</sup>

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<sup>1972</sup> “Hidden Groups Plot Subversion in the Church,” cit.

<sup>1973</sup> RR 6/16/73.

<sup>1974</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

The idea was born of a street propaganda concern. Given this campaign's importance, it seemed that we should find a means to draw people's attention and make the TFP more easily identifiable in the public eye.

I remembered busts of Roman times, many of whom wore capes similar to ours.<sup>1975</sup> But I had no desire to imitate the ancient Romans. I wanted this cape to be marked by a reminder of medieval heroism. How could we communicate such a reminder?

I remembered I had seen a barb-shaped garment on some medieval figure.

Dr. Eduardo Brotero, with that zeal that characterizes him, made some models in imitation of a costume worn by Archduke Maximilian of Austria (1459-1519), later the Holy Roman Emperor (1508 until his death), dressed in the habit of the Order of the Golden Fleece. We took it to a seamstress, who made it according to our ideas. And so, we got our *cape*.

When we analyzed the campaign results, we found that the cape was a success.<sup>1976</sup>

Later, during a TFP meeting, when commenting on the image of Our Lady defending the monk Theophilus against the devil, represented in a section from a tympanum of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, I pointed out a certain detail I found particularly delightful.

I told those present to look closely at the folds of Our Lady's mantle and asked: Do these folds look familiar? It is the TFP cape! Let us hope those who wear it will know how to face up to the Gnostic and egalitarian Revolution like Our Lady did with the devil.<sup>1977</sup>

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## 5. Strange Encounters with Two Civil Authorities

At this point, I would like to talk about two setbacks we encountered.

One of them was the passionate opposition of the Secretary of Public Security of the State of Minas Gerais to our public activities.

I thought he was the only one since we were selling magazines across the country, except in Minas, and the authorities had always granted us the necessary guarantees to exercise the freedoms we were entitled to under the Constitution.

My erroneous assumption that the local government would limit our freedom only in Minas was disproved at the last minute because in Bahia, in the

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<sup>1975</sup> For example, the bust of the Roman Emperor Caracalla, in the Louvre Museum; or that of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, in the gardens of Versailles.

<sup>1976</sup> SD 7/21/73.

<sup>1977</sup> SD 9/23/69.

beloved, glorious and traditional city of Salvador, the Secretary of Public Security put the same obstacles in our path as his fiery colleague in Minas— despite the wonderful welcome the public had given us in the beautiful capital of the Viceroy.

The arguments advanced by that authority were limited to the following: a) that, within the panorama of Brazilian politics, the TFP represented the antithesis of communism, which meant that it was just as extremist as the latter; b) consequently, it should not have complete freedom of action, since the communists did not enjoy such complete freedom, either.

Therefore, they forbade us, both in Salvador and Minas, to use standards and capes and to do any public action. We were only “allowed” to go door to door to sell our magazine, considerably reducing our sphere of action.<sup>1978</sup>

## 6. Violent Opposition from Progressive Priests

However, we only encountered violent opposition outside the sphere of the civil authorities. Such opposition almost always came from progressive parish priests leading mobs of fanatical thugs.<sup>1979</sup>

I must say a few words about His Eminence Cardinal Rossi's statements to the press during our campaign against IDO-C and the "prophetic groups": “Tradition, Family and Property speaks for itself and does not reflect the doctrine and actions of the Church.”

Another statement during that interview was: “We must remember [said the cardinal] the noble motto of the Church of Christ: ‘Unity in essentials; freedom in non-essential matters, and charity in all things.’ It may be true that there are communists within the large and scattered world of the Brazilian clergy, but it is not the Church’s role to denounce the black sheep. She must be the first to condemn and reproach but will do so as a Mother and Teacher.”

We wanted to believe the reporter had misheard. It did not seem credible that His Eminence would consider it uncharitable to “point a finger” at communist clerics - and ipso facto apostates – while at the same time seeing nothing uncharitable in “pointing a finger” at the TFP for alleged reasons that would have been far less serious even if they had been true.<sup>1980</sup>

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<sup>1978</sup> At the time, there were rumors, passed on to TFP members during face-to-face meetings with senior officials of the governments of Minas Gerais and Bahia, that the prohibitions imposed by the Secretaries had been due to pressure in Belo Horizonte from Archbishop Dom João Resende Costa, and in Salvador from the Cardinal-Archbishop Eugenio de Araújo Sales. The controversies with the two secretaries were reported in *Catolicismo*, issues No. 223 (July 1969) and Nos. 225-226 (September-October of the same year).

<sup>1979</sup> “Unique Aspects of a Glorious Campaign,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/3/69.

<sup>1980</sup> “Basing Oneself on an Author Is Not Speaking in His Name,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/16/69.

In the final analysis, I am sure that the momentum we generated against IDO-C and the "prophetic groups" forced them to act with far more prudence than they would otherwise have, which delayed the implementation of their plans in Brazil. So, we could say that our campaign served as a preventive action.<sup>1981</sup>

## Chapter XX

# The Cancer of Clerical Involvement With Terrorism (1969)

### 1. The Case of Terrorist Dominicans: The Marighela Affair

The cancer of terrorist infiltration in the clergy suddenly burst into the open in November 1969, a few months after our campaign. It was Communist infiltration of the worst kind, not limited to defending atheism, materialism, contempt for the family, negation of property rights, and supporting murder, kidnapping, and organized looting.<sup>1982</sup>

From north to south, newspapers, radios and television stations reported the scandal. It was the mandatory topic of conversation everywhere.

Brazil was convinced that the essential facts of the reported events were true, and they were so scandalous that the public was horrified.

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Naturally, facing the terrible and irrefutable events, the Brazilian people hoped to find an echo of their feelings in the attitudes of leading Church authorities and organizations.

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<sup>1981</sup> RR 8/25/73.

<sup>1982</sup> The case became known when, on November 4, 1969, in São Paulo, the terrorist leader Carlos Marighela, a fugitive from justice, was killed by police when resisting arrest. The occurrence took place on Casa Branca alley, Jardim Paulista, when Marighela approached two religious of the Convent of São Domingos das Perdizes, with whom he had scheduled an interview by a phone call to the Duas Cidades bookstore, which Dominicans ran. The two monks were accomplices of the terrorist network set up by Marighela and served as bait to lure him there.



However, they saw and heard the exact opposite from the hierarchy: Caginess, reticence, and procrastination while cautiously waiting for new information.

The overall attitude of distinguished prelates seemed to suggest they had not recovered from the stunning surprise they presumably suffered. That surprise was so great that it completely paralyzed CNBB's senior leadership.

Sometime before, my archbishop, His Eminence Cardinal Rossi, had declared to the press that he was unaware of the existence of any communist priests in Brazil.

Shortly after returning from Rome, the Archbishop of Rio, Dom Jaime de Barros Camara, declared that he had informed the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, that everything was entirely normal as far as the situation of the Brazilian clergy was concerned.

Now, however, there was this criminal case, and the reaction of the same people, once again, was one of complete surprise.<sup>1983</sup>

The Church's internal security called for the CNBB to initiate a far-reaching and thorough investigation of a strictly ecclesiastical nature to ascertain the full extent of the discovered cancer.

However, as far as I could see, nothing was done. Yet, this would have been the only adequate and consistent way for the CNBB to deal with the catastrophic situation.

The Church was in an ideal position—in collaboration with the State—to protect itself and Brazil against that colossal and unprecedented danger. But apparently, the 'surprising surprise' left those responsible so stunned that they were unable to take even the most necessary measures.<sup>1984</sup>

## 2. Time for "The Game of Truth"

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<sup>1983</sup> The affair made headlines on November 5, 1969. The very next day, Dr. Plinio published a TFP statement on the subject. This press release, "The TFP on the Dominican Terrorists," was printed in *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo* on November 6, 1969, and in over 11 other Brazilian newspapers.

Eighty thousand copies of this statement were distributed on the city's central streets.

In this press release, Dr. Plinio referred to "the Society's consternation at the news that Dominican priests actively participated in a terrorist plot." He said it was hard to imagine "a more complete defilement of the priesthood's sublime dignity and the unblemished glory of the Dominican habit" and pointed out the "urgent and pressing need of official negotiations between the Foreign Ministry and the Holy See to ensure that the ecclesiastical authorities, or, in their absence, the civil authorities, would use appropriate means to end the communist agitation scandalously rife in Catholic circles."

<sup>1984</sup> "Surprising Surprise," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/16/69.

Shortly before, Belo Horizonte's *Diário de Justiça* [Courts' Daily Record] had published in-depth documentation on the notorious *Popular Action* movement (AP) that spread communist agitation in our country.<sup>1985</sup>

This again drew attention to the communist infiltration of Catholic circles in Brazil.

Since "the time had come for us to play the game of truth," we had to be clear: Of the various areas in which subversion had flourished, the one least interfered with was precisely the Catholic left.<sup>1986</sup>

This dilution of the truth was becoming increasingly emphasized in our public life, with the cooperation of almost everyone. It resulted from a widespread desire for compromise, skirting around issues and avoiding conflicts.

However, there is a limit to everything.

Father Comblin's case was a good example. Although denounced by a petition with more than 1,500,000 signatures, the Belgian communist was walking around in Brazil a free man. However, the young people he radicalized, who became involved in the conspiracy, could be punished. He, responsible for their aberrations, remained scot-free.

Ironically, a very difficult-to-remove protective screen placed Father Comblin almost beyond the law: the cassock, which, incidentally, he no longer wore.

The matter was complicated by the following: under the centuries-old laws of the Church, a priest can only be judged by the Church. This is a privilege based on the sacral nature of the priesthood.

I cannot say whether this privilege still exists according to the most recent canonical legislation. However, having been in force for centuries, it profoundly influenced and molded the religious sensitivity of Christians.

Whenever the civil authorities took or threatened to take action against the clergy, the Catholic Left very cleverly made them appear as violators of the Church's rights. It was primarily to this that Comblin owed his impunity.<sup>1987</sup>

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<sup>1985</sup> The AP had chosen to seize power by armed struggle, and the entire generation of its militants was trained in the ranks of Catholic Action.

<sup>1986</sup> At the time, Dr. Plinio published an article in *Folha de S. Paulo* quoting a saying by President Garrastazú Medici that the time had come to play the "game of truth." The article appeared on October 15, 1969, and was titled "The 'Game of Truth' and the Religious Crisis."

<sup>1987</sup> Recourse to the civil authorities to prosecute clergymen for violations of public order has already become commonplace. When a priest was shown to have embezzled money from a parish in the city of Cascavel (PR), the local archbishop, Dom Mauro Aparecido dos Santos, said: "If anyone there [in the parish] should consider themselves to have suffered damage and wish to file an action in a court of law, they are perfectly within their rights to do so" (cf. Rede SBC Brasil, October 14, 2014).

The well-known progressive News Agency ADITAL (Friar Tito's Information Agency for Latin America) reported on October 14, 2014, that "Mexican collectives, Christian networks and entities like the Ecclesial Observatory are publishing an open letter to Pope Francis" in which they "call for the pope to

### 3. The Remedy the Government Refused to Apply

Having exposed the situation courageously and without beating about the bush, it remained to suggest a solution.

There could only be one possible solution – the civil authorities would have to publish, to the fullest extent, the magnitude of the scope of communist infiltration in Catholic circles to make sure that people were fully informed, even in the remotest areas of the country.

At the same time, the government should ask the ecclesiastical authorities to remedy the situation. It should ask CNBB, ever ready to recommend solutions for problems in the temporal sphere, to provide such a remedy. And it should ask the Holy Father, who had received a petition signed by 1,600,368 Brazilians at TFP's initiative, to do the same.

Had these requests been presented decisively and respectfully with the required publicity, there would have been no reason for the hierarchy to refuse to take immediate and effective measures to fulfill Brazilians' wishes.

There was no other suitable way of doing this. A compromise was no use. Behind-the-scene negotiations – it is absurd to suppose they had not been attempted – had apparently failed. The leftist boil in the Church was still swelling and ready to pour out its venom over the country at the first opportunity. At the “moment of truth,” only public and unequivocal actions would be effective.<sup>1988</sup> And since you can only eliminate danger if you remove its causes, I wanted to eliminate the influence of the Catholic left. Because it did not express the Church's thinking, the Catholic left did not deserve support from the hierarchy or the Catholic people.

I never advocated depriving leftist people of their freedom or expelling foreign leftists from the country. Such measures might or not be fair and useful depending on the circumstances of each case. They might have helped mitigate the danger but would not have eliminated it and might even have been counterproductive in some cases.

The Catholic left lives off the influence it derives from the Catholic label. This influence cannot be removed merely by legal and judicial measures. The only solution is to deprive it of the Catholic label.<sup>1989</sup>

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approve the application of civil justice to priests who commit sexual crimes against children and adolescents.”

<sup>1988</sup> “Letter to Unknown Ministers,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/26/69.

<sup>1989</sup> Groups promoting pernicious and unnatural causes are well aware that if they use the label “Catholic,” they will command a higher degree of attention in public opinion and feel more protected. A typical case is the self-titled pro-abortion NGO, “Catholics for the Right to Decide.”

Although people in Brazil’s major cities were well aware that active communist pockets or sympathizers had infiltrated Catholic circles, people in many medium and small cities only had the vaguest idea of this threat.

Therefore, a detailed documentary based on evidence seized by the police was necessary to prove this sad reality, and we had to distribute it throughout Brazil.

The Foreign Minister, supported by the clamor of the immense majority of the population, should have asked the Holy See to take measures to unfrock all Comblins and other black sheep using the Church to destroy Brazil.<sup>1990</sup>

Some skeptics might have claimed that the hierarchy would never take such measures, but their gloomy pessimism was no excuse for not trying.

Let us imagine that little or nothing could be achieved; in that case, I believe the right of Brazilians to self-defense—an inalienable right based on the most fundamental principles of the natural order—would inspire the government to employ other prudent and respectful but entirely decisive means of action.

These measures would not have hurt Catholic opinion, as Catholic doctrine does not require that an entire country be left to burn because of a lack of suitable measures to defend it.

According to Christian morality, the right to self-defense offers enough scope for this. Any serious moralist is perfectly well aware of it.<sup>1991</sup>

Please note:

The facts and events narrated belong to a more recent past, starting with Part X and continuing in all subsequent parts. Compared to earlier decades, the lectures Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira gave TFP members, volunteers, and supporters included fewer autobiographical narrations. As the reader will notice, the narrative often gives way to simple reports of current events, always in his own words.

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<sup>1990</sup> “Letter to Unknown Ministers,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/26/69.

<sup>1991</sup> “The Game of Truth and the Religious Crisis,” cit.

# Part X

## Successful Books and Campaigns During the 1970s

### Chapter I

## Allende's Rise to Power Confirms the "Prophetic Book"

### 1. An Analysis Corroborated by Events

In 1970, the Marxist Allende rose to power in Chile.

It was also the year in which Fábio Xavier da Silveira's book *Frei, the Chilean Kerensky*, became a bestseller—something that did not happen when the book was published but when Frei was voted out of office.<sup>1992</sup>

The 1967 prediction was tragically confirmed before the eyes of the Americas and the world.<sup>1993</sup> What had been prophesied came true.<sup>1994</sup>

People recognized that the book had been prophetic.<sup>1995</sup> Many said: "This book already predicted all of this."<sup>1996</sup>

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<sup>1992</sup> RR 12/15/74.

<sup>1993</sup> "TFP's Open Letter to Eugênio Cardinal Sales," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/9/70 & 10/10/70; and *Catolicismo* No. 239, November 1970.

<sup>1994</sup> RR 12/15/74.

<sup>1995</sup> Normal Meeting 3/12/76.

<sup>1996</sup> Reports 12/19/70. In an article in the *Jornal da Tarde* of September 8, 1970, the journalist Lenildo Tabosa Pessoa said the accuracy of the book's predictions was such that it read as though it had been written *post-factum*. Another journalist, Mario Bush, a contributor to *O Estado de S. Paulo*, said in an article on September 13 of that year that the book's analysis, which to many had seemed a 'rightist' exaggeration inspired by "homegrown" McCarthyism, was fully corroborated by subsequent events (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 238, October 1970).

Therefore, the book was not a short-term prediction for tomorrow but “the day after tomorrow.”<sup>1997</sup>

Before that, to all appearances, it had been a failure since it did not prevent Frei from doing the work of a Kerensky.<sup>1998</sup>

At the end of Frei's term in office, things had changed significantly in favor of communism—not because the Communist Party increased the number of its adherents but because the number of bourgeois willing to cooperate with communism out of naivety or genuine sympathy had increased to an extraordinary degree thanks to the atmosphere created by the Chilean Christian Democrats.

## 2. Cardinal Silva Henríquez's Scandalous Support of Allende

This general erosion of opposition in non-communist circles happened even faster and more profoundly in Catholic sectors, particularly shaken by the progressive whirlwind.

Before the elections, Cardinal Silva Henríquez went so far as to assert that it would be morally permissible for a Catholic to vote for a Marxist (cf. *Última Hora* and *Clarín*, Santiago, December 24, 1969).

The Cardinal never denied making that startling statement, which was widely reported by the media throughout Chile and by numerous news agencies abroad.

He also did not respond to a letter addressed to him by the Chilean Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, expressly asking for a denial.

As a result, numerous Catholics voted for the Marxist candidate, Salvador Allende (cf. *El Mercurio*, January 24, 1970, and *El Diario Ilustrado*, 25 January 1970, both of Santiago).

## 3. In the Runoff, Christian Democrats Vote for the Marxist Candidate

Let us present the facts precisely as they unfolded.

The Christian Democratic Party gradually split, and some members voted for Allende. The old Radical Party, characteristically bourgeois, also voted for him.<sup>1999</sup>

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<sup>1997</sup> RR 12/15/74.

<sup>1998</sup> RR 2/21/76.

<sup>1999</sup> From the Introduction to the second Italian edition of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, 1971: Popular Unity, a radical Communist-Marxist-Christian-Democrat coalition that supported Allende, won 36.63% of the vote. Jorge Alessandri, favored by the anticommunists, obtained 35.29% of the vote, while the Christian-Democrat candidate, Radomiro Tomic, got 28.08%.

Because of this very small difference in the number of votes between one candidate and another, there was a bit of a squeeze to ensure Allende's victory. The Chilean Constitution provides a wise solution in cases of such tight election results in which no candidate has managed to win a 50% majority of the votes

When presented with the choice between the Marxist and non-Marxist candidates, their leaders inside and outside Parliament declared that they would not prefer the latter under any circumstances. That was a barely veiled way of saying that they would, in any case, hand the highest office in government to the Marxist candidate. They thus adopted, from the first, a submissive position toward the victory of Marxism.<sup>2000</sup>

As a result, leftist propaganda was in a position to boast worldwide that, for the first time in history, a Marxist had won an election.<sup>2001</sup>

Certain journalists spoke of Allende's "triumph"—apparently, a majority of 1% now qualifies as a triumph...<sup>2002</sup>

It was quite true. Yet, the number of Marxist adherents had not grown. The true cause of this victory lay in the undermining and weakening of the population's non-communist—or even anticommunist—sectors.<sup>2003</sup>

#### 4. “Te Deum” in Chile, Greetings from Paul VI

So, Chile began its "painful march" toward communism.

Cardinal Silva Henriquez was among the first to visit the future president, assure him of the hierarchy's support, and transmit a special message of greeting and best wishes from Pope Paul VI.

Had Paul VI foreseen the victory of Allende from the start without apprehension or disgust? All the evidence suggests that he did foresee it and never expressed apprehension or disgust.

The Chilean cardinal, on his own account, told the press that the Christians' duty at this time was to do all they could to ensure the new government's success.<sup>2004</sup>

On the day of Allende's inauguration ceremony, Cardinal Silva Henriquez celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and had a Te Deum sung thanksgiving for the new government.

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plus one: in such cases, it behooves the Congress, in a bicameral meeting, to select a president from the two top candidates.

At that point, the decision was in the hands of the Chilean Christian Democrats, who had a majority in Congress. Their votes would decide whether Allende or Alessandri would be president. The question then was whether the Christian Democrats would continue hanging on to their sad “third force” position to the point of opting to deliver Chile into the hands of the communists.

This created suspense not only in Chile and the Americas but worldwide. Everyone wondered how far the Christian Democrats would go on this occasion (cf. “The Whole Truth about the Elections in Chile,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, September 10, 1970).

<sup>2000</sup> “TFP’s Open Letter to Eugênio Cardinal Sales,” cit.

<sup>2001</sup> Introduction to the second Italian edition of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, 1971.

<sup>2002</sup> “The ‘Toads,’ the Epopee, and the Operetta,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/20/70.

<sup>2003</sup> Introduction to the second Italian edition of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, 1971.

<sup>2004</sup> “Between Wolves and Sheep, a New Style of Relationships,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/1/70.

The atheist president and a large group of Protestant pastors attended the solemn Catholic ceremony.

### 5. The Right to Think and to Disagree

If I have, as a man and as a Catholic, a right as essential or even more essential than my right to life, it is the right to reflect on these events and tell the public my opinion about them.<sup>2005</sup>

I have been a Roman and Apostolic Catholic all my life. Today, I am a Catholic with even greater conviction, energy and enthusiasm than ever. And by the grace of God and Our Lady's intercession, I hope to remain and become more fervent in the faith to my last breath. Therefore, as a tribute from the bottom of my soul, I accord the Supreme Pontiff and the Holy See the whole-hearted veneration, affection, and obedience I owe them according to Church doctrine and laws.

All that notwithstanding, when faced with clear facts, I cannot deny them or fail to acknowledge their consequences.

While admitting the irrefutable facts I have just enumerated and analyzed, I also know that all that the Church teaches about the Supreme Pontiff's infallibility and authority must be accepted unquestioned.

Thus, as a Catholic, my conscience is clear as I speak about this sad and delicate subject.

Did Paul VI envisage a "*modus vivendi*," an arrangement with Communism for Latin America?

It made me think.<sup>2006</sup>

What was I thinking? First and foremost, this was a series of huge scandals.

What had happened to all the condemnations of communism by all the Popes from Pius IX to Pius XII? How was it possible that, from one moment to the next, without further explanation, all those solemn and repeated acts were forgotten? How could the Chilean Cardinal offer the infinitely precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ to give thanks for - and treat as a rightful and auspicious event - the victory of a movement that so many popes unhesitatingly condemned as satanic, immoral and subversive? Was this not sacrilege? Was it not equally sacrilegious to have a *Te Deum* sung to thank God for this victory of atheism?

If, in the interests of a discipline whose nature is often misunderstood, I forced myself to pretend that such acts were not sacrilegious, I would feel that all the laws of logic had been abrogated, and the absurd had become the only

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<sup>2005</sup> "The Festive Cardinal," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/8/70.

<sup>2006</sup> "Between Wolves and Sheep, a New Style of Relationships," cit.



reality. Fortunately, none of the laws of the Holy Church required me to do such an act of submission.<sup>2007</sup>

## 6. The Ensuing Chaos

Installed in power, the Allende government decided to impose a series of socialist and confiscatory laws on Chile at any cost, ignoring the discontent these would create among the majority of the population.

Poverty gradually spread across the nation like gangrene. The accumulated effects of the political and economic crises produced utter chaos.<sup>2008</sup>

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<sup>2007</sup> "The Festive Cardinal," cit. These attitudes of Paul VI added to others equally perplexing, all of which clearly showed a systematic bias: The gates were wide open to communism and progressivism but closed to any person or movement that opposed them. In a *Folha* article on July 12, 1970, Dr. Plinio quoted an objector, Geroboão Cândido Guerreiro, enumerating some of these attitudes:

"Fifteen hundred Catholics from various countries march in Rome to express to Paul VI their displeasure at the reforms he is implementing in the Church. They want the Bishop of Rome to hold the same absolute power as his predecessors did. When they arrived at St. Peter's Square, they remained there, submissively holding a prayer vigil, asking God to enlighten Pope Montini. The latter treated them with utter contempt, hiding behind closed doors and windows the entire time these members of his flock remained there. ...The poor flock of truly faithful Catholics . . . returned home with heavy hearts, without having heard a single word of paternal affection from their supreme shepherd, with whom they insist on remaining. But that was not all. Shortly afterward, in a speech, Paul VI humiliated them even further. ...

"Some days earlier, Paul VI had received in the Sistine Chapel with pomp and ceremony, like a pope, a 'heretic' (I am using the terminology of Catholic theologians) like the Armenian Patriarch Vasken. Paul VI will now receive an anti-establishment leader such as Cardinal Alfrink of Utrecht for engaging in a "dialogue" followed by concessions.

"Also, a few days after slamming the door in the face of his unfortunate faithful, Paul VI received three African-Portuguese guerrillas with special distinction. In August, the Vatican will receive a visit from [Yugoslavia's dictator] Tito, who will be accorded the honors owed to a head of state.

"Dr. Plinio, do you not realize that the doors of the Vatican and the pope's heart are open to all except those who agree with your ideological point of view? No one in today's world is more thoroughly rejected by the modernized Papacy and the new Church than you and those who agree with you.

"The evidence is incontrovertible. During the last Synod of Bishops, a group of extremely anti-establishment Catholic priests gathered in a Protestant Church in Rome and sent a sulfuric message to Paul VI. The gates of the Vatican opened for them, who went all the way to the papal antechamber and delivered their message. Paul VI did not grant them an audience but promised to study the protesters' demands very graciously. Yet the TFP message begging Paul VI to take measures against what you have called the 'communist infiltration in the Church' apparently did not even merit a response from Paul VI, though 1,600,368 Catholics signed it! I ask: Could there be clearer evidence of rejection?"

<sup>2008</sup> "Magnificat for Chile," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/16/73.

## Chapter II

# TFPs in Action During Allende's Tenure; Unexpected Reactions From Two Prelates

### 1. The Chilean TFP in Exile; Other TFPs Initiate Campaigns

Chilean TFP members were keenly aware they would fall into Allende's hands and suffer police persecution if they remained in Chile.<sup>2009</sup>

So, most of them left the country and started a systematic information campaign about what the Allende government was doing.<sup>2010</sup>

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The TFP in Brazil and other TFPs throughout South America organized vigorous street demonstrations denouncing Allende and the Kerensky-like role played by Eduardo Frei.

We held street parades distributing flyers and shouting the slogan: "For Chile, our brother country – let us mourn, fight and pray!"<sup>2011</sup>

In eight days, 4,319 copies of the new edition of Fabio Xavier da Silveira's book sold. Over the same period, about 325,000 loose copies of my article in *Folha de S. Paulo* titled "The Whole Truth about the Elections in Chile" were distributed.

The opposition was active in the streets. Communist sympathizers and young people radicalized by the progressive clergy tried to harass us and stop our work with thousands of little questions, petty objections and mockery.

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<sup>2009</sup> This was all the more likely because the *Fiscalia* (public prosecutor's office) had started proceedings against the leaders of the Chilean TFP for alleged insults to former President Eduardo Frei at the end of his term.

<sup>2010</sup> Interview with the *Associated Press* (recording), 3/15/82.

<sup>2011</sup> RR 10/2/93.

A few even resorted to violence. In Porto Alegre, one of them – promising material for a future career as an assassin – hurled a paving stone at us. Needless to say, this “hero” chose to remain anonymous.<sup>2012</sup>

## 2. Cardinal Eugênio Sales’s Surprising Attack

Just as our struggle to destroy the noxious effects of Allende’s victory was in full gear, they unleashed a real typhoon against our organization.

A whole pack of perfectly coordinated leftist “toads” and sensationalist journalists moved to attack us.

Then, in a sudden fresh blow, His Eminence Cardinal Eugênio Sales made a statement against the TFP to discredit us in the eyes of Brazilians.

Future historians who deal with this episode will ask why His Eminence chose that moment to mount a brutal attack against the TFP and issue an ardent defense of Dom Helder.

After effusively praising the Red Archbishop, Cardinal Sales said that the country's wave of distrust about Dom Helder practically amounted to an attack on the Church itself. It was a clear attempt on his part to block the country's reaction against the Archbishop of Olinda and Recife’s outrageous language and ideology.<sup>2013</sup>

The cardinal’s statement also formally attacked the TFP, warning Catholics to remain “on the alert ... concerning the movement known as Tradition, Family and Property.”

The only reason alleged for his warning was that the movement “does not have the approval and support of this archdiocese.”

This justification could not have been more cryptic because it suggested that the Society failed to ask His Eminence for permission to establish itself in Bahia. He also failed to mention that as a TFP was a civic entity that always spoke on its behalf and never in the name of the Hierarchy, canon law did not require such permission. In short, the simple fact we had not obtained His Eminence’s permission was no reason to warn people against us.

The cardinal claimed we did not have his permission but knew perfectly well that Church laws gave us the right to exist without it,<sup>2014</sup> hence our respectful but firm message to Cardinal Sales.<sup>2015</sup>

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<sup>2012</sup> “The ‘Toads,’ the Epopee and the Operetta,” cit.

<sup>2013</sup> “Inside and Outside Brazil,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/11/70. The prelate made those statements on a radio message broadcast by Rádio Cultura of Salvador on September 19, 1970.

<sup>2014</sup> “TFP’s Open Letter to Eugênio Cardinal Sales,” cit.

<sup>2015</sup> In this message, Dr. Plinio said it was easy to see all that the Cardinal Primate had in common with Dom Helder’s philosophy and work and practically impossible to find any points that separated them. He received no answer. The document, dated October 5, 1970, was titled “TFP’s Open Letter to Eugenio Cardinal Sales: Analysis, Defense, and Request for Dialogue.” It was published in *Folha de S. Paulo* on

### 3. An Even Greater Shock: Dom Sigaud's Statements

Future historians will be even more puzzled by why Dom Geraldo Sigaud, Archbishop of Diamantina—to whom Brazil owed undeniable services in the fight against communism—should, in his turn, have chosen the very same time to attack the TFP.

Could His Excellency not have waited at least a few days until the end of the campaign? And if he had felt that attacking us was extremely urgent, why not say at least a word of understanding, support or praise for our ongoing campaign?<sup>2016</sup>

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October 9, 1970, and subsequently printed in many other papers nationwide, including *A Tarde* in Salvador, Bahia, on October 22, 1970, and *Catolicismo*, No. 239 of November 1970.

<sup>2016</sup> "Inside and Outside Brazil," cit. The media reported that, after being received in an audience by President Medici, Dom Sigaud stated the TFP had begun to distance itself from him more than two years earlier. He said the split was due to his support for the government's agrarian reform program, which he considered fair and Christian, and the liturgical reforms the Holy See had imposed. The report concluded, "While lamenting this disagreement, he insisted that he could not, in good conscience, contradict the pope or fail to support the government."

The estrangement between us and a prelate who had earlier participated in a struggle, the scope and merit of which is very clearly shown in this book, was an extremely painful episode in the history of the TFP. True, at a certain moment, a gap had begun to open between Dom Sigaud, on the one hand, and Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer, Dr. Plinio, and TFP directors and members, on the other.

This difference of opinion concerned doctrinal issues relating to the right of property and Church discipline. On April 27, 1969, the Belo Horizonte daily *Estado de Minas* published a statement by Dom Sigaud saying that "the expropriation methods established by Institutional Act No. 9" created a "favorable climate for the implementation of agrarian reform."

This statement openly contradicted the school of thought represented by Dom Mayer, Dr. Plinio and the TFP in their fight against the agrarian reform program. TFP members received Dom Sigaud's statement with great surprise. Most tended to believe it was due to some lapse of the press. However, two days Rio's *Jornal do Brasil* published another statement in the same vein, leaving no doubt that the TFP had to contact the archbishop. This mission was entrusted to a prominent TFP member in Minas.

Bearing a respectful but frank letter from Dr. Plinio about the incident, this emissary had a long meeting with the archbishop in Diamantina, in which Dom Geraldo Sigaud confirmed his recent statements favoring agrarian reform. So, after many years of fighting side by side, the cooperation between the TFP and the archbishop came to an end.

Given the long and close collaboration between the Archbishop of Diamantina and us and the friendship and consideration we owed him, Dr. Plinio and the TFP tried to withhold these facts from the public as much as possible. Dom Sigaud took the initiative to disclose them by bluntly affirming that TFP members "had undoubtedly done much for Brazil but were now beginning to cause it harm" (cf. *Jornal do Brasil*, 10/3/70).

The news of these attacks was published as a sensation in daily newspapers nationwide. Dr. Plinio responded with a statement titled "Dom Geraldo Sigaud and the TFP," widely distributed to the press on October 7, 1970 (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 239, November 1970). Dr. Plinio emphasized that the TFP's position on the issue of agrarian reform was clearly set out in the books *Agrarian Reform, a Question of Conscience* and the *Morro Alto Declaration*, both fully endorsed by Dom Sigaud. So, while deploring that the illustrious prelate had changed his mind, the TFP would continue to adhere faithfully to its position, which did not advocate opposition to the government but was based on an imperative of conscience.

## Chapter III

# The Chilean TFP on the Support Paul VI and the Chilean Bishops Gave Allende (1973)

### 1. Misery and Chaos Take Over the Country with the Bishops' Blessings

Meanwhile, along with communist infiltration in Catholic circles, events in Chile became increasingly dramatic.

To explain the attitude adopted by the Chilean TFP, I must first briefly describe the situation in that country.

First, an economic and social crisis manifested itself in major strikes. Chile was on the brink of civil war.<sup>2017</sup>

The legitimate discontent of a population threatened with misery and chaos kept growing throughout the years of the Allende government under the

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The statement said that some liturgical reforms had caused considerable perplexity to TFP members and many distinguished bishops and theologians. The latter were studying them and desired an open discussion about the issue to avoid misunderstandings.

However, the TFP emphasized that this attitude does not violate any Church laws regarding the faithful's allegiance to the pope. (In fact, many highly regarded Catholic opinion leaders shared perplexity about liturgical reform, perplexity which Pope Benedict XVI, to a great extent, favorably considered and received in his *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum* of July 7, 2007.)

As for the causes of this split, Dom Geraldo Sigaud was right to say that land reform and the liturgical reforms were why he had begun to distance himself from the TFP. He might have added a third cause. From 1969 onwards, His Eminence began advocating the abolition of clerical celibacy, at least in certain cases. This change of heart reportedly earned him a congratulatory embrace from Dom Helder. The TFP members, however, held fast to the current canonical legislation, which states quite unequivocally that celibacy is mandatory for all clerics in the Latin Church.

Given Dr. Plinio's consideration for Dom Geraldo de Proença Sigaud and their long and close cooperation, the TFP avoided publishing these facts whenever possible. It did so with a heavy heart, forced by the need to prevent any shadow of doubt as to the correctness of its attitude toward civil and ecclesiastical legislation.

<sup>2017</sup> RR 8/25/73.

glacially indifferent and not infrequently hostile eyes of the clergy, who supported the Marxist president in impressive numbers.<sup>2018</sup>

The persecution of landowners became more and more open. The successor of Chonchol at the Ministry of Agriculture, Ronaldo Calderon, declared: "We have class hatred, and this [landowners'] class will disappear."<sup>2019</sup>

## 2. Persecuting the Private Sector, Muzzling the Press

The program underlying the general trend of events became increasingly obvious. The government of a large South American nation had fallen into the hands of a fanatical sect—the Marxist-Socialist party. This sect was determined to apply its materialist, egalitarian, interventionist, and anti-Christian doctrine in Chile regardless of the consequences. Multiple political and economic repercussions began to unfold from this ideological starting point.

They imposed several socialist and confiscatory laws one after another, disregarding the public's general discontent. As a result, a political crisis began to shake the very foundations of the State.

The ideological shift led to a political and economic crisis.<sup>2020</sup>

Allende abusively employed the press law as a weapon against his opponents by filing large numbers of lawsuits, arresting anticommunist journalists, and temporarily closing media outlets.

Large Russian boats were granted contracts to supply the nationalized fish-processing companies, so the Russians started building a port in Colcura Bay, south of Valparaiso, a base to house warships.

About 40% of industrial enterprises and 80% of banks passed into the hands of the State.<sup>2021</sup>

Workers in the Chilean towns and countryside soon became keenly aware that the government was the worst possible boss. Shortly after having

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<sup>2018</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit. What happened in Chile happens in all countries that fall under the communist yoke. The Allende government's persecutory measures against private property and free enterprise gradually spread a mantle of misery across the nation. And instead of admitting the obvious socialist failure, the Catholic left supported the communist government at all costs. For example, the general secretary of the association *Esquerda Cristã (Christian Left)*, Bosco Parra, suggested to Allende's Minister of Agriculture, Jacques Chonchol, that the solution to the problem of starvation increasingly threatening all Chileans was a "basic equal consumption for the entire population" (*El Mercurio*, 8/21/72).

On their part, *Christians for Socialism* in the city of Antofagasta advocated fasting by saying, "Christians are not afraid of fasting; they are used to it" (*Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/10/72). The Socialist Party's Women's Federation went so far as to recommend that socialist women abstain from eating beef for a year (cf. *O Jornal*, Rio, 9/30/72, quoted from the article "Allende's Civic 'Canonization,'" *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/21/89).

<sup>2019</sup> *El Mercurio*, 2/9/73, quoted from "Allende's Civic 'Canonization,'" cit.

<sup>2020</sup> "Magnificat for Chile," cit.

<sup>2021</sup> "Allende's Civic 'Canonization,'" *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/21/89.

‘benefited’ from forced collectivization, they began to revolt against misery and want.

The accumulating effects of the political and economic crises soon produced chaos. Massive strikes paralyzed the country, which found itself on the brink of complete annihilation.<sup>2022</sup>

### 3. Amnesty Granted to Bandits and Terrorists

The terrorists of MIR—*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) were released. So were persons arrested for common assault and murder, and broad amnesty was granted to detainees in general. The Civil Police hired former inmates, while the mobile units of *Carabineros*, specialized in maintaining order, were disbanded.<sup>2023</sup>

The Allende government increasingly committed illegal acts to impose socialist measures.<sup>2024</sup>

### 4. “Church Self-Destruction, a Factor in Chile’s Destruction”

In 1973, given this background, I followed with great interest the publication of a Chilean TFP manifesto<sup>2025</sup> stating its disagreement with the conduct of the Chilean Catholic Hierarchy and Paul VI concerning the country’s communist transformation.<sup>2026</sup>

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<sup>2022</sup> “Magnificat for Chile,” cit.

<sup>2023</sup> It is a constant in all leftist revolutions that they protect and use bandits of the worst type as a backup. It happened during the French Revolution and the 1917 Communist Revolution and was a factor in systematic campaigns against the police in several Latin American countries, often under the pretext of enforcing “human rights.” As adherents of an ideology that attributes criminal tendencies and activities exclusively to social problems, these revolutionaries felt a spiritual affinity with criminals (cf. “Four Dirty and Ugly Fingers,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/16/83).

<sup>2024</sup> “Allende’s Civic ‘Canonization,’” cit.

<sup>2025</sup> Dispatch 3/27/73.

<sup>2026</sup> “I Resisted Him to His Face,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/11/73. The manifesto, titled “The Self-Destruction of the Church, a Factor in the Destruction of Chile,” was published in *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, 3/2/73; *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/2/73; *El País*, Montevideo, 3/3/73; *Fuerza Nueva*, Spain, No. 325, March 1973; *Diario Las Americas*, Miami, 3/29-30/73; *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, 4/15/73 (cf. “Eleven Brave Priests,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/15/73).

With great elevation and courage, the Chilean TFP said that the advance of progressivism in the hierarchy, clergy and laity had favored the Marxist regime’s implementation and consolidation in their country and that Paul VI was partly to blame for the clergy’s demolition work. Here is an especially poignant passage from this manifesto:

“As devoted children of the Holy Church, it is with deep sorrow that we observe the unfolding of this process, in the course of which we have seen the doctrinal principles that inspired the Church’s self-destruction spread from the religious sphere into the country’s public life, producing similarly deleterious effects. ... “We hereby renew the expression of our reverential love and adhesion to the pope and the Holy See even as we are logically obliged, with profound pain, to address another question:

“Is it conceivable that the Chilean Catholic hierarchy would act as they are if they had not received Paul VI’s full and direct approval? This question is even more inevitable given that, as a cardinal, Most Rev. Silva Henríquez is in permanent contact with the Vatican. Moreover, it is the job of the

In its manifesto, the Chilean TFP accepted sole responsibility for this publication.

Thus, the Brazilian TFP was not involved in this manifestation of its courageous Chilean brothers. It awaited a pronouncement by the Curia of Santiago and by Chileans and Brazilians who might be interested in the subject. Then, at some point, it might issue a statement with the prudence and circumspection that the sensitive topic requires.

### 5. The Right to Resist Bad Pastors

Some people were angry at that manifesto: “Is this supposed to mean that Paul VI is a bad Pope, a Pope who is destroying the Church”?<sup>2027</sup>

I must confess that if circumstances had not led me to go so deeply into this matter, I would have categorically opposed the assumption that Catholics should be entitled to criticize – however respectfully -- certain acts of the sacred hierarchy.

As an ardent supporter of the principle of authority in all areas, I am especially aware of its importance to the Church and its hierarchy, even more so to the Roman Pontiff. That is my conviction; it has always been, and I hope it will always be until I die.<sup>2028</sup>

No one could say that the Chilean TFP had implicitly denied papal infallibility or fallen short of reverence due to the Roman Pontiff when it attributed to Paul VI a share of the responsibility for what had happened in Chile. That would indeed have been a ridiculous allegation.

Anyone who knows a little theology or canon law knows that the charism of infallibility only assists the Supreme Pontiff in specific acts of the Magisterium practiced in precisely defined conditions.

The duty of the faithful to adhere to the pope’s non-infallible doctrinal teachings does not preclude them from disagreeing - on reasonable grounds – with the concrete actions of a particular pope.<sup>2029</sup>

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Apostolic Nuncio permanently residing in Chile to represent the Vatican with both the Chilean government and the Episcopate. This Nuncio has all the means at his disposal to transmit Paul VI’s intentions to Cardinal Silva Henriquez, the bishops and clergy in general.

“It is unthinkable that such approval was not given because of the Cardinal’s position, the hierarchical structure of the Church, and the constancy and extent of this unusual policy the Chilean clergy has followed. Furthermore, during this period, there has been no open or veiled manifestation of Vatican coolness or discomfort concerning the cardinal, bishops and clergy’s support of Mr. Allende’s Marxist regime.”

<sup>2027</sup> “To a Young Man Furious at the Chilean TFP,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/4/73.

<sup>2028</sup> “I Resisted Him to His Face,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/11/73.

<sup>2029</sup> This doctrine was recently upheld by an authoritative theologian who later became pope: Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger or Pope Benedict XVI. He said, “Criticism of papal pronouncements will be possible and even necessary, to the extent that they lack support in Scripture and the Creed, that is, in the faith of the whole Church. When neither the consensus of the whole Church is had, nor clear evidence from the sources



The famous Cardinal Cajetan, accepted as an authority by all serious theologians, quotes this pronouncement:

“One must resist to his face a pope who publicly destroys the Church” (*Obras de Francisco de Vitoria*, BAC, Madrid, p. 486). And the same Francisco de Vitoria, a great 16th-century theologian, taught, “Therefore, if he [the Pope] wished to hand over all the treasure of the Church...to his family if he wished to destroy the Church or other similar things, one should not permit him to act in this way, rather one would be obliged to resist him. This is because he does not have the power to destroy; it is clear, therefore, that if he does, it is licit to resist him” (ibid, p 487). The same author insists with these obvious words, “From all of this it follows that, if the Pope, by his orders and his acts, destroys the Church, one can resist him and impede the execution of his commands” (ibid, p. 487).

If these authors were not enough, more ancient ones can be consulted, such as St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Robert Bellarmine, Suarez, Cornelius a Lapide, or the Oriental Fathers such as St. John Chrysostom, St. John Damascene, and Theodoretus.<sup>2030</sup>

Wernz and Vidal, our contemporaries, uphold the same doctrine in their well-known and authoritative *Jus canonicum* (vol. II, p. 520). Antonio Peinador Navarro is another authoritative voice on this subject (*Curs. Brev. Theol. Mor.* II. I, p. 277).

Even more striking is the opinion of a famous Swiss theologian, Monsignor Charles Journet, whom Paul VI created Cardinal. In his treatise *L'Eglise du Verbe incarné, essai de théologie spéculative* (The Church of the Word Incarnate—an Essay in Speculative Theology) (vol I, pp. 839 ff.), Journet endorses the doctrine—accepted by many other theologians—that a pope may even become schismatic. Of course, this grants the faithful the right and even the duty to resist him.

## 6. The Curia’s Deafening Silence; Recriminations Behind Closed Doors

The Chilean TFP manifesto was widely reported in daily papers and on Chilean radio and television.

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is available, an ultimately binding decision is impossible. Were one formally to take place, the conditions for such an act would be lacking, and hence the question would have to be raised concerning its legitimacy” (Joseph Ratzinger, *Das neue Volk Gottes — Entwürfe zur Ekklesiologie*, Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1969, quoted in *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium*, by Francis A. Sullivan SJ, Wipf & Stock Pub (March 31, 2003, p. 89. In 1870, the First Vatican Council, in the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, defined the conditions for a papal pronouncement to be infallible.

<sup>2030</sup> “To a Young Man Furious at the Chilean TFP,” cit.

Given the vast public who read and heard about the manifesto, it would have deserved at least a refutation.<sup>2031</sup>

However, what followed on the part of the hierarchy was lamentable.

Shortly after the manifesto was published, the signatories received two telegrams summoning them to appear before the Curia. One obeyed the summons and was received by Most Rev. Carlos Oviedo Cavada, Secretary of the Chilean Bishops' Conference.

While the TFP representative remained respectful but firm, the discussion immediately turned hostile on the part of the prelate. The meeting ended with Bishop Oviedo stating that a dialogue with the TFP was impossible because they were far too intransigent – as if the communist leaders with whom the likes of Bishop Oviedo throughout the world kept a lively and pleasant dialogue were not intransigent!

This meeting behind closed doors was the only reaction of the Chilean Bishops' Conference to a manifesto of such weight and impact.<sup>2032</sup>

According to the old adage, “silence is consent.” Anyone who remains silent in the face of a serious and well-grounded accusation will inevitably cut a deplorable figure.

Someone might say, “A son who points out his mother's errors shows a lack of respect, and zeal for her authority prevents the hierarchy from responding to her son.”

I do not believe any moralist would seriously consider adopting such a despotic concept of maternal authority. Naturally, a mother in danger of losing the love of a son who reproaches her attitude would summon all her forces to defend herself and keep his esteem. That would be the natural reaction in all cases where a mother has good reasons for her actions.

When such reasons are lacking, she should acknowledge that she acted wrongly and ask her son's forgiveness for setting a bad example. Silence would be the only incomprehensible reaction of an accused mother.

Accordingly, an ecclesiastical authority feeling wrongly accused should consider it a strict pastoral duty to defend itself. If it recognized the accusations as well-founded, it might have a grave duty to apologize.<sup>2033</sup>

But the Chilean hierarchy did none of these things. They remained silent.

Therefore, the Brazilian TFP did not need to change its attitude. We continued saying that since our valiant brothers gave their version of events with dispassionate objectivity, they had the right and even duty, according to Church doctrine and laws, to criticize the hierarchy as they did.

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<sup>2031</sup> “St. Pius Pio X Thanked for Criticism,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/18/73.

<sup>2032</sup> “Eleven Brave Priests,” cit.

<sup>2033</sup> “St. Pius Pio X Thanked for Criticism,” cit.

We would not judge the facts TFP alleged without first hearing the other side, i.e., the Chancery of Santiago or the papal Nunciature in Chile.<sup>2034</sup>

## 7. Chilean Priests Publicly Support TFP

Several courageous priests expressed their support of the Chilean TFP, which honors the Chilean clergy and brings us great joy as Catholics.<sup>2035</sup>

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<sup>2034</sup> “I Resisted Him to His Face,” cit.

<sup>2035</sup> To illustrate some priests’ serious dissatisfaction with their hierarchs’ scandalous support of the communist government, we transcribe below excerpts from their letters Dr. Plinio quoted in his article “Eleven Brave Priests,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, April 15, 1973:

*Father Guillermo Varas*, Santiago (published in the dailies *La Tribuna* and *La Tercera de la Hora*, 4/7/73): “It is very sad to note - and you have provided plenty of evidence for your statements – how cleverly Marxism exploited the often weak, vacillating or wrong attitudes of certain priests to consolidate its domination over our country. What you have expressed [in your manifesto] ... provides a guiding light for countless Chileans struggling amidst error and confusion. I believe that many groups in whose interest it is to sow such confusion will prefer to keep a prudent silence. What other attitudes could they adopt when the facts you have presented and the conclusions you have drawn are not only common knowledge but a faithful expression of the teachings of our Holy Mother Church?”

*Father Raymundo Arancibia*, Santiago (*La Tercera de la Hora*, 4/11/73): “For Christians, and especially priests, the fact that such publications are even necessary causes a lot of profound suffering for the simple reason that they show the hierarchy, mother of all believers, in a very bad light. ... However, I am not one of those who reject all criticism *a priori* because they consider it irreverent or sinful under all circumstances. Undoubtedly, there are many types of criticism, one inspired by hatred or a simple desire to find errors everywhere and another that calmly analyzes the facts, draws adequate conclusions, discerns responsibilities and seeks remedies to cure the evil. What you are doing belongs to the second type since you are not motivated by hatred but by your love for the Church. Using respectful language, you have pointed out what has occurred and identified its causes; you have drawn logical conclusions and proposed constructive solutions. ... It is frightening to realize that many priests interested in the workers’ fate sought a solution for these (social) issues in a doctrine, of all things, which the Church has condemned as intrinsically perverse, as though the encyclicals had not already offered the best and most Christian solutions. This weak and indecisive attitude in the face of the advance of Marxist errors; the doctrine shamelessly sustained by many ministers of God that it is possible to be a good Christian and a Marxist at the same time; the policy of extending a friendly hand to communists, collaborating with communism, all of which happened without anyone attempting to put a stop to such aberrations – has caused many Catholics to become weak and indifferent in the face of this scourge, creating a ‘climate’ conducive to the introduction of Marxism in Chile, which is now leading us into chaos. You are perfectly right to protest against these events, and your booklet’s conclusions are drawn with perfect logic. ... May God continue to bless and help you in this work you have undertaken with zeal and so many sacrifices.”

Fathers *Francisco Ramirez*, parish priest of San Agustin; *José Garcia*, auxiliary pastor; *Benedicto Guines* and *Luis Toledo*, pastor of the Carlos Mahn parish in the city of Tomé, all in the Archdiocese of Concepción (published in the daily *El Sur de Concepción*, 4/10/73): “We feel it is our duty to express our public support and our most sincere applause for your association’s position in the manifesto titled ‘The Church’s Self-Destruction, a Factor in the Destruction of Chile.’ Given the attitude adopted by a large number of members of the clergy vis-à-vis the process of communism transformation that has swept through our country like a *procella tenebrarum*, all that remains is for us to express our condemnation of their silence and complicity that has made this possible. Like you, we see this attitude as a sign of the serious crisis in which the Catholic Church finds itself, a crisis that Paul VI himself referred to as the process of Church self-destruction; we also see that for this very reason, the Chilean clergy bears a grave responsibility for this process. As we do not want to be guilty of the same omission, we support your statement since it is fully under the most genuine teachings of our Holy Mother Church.”

There was abundant evidence that the Chilean TFP was within its rights to do what it did.<sup>2036</sup>

## 8. Cast Into Misery, Chile Reacts. The Marxist Government Falls

The Allende government was an absolute disaster. It brought nothing but hunger and misery.

The many measures the communists imposed on Iron Curtain countries such as Russia were introduced in a slightly less radical manner in Chile. But Allende, a self-proclaimed Marxist unto his last breath, was leading Chile toward the horrors of Marxism.<sup>2037</sup>

There followed substantial anti-Allende demonstrations, the boldest elements of which were not members of the wealthy elite but workers of the copper mines of El Teniente, peasants who rose with arms in hand to protect their employers, and truck drivers from all over the country.<sup>2038</sup>

As a result, the Supreme Court of Justice ruled on May 25 and June 25, 1973, that the executive branch had acted outside the Constitution and the laws of the land. On August 22, 1973, the House of Representatives declared “the Allende government illegal given its deliberate and repeated violations of the Constitution.” The office of the Comptroller General and the Chilean Bar Association issued similar statements.<sup>2039</sup>

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Fathers *Arturo Fuentes*, chaplain of the Little Sisters of the Poor, and *Bernardo Lobos*, professor at Lyceum II of Men in Concepcion (published in *La Tercera de la Hora*, 4/9/73): “We fully agree with your analysis of the situation in Chile, particularly concerning the clergy’s silence and, in some cases, collaboration as one of the leading factors in the process of introducing communism into our beloved country. You have addressed the problem honestly, exposing incontrovertible facts entirely and respectfully. It is a great joy for us, as priests, to see that at this very critical time in the life of the Church and in our country’s history, lay people take up the defense of the genuine principles of their Religion, while those whose duty it would be to do so have chosen to remain silent.”

Fathers *Reinaldo Durán*, pastor of San Rosendo, *Francisco J. Valenzuela*, parish priest of Lirquén, and *Francisco Veloso*, parish priest of San Juan de la Mata (*Tribuna de Santiago*, 4/11/73): “We can only agree and express our warm support for the (TFP) protesters who have pointed out facts that are in the public domain and therefore indisputable. These facts and omissions have caused scandal and confusion among the faithful. Marxism, the enemy of everything Catholic, has drawn strength from this. We do not want our silence to be construed as an endorsement of Marxism, formally condemned by numerous papal encyclicals. This is why we have decided to publish this statement.”

<sup>2036</sup> “St. Pius X Thanked for Criticism,” cit.

<sup>2037</sup> Interview with Radio Capital of Montevideo (recording) 7/20/90.

<sup>2038</sup> “Praising the Silent Ones in the West,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/7/73. At that point, popular unrest was already uncontrollable. More than one hundred thousand women went on the famous “marches of empty pots” to protest food shortages (cf. “Church Self-Destruction Entails Chile’s Demolition; Chilean TFP: The Clergy, Allende’s Great Hope,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/2/73).

<sup>2039</sup> “Allende’s Civic ‘Canonization,’” cit.

When the military overthrew Allende, they claimed they were acting under pressure from the people. And no one doubted this.<sup>2040</sup>

## 9. Blame for the Bloodshed Those Who Prepared the Marxist Victory

Leftists around the world - who had made it their business to proclaim the complete supremacy of the “common good” - abruptly turned into defenders of individual rights.

Turning a blind eye to the imperative of “public salvation,” they began chanting worldwide a secular and sanctimonious *De Profundis* deploring the bloodshed. Of course, their lamentations were all for the blood of leftist casualties. As if the deceased had not violated any “human rights” by killing and maiming soldiers!

If this had not happened, what would have been the alternative? Should they have let the country go to perdition? There is only a “yes” or “no” answer.

We, too, deplore the bloodshed. It would have been much better if Chile’s political and economic ideological trajectory had not led to the catastrophic rise of a Marxist sect to power.<sup>2041</sup>

I could only approve of Chile’s hierarchy’s opposition to abuses allegedly occurring: Arbitrary arrests, interrogation with physical and moral torture, limitation of the rights of defense, and arbitrary inequality in sentencing.

I was shocked, however, by the fact that during Fidel Castro’s visit to Allende, Cardinal Silva Henriquez did not shrink from showing sympathy for the Cuban tyrant whose human rights violations were far worse than any excesses allegedly practiced by Chilean law enforcement authorities.

Why this double standard? Why such excessive severity regarding the actions of an anticommunist government and such leniency toward the communist tyrant?<sup>2042</sup>

## 10. The Chilean TFP’s Earnest Struggle to Prevent the Deadly Process

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<sup>2040</sup> “Praising the Silent Ones in the West,” cit. Then came September 11, 1973, revolution against Allende. He was overthrown and committed suicide before they could arrest him.

<sup>2041</sup> “Magnificat for Chile,” 9/16/73. In this article, Dr. Plinio stated, “Someone might ask, “Once the Marxist government had been overthrown, was it absolutely necessary to shoot communist holdouts offering armed resistance? To answer this question properly, one must consider a series of details the press has not yet reported and moral considerations that we lack the space to develop here. However, the fact is that heavily armed militants of the communist resistance were unlawfully trying to prevent the country’s salvation. Their fanaticism leads them to keep shooting when all resistance is useless. Thus, the main culprits for the present bloodshed in Chile are those who poisoned militants with Marxist doctrine and radicalized them. With the impartiality inherent to our Christian heritage, history will always record them as criminals. If the nation’s restorers committed excesses, these will also be recorded and duly censored, but impartial Christian historiography will never consider the blood of fanatics who died attacking the country as equivalent to that of the heroes who fell defending it.”

<sup>2042</sup> “Voice of Those Who Silence, Overwhelmed,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/28/74.

The Chilean TFP left no stone unturned to alert their countrymen to the danger of "Catholic" progressivism and Christian Democrats stealthily pushing the nation over the brink of the chasm whence it emerged covered in blood.

TFPs in the entire South American continent did their best to create international conditions hindering collaboration with this process of death and destruction.

However, no one was able to prevent Chilean *toads*, hand in glove with the leftist clergy, from handing the country over to Allende.

They all sang a victory *Te Deum* in Santiago's Cathedral accompanied by rabbis, Protestant pastors, communists, and terrorists. And then, the tragedy took its course.

From the beginning, it was apparent there would be a bloody ending, or Chile would be destroyed. The end was indeed bloody, and Chile narrowly escaped destruction. Most blame lies with those who sang that strange ecumenical *Te Deum*.

As a Catholic, I can only deplore the stubborn communist leader's suicide and lament that the Bible, which Cardinal Silva Henriquez so eagerly offered, provided so little spiritual help.

Chile's riddance of communism meant losing ground everywhere on the South American continent. As a Brazilian and a friend of Chile, I could only rejoice. And without prejudging any details that God and history may disapprove, I inwardly chanted the Magnificat.

Yes, the Magnificat - which Cardinal Silva Henriquez certainly was not singing at the time.<sup>2043</sup>

That is our assessment of events.

Similarly, a leading Paris daily wrote: "Allende was a symbol of democratic socialism. ... His fall has traumatized European leftists who were preparing to follow the same path" (*Le Monde*, September 13, 1993).<sup>2044</sup>

A kind of discouragement spread to all socialist countries worldwide and was at the root of socialism's general decline.<sup>2045</sup>

It is striking to see this fact recognized by *Le Monde*, a centrist French newspaper with leftist leanings that one would not normally expect to publish such conclusions.<sup>2046</sup>

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<sup>2043</sup> "Magnificat for Chile," cit.

<sup>2044</sup> RR 10/2/93.

<sup>2045</sup> Dispatch 9/30/93.

<sup>2046</sup> RR 10/2/93.

## Chapter IV

# Denouncing Infiltration of 'Cursillos in Christianity' (1972-1973)

### 1. The Cursillos' Role in the Brazilian Establishment's Ideological Shift

I was also worried about another infiltration with signs discernible in the so-called *Cursillos in Christianity*.

The *Cursillos*, a movement of Spanish origin, were very popular in the Americas.<sup>2047</sup> They represented the most potent and dangerous weapon at the enemy's disposal in Brazilian society.<sup>2048</sup>

To understand this danger, we need to go back a little

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When we launched *AR-QC* in 1960, some rural leaders tried to sabotage the book and played all kinds of tricks to prevent it from becoming known.<sup>2049</sup> We fought and aborted the agrarian reform program despite some professional organizations of the very landowners whose lands were in danger of confiscation and who did what they could to sabotage the book while pretending to sympathize with its aims.<sup>2050</sup>

However, this was a localized phenomenon. Regarding public opinion in general, the book was approved by what we might call the establishment.

What do I mean by the establishment?

The establishment is a class of people made up of many traditional families of São Paulo and other states who have not lost their fortune or prestige, plus several farmers born of the people but who love their property.

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<sup>2047</sup> SEFAC 1/15/76.

<sup>2048</sup> Lecture to Caravans 11/23/72.

<sup>2049</sup> Normal Meeting 6/30/72.

<sup>2050</sup> Dispatch 2/20/80.

For example, when Dom Helder Câmara, in an attempt to confront *AR-QC*, convened that CNBB meeting in São Paulo and officially favored agrarian reform, not one voice supporting the bishops was heard from the establishment ranks.

Even atheists praised *AR-QC*.

The establishment's approval of our position lasted until approximately 1969/1970, when I started noticing a change of heart<sup>2051</sup> in large groups of this bourgeoisie, especially the middle and upper classes.<sup>2052</sup>

Many came to believe that the communist danger had been finally averted.<sup>2053</sup> Those who had taken an anticommunist position and supported us during Jango's time were now becoming supporters of communism or social and political reforms that are its inevitable precursors.<sup>2054</sup>

A muted attack against the TFP started rumors that our positions on political and social matters were "exaggerated" and embarrassing since the TFP drew attention to a problem they believed should be settled through accommodation without fighting, arguing or making a fuss.

We were also attacked for our rigidity regarding customs and general intransigence in religious matters. They said our religious attitudes should be more forgiving, loving, and tolerant of new fashions and customs.

And so, an indefinable antipathy to the TFP spread among much of the ruling class, especially in São Paulo.<sup>2055</sup>

## 2. *Cursillos*, Tailor-Made to Indoctrinate With Leftist Ideas

How did this ideological shift come about?

The shift was primarily due to the influence of the leftist clergy and, in the vast majority of cases, to the activities of *Cursillos* in Christianity.

Some *Cursillos* versions suited the tastes of bourgeois individuals with remnants of tradition, religious practices or faith who neither wanted to abandon their religion completely nor accept or practice it as it was. They wanted a religion shaped according to their passions and whims, which would inevitably lead them sooner or later to the left.

Some *Cursillos*' religious teachings were playful, light-hearted, egalitarian, tolerant of off-color jokes, recommending an impudent intimacy with God and conveying that faith can be practiced pleasantly and efficiently

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<sup>2051</sup> Normal Meeting 6/30/72.

<sup>2052</sup> SD 11/24/72.

<sup>2053</sup> Normal Meeting 6/30/72.

<sup>2054</sup> SD 11/24/72.

<sup>2055</sup> Normal Meeting 6/30/72.



without discomfort or sacrifice. For this type of bourgeois, it was a tailor-made religion.

Left-leaning liberalism was the necessary corollary of such an attitude to religion, and the bourgeoisie was thus introduced to and indoctrinated with leftist ideas.

The *Cursillos* promoting this doctrine led untold numbers of people who had previously supported us astray. They did not only lead them astray but turned them against us.

Such *Cursillistas* were the most efficient drivers of leftism - not in seminaries, universities or Catholic groups or associations but among those hitherto hostile to leftism who were not particularly close to the Church or clergy.<sup>2056</sup>

Accordingly, the *Cursillos* had the same effect on the laity as the IDO-C and "prophetic groups" were causing within religious circles (seminaries, religious orders, convents, Catholic works). The spirit was the same, and the technique was very similar.<sup>2057</sup>

In this sense, our struggle during Catholic Action was against the precursors of the *Cursillos*.<sup>2058</sup>

This counteroffensive toward a quasi-leftist position was led by industry and business leaders rather than farmers. It was a leftist infiltration of commerce, industry, the banking sector, and the upper classes.

### **3. An Effective Tool to Spread the Christian Democrat Mentality**

The Christian Democrat mindset (not as a political party) played no small role in this shift to the left because of its influence and the spirit it promoted.

There was no longer a Christian Democratic Party in Brazil. However, people still trusted Christian Democrat politicians, and this influenced events precisely because of Cursillo-type mechanisms.

The Christian Democrat approach spread slowly from the spheres of trade and industry to upper-class families in urban and rural areas.

Note that the number of conservative clergy members was decreasing during this period. More or less en masse, the clergy began to oppose the TFP.

All these influences resulted in a situation in which the majority of the large fortunes and a good part of medium-sized fortunes in São Paulo and other states in the 1970s were in the hands of people who were sometimes more and sometimes less liberal but very much taken in by new fashions and sexual liberation.

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<sup>2056</sup> SD 11/24/72.

<sup>2057</sup> Lecture to Caravans 11/23/72.

<sup>2058</sup> Normal Meeting 9/23/69.

Among these people, the phenomenon of what we came to call “*toads*” emerged.<sup>2059</sup>

A *toad* was an establishment man who no longer respected tradition, completely lost the traditional spirit, and used his fortune only for selfish pleasure and to attack those seeking to defend private property, family, and Catholic tradition. That was the concept behind the use of the term “*toad*.”<sup>2060</sup>

#### 4. The Idea of Publishing a Pastoral Letter on the Cursillos

During a conversation between Dom Mayer, two older members of our group and me in my office at the Maranhão Street headquarters, I spoke about the *Cursillos* and expressed concern about the development<sup>2061</sup> this substantially progressive organization was undergoing.<sup>2062</sup>

To the applause of the other two interlocutors, Dom Mayer accepted my suggestion of publishing a pastoral letter about this movement to point out the *Cursillos*’ true nature based on their main books and publications and draw attention<sup>2063</sup> to the strange and dangerous tendencies expressed therein.<sup>2064</sup>

That conversation led to the publication of the *Pastoral Letter on Cursillos in Christianity*.<sup>2065</sup>

#### 5. Collecting Documentation and Studies

We had been looking for material and documents about the *Cursillos* for many years but were unsuccessful because it was a secretive movement.

At one point, a TFP member in Madrid obtained some fascinating details, which is how we received the proper documentation to publish the correct accusations at the right time.<sup>2066</sup>

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<sup>2059</sup> The expression was first used in an article by Dr. Plinio in the *Folha* (June 25, 1969), “The Bomb, the Star and the Toads.” At the time, the TFP was in the middle of its street campaign against IDO-C and the “prophetic groups.” Dr. Plinio called *toads* the leftist bourgeois who passed by our campaign groups in their cars – often luxury models – shouting (croaking) communist-inspired insults. The so-called post-conciliar era had already begun.

<sup>2060</sup> Normal Meeting 6/30/72.

<sup>2061</sup> SD 11/24/72.

<sup>2062</sup> SEFAC 1/15/76.

<sup>2063</sup> SD 11/24/72.

<sup>2064</sup> “The Pastoral Letter on Cursillos,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/3/72.

<sup>2065</sup> SD 11/24/72.

<sup>2066</sup> Lecture to Caravans 11/23/72.

At a meeting with Dom Mayer, we studied various documents regarding the *Cursillos* and decided that the pastoral letter would be limited to stating that they had bad influences and that people should view the movement with caution and reserve.<sup>2067</sup>

We did not claim that all *Cursillos* were bad but had come under evil influences, some of which were from their Madrid headquarters.<sup>2068</sup>

## 6. “It Takes Courage to Face a Such Powerful Enemy”

When the *Pastoral Letter on Cursillos in Christianity* was ready, a TFP director, Dr. Plinio Xavier da Silveira, went to the *Folha de S. Paulo* offices to ask its editor to announce its publication and interview Dom Mayer about it.<sup>2069</sup>

One of the editors flipped through the pastoral letter and said:<sup>2070</sup>

“You do know that it's courageous of you to face up to such a powerful enemy as the *Cursillos* of Christianity?”

Dr. Plinio Xavier casually replied: “Yes.”<sup>2071</sup>

“And you know there will be a terrible backlash because of this?”

“Yes, we do.”

“Well, I will publish this material free of charge. I'd publish this for free even if you wanted to pay me on condition that my newspaper is the first to break the news.”

He added: “Now, let me warn you: my paper will not take sides. When the reply comes, I will publish all the same because I want to stir up a discussion by printing this. And I will also print your rejoinder when you present it to me.”

Soon after, Dr. Adolpho Lindenberg and Dr. Paulo Corrêa de Brito met with the owner of one or two critical television channels. After they presented the subject, he told them: “I will report this without charge.” He considered it an exciting matter, likely to cause a lot of controversies.<sup>2072</sup>

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<sup>2067</sup> SD 11/24/72.

<sup>2068</sup> Lecture to Caravans 11/23/72.

<sup>2069</sup> SEFAC 1/15/76.

<sup>2070</sup> EE 11/24/72.

<sup>2071</sup> SEFAC 1/15/76.

<sup>2072</sup> EE 11/24/72. The story created a huge stir when, on Saturday, November 25, 1972, news kiosks put *Folha de S. Paulo* out for sale. The front page headlined, “Do the *Cursillos* Promote a Leftist Agenda?” And just below, a warning: “There is a unique mixture of truth and error, good and evil in the *Cursillos*,” states Dom Antonio Castro Mayer, bishop of Campos (State of Rio de Janeiro), who has just published a pastoral letter about the *Cursillos in Christianity* examining certain aspects of this movement. In an interview with this newspaper to be published in tomorrow's edition, the prelate said the *Cursillos* have revealed “dangerous trends and even, in some of their publications, errors concerning doctrine and moral, economic and social issues. One must recognize there is a leftist trend in *Cursillos*' circles,” says the Bishop of Campos. This will certainly open up a discussion about a movement that deeply penetrated Brazilian Catholic circles. It goes without saying that the interview with Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer, which will

## 7. The Campaign Spreads: 120 Volunteers in 1238 Cities

So began this great campaign, which distributed the pastoral letter throughout Brazil. We sent TFP members and friends into the streets to sell the book throughout Brazil.

If I remember correctly, we continued this publicity drive for about four months.<sup>2073</sup>

## 8. Adverse Reactions, Frantic but Superficial

Most of those who argued for the *Cursillos* did so as if they were short of breath. They could not find enough words to express their restlessness, panic, and indignation. The concepts, arguments, and words seemed stuck in their throats, so eager were they to attack the pastoral letter and those distributing it.<sup>2074</sup>

The *Cursillo* movement in Brazil shuddered under this blow.<sup>2075</sup>

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Almost all the bishops who spoke out favored the *Cursillos*, generally saying and avoiding the same things.

Quite a few claimed that Dom Mayer's pastoral letter distribution in their dioceses challenged their authority. No wonder – the pastoral letter attacked what they proclaimed a wonderful thing!<sup>2076</sup>

On the other hand, they avoided with the greatest caution any affirmation or denial of the authenticity of the more than 50 *Cursillo* documents on which Dom Mayer based his criticism.<sup>2077</sup>

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As soon as the campaign started, someone from the *Jornal da Tarde* called Dr. Paulo Corrêa de Brito, Dr. Plinio Xavier da Silveira and me to ask for an interview, not about the campaign but the TFP. I soon realized this was a ploy to start attacking the TFP, simultaneously creating controversy about the TFP and the *Cursillos*.

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obviously have a great impact, represents his personal point of view, which will certainly cause protests and controversies.”

<sup>2073</sup> SEFAC 1/15/76. The campaign mobilized 120 members and volunteers, organized in thirteen caravans, who traveled from December 1972 to March 1973, visiting 1,238 cities in various parts of the country; 93,000 copies of the pastoral letter were distributed throughout Brazil.

<sup>2074</sup> “Cursillism Boils Over,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/28/73.

<sup>2075</sup> EANS 12/10/72.

<sup>2076</sup> Dom Mayer, in an interview, called such criticism “evasive and superficial” and deplored that he had not received a single argument refuting the documents and arguments he presented (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 266, February 1973).

<sup>2077</sup> “Cursillism Boils Over,” cit.

I replied that since the TFP was in the middle of a campaign to alert the public about unhealthy *Cursillos* guidelines, it was not a convenient moment to grant interviews, but I promised we would be available as soon as the campaign was over.

Shortly after, this paper published a series of factious and biased articles that left no doubt that it intended to help the *Cursillos*. They were based on testimonies from people who had left the TFP.

These articles in the *Jornal da Tarde* were only an episode in our struggle with the *Cursillos*. As I stated, it was an attempt to see if they could divert the focus of controversy away from *Cursillos* and start a discussion about the TFP. The *Cursillos* were the topic of debate. Since they could not argue against Dom Mayer's claims in his pastoral letter, they started a slander campaign against us to see if they could push us into the defendants' bench. That was the purpose of those articles.<sup>2078</sup>

## 9. CNBB's Empty Threat

The Bishops' General Assembly was held in a climate of expectation.<sup>2079</sup>

Rumors had it that the CNBB intended to publish an enthusiastic endorsement of the *Cursillo* movement and a resounding condemnation of the TFP.<sup>2080</sup>

Indeed, as the conference started, Dom José Freire Falcão, Archbishop of Teresina, appointed by his peers as their representative with the press, announced that "probably the TFP will be reprimanded."<sup>2081</sup>

Various news agencies disclosed that the Assembly had set up a committee consisting of Dom Gilberto Pereira Lopes, Bishop of Ipameri (Goiás); Dom Serafim Fernandes de Araújo, Auxiliary Bishop of Belo Horizonte (later Cardinal Archbishop of that city), and Dom Antonio Afonso de Miranda, Bishop of Lorena, to make a unique study about the TFP.

Even before the Commission began its studies, other bishops prejudged the matter by speaking to the press against the TFP.<sup>2082</sup>

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<sup>2078</sup> SD 2/9/73. In a *Folha* article, Dr. Plinio predicted that if the opponents were unable to answer, they would resort "to hearsay, personal invectives against the great prelate, or slanders against the TFP, which is distributing the work. I am far from saying they will go that far. Besides, that tactic would not help them, for it could only be seen as an attempt to escape the annoyances of the serene doctrinal dialogue to which the nature of the matter invites" (*Folha de S. Paulo* 12/3/72).

<sup>2079</sup> This meeting took place in February 1973.

<sup>2080</sup> "In the Post-Assembly Climate," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/25/73.

<sup>2081</sup> "Opening for Dialogue," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/18/73.

<sup>2082</sup> "In the Post-Assembly Climate," cit.

The cheering crowd of leftist *Cursillos* sectors was jubilant. Things could not have gone better for them. A raving review for the *Cursillos* and a condemnation of the TFP, what a windfall!

With a clear conscience, the TFP let the Assembly pass without asking for information or begging for sympathy. We calmly waited for the outcome, prepared to explain to the public our position when the time was right, as we had done at the time of the CNBB Central Committee's statement against us in 1966.

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These news items were followed by anonymous phone calls to our offices with insults and profanity. People drove cars past the shrine of Our Lady that we kept on Martím Francisco Street and shouted obscenities. Some threw eggs at young TFP members praying before the statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception with their backs to the street.

It all ended suddenly when the Cardinal Archbishop of Porto Alegre, Dom Vicente Scherer, told the press that the TFP would likely not be the object of any reprimand. His Eminence asserted that the TFP was “not an item on the [meeting's] agenda.”<sup>2083</sup>

According to reports in some newspapers, the bishops heatedly argued about whether or not to censor the TFP, delaying the statement's publication by a whole hour. In the end, it contained nothing about the TFP.<sup>2084</sup>

Ultimately, regarding the *Cursillo* movement, the bishops' statement showed that the optimistic prognosis of *Cursillo* promoters was almost entirely unfounded. The bishops inserted no more than a friendly reference to the *Cursillos* into their final statement. It was very different from the enthusiastic endorsement so confidently expected.

There was not a single word about the TFP.

The apparent intention of the bishops' assembly was to act discreetly and with restraint.

However, Dom Seraphim Fernandes de Araújo, Auxiliary Bishop of Belo Horizonte, did the opposite.

The *Diário de Minas* of February 17, 1973, quoted Dom Seraphim as saying that all the bishops present at the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly had condemned the TFP.

This statement was reminiscent of a magic trick: all the bishops had been keen to condemn the TFP, but their final and official statement did not mention it!

Soon after this strange assertion, they again quoted Dom Seraphim as saying, “There was some disagreement concerning this organization. Some

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<sup>2083</sup> Cf. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 2/20/73.

<sup>2084</sup> “Opening for Dialogue,” cit.

bishops think there should be a dialogue with the TFP, others that we should forget because its members are unprepared to engage in dialogue.”

Given all this, it was astonishing to read the interview Bishop Ivo Lorscheiter, Secretary-General of the CNBB, gave the press. He told reporters the Assembly had decided not to condemn the TFP because doing so might give the impression that we are much more important than we are.

Those bishops who expressed their dislike for the TFP after the meeting acted contrary to the Assembly’s spirit and intent, as its manifest intention was to calm things down.<sup>2085</sup>

## 10. Bishop Isnard’s Virulent Attack

A few months later, the press created a bit of a stir by publishing a decree in which Dom Clemente Isnard, Bishop of Nova Friburgo, forbade his clergy from giving Communion to TFP members if they appeared in a group or wearing their insignia.<sup>2086</sup>

To justify his orders, the prelate made three accusations against the TFP: We had slandered the *Cursillos*, had shown contempt for his person and authority, and had supported a "schismatic" book about the new *Ordo Missae* of Paul VI.

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It is true that, in 1970, a TFP director at the time, Mr. Arnaldo Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, wrote a solidly documented study about the new *Ordo Missae*, and the TFP endorsed his book.

Due to this delicate subject’s doctrinal implications, this study would likely raise many theological and canonical issues the Brazilian public was unfamiliar with. The book’s publication could lead to a serious division and disruption of the country’s troubled and divided religious situation.

We would indeed have published the book with as much fanfare as possible if we wanted to be talked about at all costs and engage in polemics – as Dom Lorscheiter claimed.

However, we decided not to do so and distributed only a few copies of the work to a limited number of carefully chosen people, asking them for their opinions in private.

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<sup>2085</sup> “In the Post-Assembly Climate,” cit.

<sup>2086</sup> Most Rev. Clemente José Carlos de Gouvea Isnard, OSB (1917-2011), was the first bishop of the Diocese of Nova Friburgo (RJ) from 1942. As a Law and Social Sciences student at the Law School of Rio de Janeiro, he met Catholic Action and the Dom Vital Center and began participating in them. He joined the Order of Saint Benedict in 1937. He intensely participated in the Second Vatican Council and later held important posts at the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops and CELAM. At CNBB, he played a key role in implementing the liturgical reform in Brazil.

One of the recipients—who occupied one of the highest positions in the hierarchy and had disagreed with us more than once—was so impressed with the book's possible repercussions on public opinion that he wrote to a mutual friend, asking "on bended knee if need be," that the TFP refrain from publishing the work. For these reasons, we remained silent about it.

Meanwhile, in many churches, priests who were probably unaware of all these facts relentlessly subjected our members and volunteers to invectives and public humiliations of all kinds because of our attitude toward the new *Ordo Missae*. And no one in our ranks opened his mouth to defend himself using the book's arguments.

And now Dom Isnard threatens canonical penalties against the TFP in an official church document for supporting a book he calls "schismatic."

This was much more than the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back.

All the same, when replying to this, we did not disclose the book's material. We were resolved only to do so if other facts forced us to speak. If that happened, the responsibility would undoubtedly rest on the shoulders of whoever forced us into such a position.

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In his book, the author explicitly affirms his unwavering fidelity to the Church's doctrine and discipline. Whenever he raised sensitive issues of theology or canon law, he accepted in advance all that the Church might decide, as was his duty according to Canon Law.

That was precisely the TFP's position. Our conscience was clear concerning our perfect union with the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church.

We all lived in and for the Church and wanted to die in and for the Church if this was Providence's will.

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As far as the other two claims were concerned – TFP defamation of *Cursillos* and contempt for Dom Isnard's authority<sup>2087</sup> – all we had to say was that if he disagreed with Dom Mayer's pastoral letter, it would have been a noble gesture on his part to say so in public and defend the *Cursillos* by arguing against Dom Mayer's points. Doing so would have been his right, and Dom Isnard could have engaged in a timely and high-level dialogue with his distinguished brother and neighbor of Campos.

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<sup>2087</sup> "On Bishop Isnard's Anti-TFP Decree," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/27/73.



However, Dom Isnard felt more comfortable attacking him from an oblique angle to unleash his wrath on TFP's young men. It was a pathetic display.<sup>2088</sup>

## Chapter V

### Facing Vatican *Ostpolitik*: Do Nothing? Or Resist? (1974) A Timely Manifesto of Resistance

#### 1. The Vatican Policy of Detente with Communist Regimes

At this point, I feel obliged to talk about Catholic *Resistance* to His Holiness Pope Paul VI's *Ostpolitik*.

In principle, part of the Vatican's august mission is to engage in diplomatic negotiations with communist regimes to ease the plight of persecuted Catholics. For my part, I have always maintained the legitimacy of such conduct.

However, one cannot maintain that this was all. Vatican *Ostpolitik* had two different aspects. One was diplomatic and involved contacts with foreign offices.

However, in parallel with the Vatican's diplomatic *détente* with the East, a significant change of position toward Marxist parties of the West became widespread in Catholic circles.

With John XXIII's election, the militantly anticommunist attitude that characterized these circles between the beginnings of Marxism and the death of

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<sup>2088</sup> "Still on Bishop Isnard's Anti-TFP Decree," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 6/3/73. Dr. Plinio commented on and refuted that decree in three successive articles in *Folha de S. Paulo*: "On Bishop Isnard's Anti-TFP Decree" (5/27/73), "Still on Bishop Isnard's Anti-TFP Decree" (6/3/73) and "Bishop Isnard: The End," (6/10/73).

Pius XII softened rapidly and became so rare under Paul VI that it was almost an exception to the rule.

Critical attitudes toward communism by ecclesiastical authorities and Catholic organizations became rarer and toned down more and more, so they very often sounded more like a friend complaining to another than someone criticizing an irreconcilable adversary.

Clearly, this conduct frequently led to open collaboration between Church authorities, organizations, and communist groups.<sup>2089</sup>

Catholics who took the encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII seriously knew these popes taught that communism is the opposite of the natural order of things and that its subversion in the economy or any other field can only have catastrophic consequences.<sup>2090</sup>

Sometimes, churchmen's new language and demands about social issues were such that, albeit not openly Marxist, it seemed inspired by the communist style and vocabulary.

Furthermore, the Holy See kept secret contacts with 'Red' heads of state and Most Rev. Agostino Casaroli, the Vatican's Kissinger, constantly traveled to communist countries.

Indisputably, the Vatican's change of attitude psychologically demobilized 500 million Catholics vis-a-vis the communist threat.<sup>2091</sup>

## **2. Archbishop Casaroli's Trip to Cuba, the Straw that Broke the Camel's Back**

In an interview reproduced in a leading São Paulo daily on April 7, 1974, Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, Secretary of the Vatican Council for Public Affairs, made known some results of his trip to Cuba.<sup>2092</sup>

His Excellency asserted that "the Catholics who live in Cuba are happy under the socialist regime."

It is not necessary to go into detail as to what kind of socialism he is talking about since everyone knows that Cuba is under a communist regime.

Still talking about the Castro regime, His Excellency continued: "Catholics and the Cuban people, in general, do not have the slightest problem with the socialist government."

Wishing perhaps to give these appalling statements an air of impartiality, Monsignor Casaroli expressed regret that the number of priests in Cuba—only two hundred—was so low. He said he asked Castro to provide more possibilities

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<sup>2089</sup> "We Cannot Understand," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/7/74.

<sup>2090</sup> "The Vatican Policy of Detente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?" *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/14/74.

<sup>2091</sup> "Indispensable Resistance," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/14/74.

<sup>2092</sup> cf. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 4/7/74. This trip occurred from March 27 to April 5, 1974.

for holding religious services in public and finished by asserting, quite unexpectedly, that “the beliefs of the Catholics on the island are respected just as much as those of any other citizens.”

Archbishop Casaroli also asserted that “the Cuban Catholic Church and its spiritual guide always seek to avoid creating problems of any kind for the socialist regime that governs the island.”<sup>2093</sup>

It hurts to say it, but this is the obvious truth: Archbishop Casaroli’s trip to Cuba was nothing but a propaganda prop for Fidel Castro’s regime.<sup>2094</sup>

When I read this news, I realized that Archbishop Casaroli had not only gone too far but that the event was beginning to spark indignation in public opinion worldwide.<sup>2095</sup>

### 3. Cardinal Mindszenty’s Case

Cardinal Mindszenty’s relatively recent case was still vividly present in many people’s minds.<sup>2096</sup>

A glorious representative of the Church, even to those without faith, he was removed from his archdiocese of Esztergom to facilitate rapprochement with the Hungarian Communist government.<sup>2097</sup>

He had to be destroyed. A famous photograph shown at a commemoration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his incarceration by the communists showed him in the dock, looking terrified but unswervingly determined to fulfill his duty to the end.

Then came the short *intermezzo* of the anticommunist uprising.<sup>2098</sup>

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<sup>2093</sup> On April 4, 1974, during his stay in Cuba, Archbishop Casaroli made astonishing statements in his homily at the Cathedral of Havana, published by *Vida Cristiana* (5/18/74), Cuba’s only authorized Catholic publication. In this homily, the archbishop praised the Church in Cuba for being “vitaly incorporated into the current Cuban context” (the communist regime) and acting “not as an element of harmful divisions but as a beneficial leaven of fraternity.” In other words, he praised Catholics for not fighting communism (cf. article “Casaroli: Incorporation in the Context,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 6/30/74).

<sup>2094</sup> “The Vatican Policy of Detente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?” cit.

<sup>2095</sup> RR 4/10/74.

<sup>2096</sup> József Mindszenty (1892-1975), a Hungarian Cardinal who tenaciously opposed communism in Hungary and became a symbol of resistance to the regime. He was arrested in 1919 during Bela Kun’s Communist revolution. Elected Bishop of Veszprém in 1944, he was imprisoned by the Nazi regime, which he opposed, from 1944 to 1945. Named Archbishop Primate of Esztergom on October 2, 1945, he was elevated to cardinalship by Pope Pius XII on February 18, 1946.

<sup>2097</sup> “The Vatican Policy of Détente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?” cit. He was dismissed on February 2, 1974.

<sup>2098</sup> Cardinal Mindszenty was again arrested by the communists in 1949 and freed by the anticommunist uprising that lasted from October 23 to November 10, 1956. When the uprising was crushed, he applied for asylum at the United States embassy in Budapest.

For Cardinal Mindszenty, this was the beginning of a long period of captivity at the US embassy, during which he was inexplicably prohibited from contacting even the building's residents. However, Cardinal Mindszenty remained as a lonely pillar standing amid the ruins of his homeland.<sup>2099</sup>

As the cardinal recounts in his memoirs, Vatican maneuvers to remove him from Budapest began in 1971. The terrible drama of *détente* with communism promoted in the West by Nixon and Paul VI was unfolding on all fronts.

An almost immediately noticeable effect of this *détente*—which was nothing but another name for Christianity's self-destruction process—was the pressure the Vicar of Jesus Christ and the then-US President started putting on the Hungarian Cardinal at the instigation of the Budapest government.

That communist government desired nothing more ardently than Cardinal Mindszenty leaving Hungarian territory. Soon enough, the cardinal noticed he was no longer *persona grata* in the US embassy, where he had taken refuge.

Meanwhile, Paul VI sent a prelate to persuade the cardinal to leave Hungary.<sup>2100</sup>

Since Cardinal Mindszenty's mere presence in Hungary disturbed the sleep of its communist rulers, they obtained from Paul VI to exercise his right to demand obedience—the only force the great cardinal would yield to—for removing him from Hungary.<sup>2101</sup>

Cardinal Mindszenty finally and very reluctantly accepted a compromise that seemed the maximum he could reconcile with his conscience. He left the US embassy on September 29, 1971.

Upon leaving the building, he blessed his archdiocese and homeland with a grand, paternal and tragic gesture before crossing the border into Austria with the Apostolic Nuncio to Vienna.

Passing through Vienna, Archbishop Casaroli rendered him an homage and received him with the same smile he would later show Fidel Castro.

The joy of the "Vatican's Kissinger" was easily explained: the first stage of the agenda set up by the Budapest government was complete. The Cardinal Primate no longer bothered communist Hungary's atheist and egalitarian leaders.

Archbishop Casaroli's friendly welcome indicated the shape of things to come: an even warmer reception by Paul VI awaited the cardinal. The newspapers reported in great detail all the honors and attentions the Supreme Pontiff lavished on the crucified cardinal.

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<sup>2099</sup> "Glory, Joy, Honor," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/10/74.

<sup>2100</sup> "Tenderness that Would Draw Tears," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/13/74.

<sup>2101</sup> "Irridebit," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/16/78.

However, many surprises occurred before that happened. When arriving in Rome, Cardinal Mindszenty noted that the September 28, 1971 issue of the *Osservatore Romano* (the day he had left the US embassy in Hungary) referred to his ousting as the removal of an obstacle to good relations between the Church and the Hungarian government. “For me,” said the Cardinal, “this was the first bitter experience because I realized that the Vatican was not paying any attention to the specific terms I had negotiated in Budapest.”

Subsequent events confirmed Cardinal Mindszenty’s astonishment. It was agreed that after a stay in Rome, the Cardinal would reside in the Hungarian seminary in Vienna. The Holy See made this commitment conditional on the prior consent of the Austrian government.

The cardinal later said that the Vatican had seemingly omitted that step since the Austrian ambassador to the Holy See began raising difficulties when he expressed his wish to leave for Vienna after three weeks in Rome. However, the indomitable cardinal overcame those difficulties and moved to Vienna as planned.

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The episode in which Cardinal Mindszenty said goodbye to Paul VI will be remembered forever in Church history for what happened and what ensued. The pope of *détente* took his leave of the hero of anticommunist resistance with gestures of tenderness that would draw tears to the eyes of many observers.<sup>2102</sup>

Paul VI had Cardinal Mindszenty concelebrate Mass with him before leaving for Vienna. He then gave him the cardinal’s cape he had worn before becoming pope “as a symbol of love and respect.” He promised the cardinal his support in Latin: “You are and shall continue to be the Archbishop of Esztergom and Primate of Hungary. Continue your work, and always turn confidently to us if you have any difficulty.”

However, afterward, everything went in the opposite direction.

Cardinal Mindszenty asked to be given back his authority to appoint priests for the Hungarian communities abroad. To his bitter disappointment, the Vatican denied his request, the cardinal commented, so as not to “disturb the Budapest regime.”

Again, intending not to “disturb the Budapest regime,” the Holy See ruled that the great prelate must first submit all his public statements to an adviser appointed by Rome. Cardinal Mindszenty replied he would submit them “only to the Holy Father when he explicitly asked for it.”

Soon after, the Nunciature in Vienna informed Archbishop Mindszenty that during the 1971 negotiations, the Holy See had assured the Hungarian

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<sup>2102</sup> “Tenderness that Would Draw Tears,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, cit.

government that once set free, the cardinal would say nothing that could inconvenience Budapest. Given behind the Cardinal's back, this assurance violated the essential points of the agreement he and the Vatican were negotiating.

By this concession to the Hungarian government, Paul VI used the authority Our Lord Jesus Christ gave St. Peter to force the cardinal not to thwart the plans of communist imperialism. The keys of St. Peter used to accommodate the wishes of relentless atheist persecutors of religion: what was this but probably the biggest bombshell in Church history from Pentecost to this day?

Hungarian government orders soon began to be felt via the Vatican. As the text of a speech the cardinal intended to give at Fatima was being printed in Portugal, Nunciature emissaries in Lisbon interfered at the print shop without the cardinal's knowledge to suppress a passage warning Catholics around the world to beware of the new policy of "communism with a smile."

Worse was yet to come.

Sometime later, Paul VI wrote to Cardinal Mindszenty, asking him to renounce the Archdiocese of Esztergom. The cardinal refused, and Paul VI deposed him. It was particularly bitter to swallow that the letter was delivered to the Cardinal precisely on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his glorious imprisonment by the communists.

The drama had played out. From beginning to end, the conduct of the Vicar of Christ was determined by communist imperialism, i.e., by the Antichrist.<sup>2103</sup>

#### 4. Stop Fighting or Explain Our Position

Taken in conjunction with the Casaroli affair, all these developments added up to an extraordinary picture.<sup>2104</sup>

TFP's fundamentally anticommunist position stemmed from its members' Catholic convictions. TFP directors, members, and volunteers are anticommunists because they are Catholics and live according to Catholic principles.

Vatican *détente* with communist governments creates a very difficult situation for anticommunist Catholics, much less as anticommunists than as Catholics.

That is because they constantly face an extremely embarrassing dilemma: Can their anticommunist position lead them to pursue a goal entirely opposed to

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<sup>2103</sup> "As Budapest Wishes," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/20/74.

<sup>2104</sup> RR 4/13/74.

that desired by the Vicar of Jesus Christ? How can a Catholic be consistent with his faith if he takes a path opposing that of the Pastor of Pastors?

This question presents all anticommunist Catholics with a choice: Stop fighting or explain your position.

Ceasing to fight was not an option for us. Our conscience as Catholics would not have permitted us to do so. Since every Catholic must promote good and fight evil, our conscience tells us that we must defend the Church's traditional doctrine and fight communist doctrine.

If we were no longer free to act according to the teachings of the great pontiffs whose doctrine lighted the way for Christendom, we would feel more shackled and imprisoned within the Church than Solzhenitsyn was in Soviet Russia.<sup>2105</sup>

### **5. A Gesture of Love for the Papacy**

After Archbishop Casaroli's statements, I spent Sunday, April 7, 1974, thinking about the matter. During Mass, I prayed to Our Lady with all the fervor I could muster, asking Her to help me discern the way forward.<sup>2106</sup>

I remembered catechism classes in which they explained the Papacy, its divine institution, powers and mission. My young heart (I was nine years old) was filled with admiration, amazement and enthusiasm: I had found the ideal to which I would devote my whole life.

My love of this ideal has only grown, and I always ask Our Lady to let it grow more and more until my last breath.

I want my last conscious act to be an act of faith in the Papacy and one of love for the Papacy. I will thus die in the peace of the elect, united with Mary, my Mother, and through her with Jesus, my God, King and exceedingly good Redeemer.

Thus, I wanted to give each of this pope's teachings and those of his predecessors and successors the full adherence to Church doctrine it was my duty to give, holding as infallible what the Church ordered me to accept as such and as fallible what she taught me to consider fallible.

I wanted to obey the orders of this or any pope to the full extent to which the Church ordered them to be obeyed, never modifying them according to my wishes or under any earthly power and only refusing obedience a pope's orders that would lead me into sin without exception.

Echoing the Apostle St. Paul, all Catholic moralists teach that in such extreme cases, one must consider God's will above all else.

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<sup>2105</sup> "The Vatican Policy of Détente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?" cit.

<sup>2106</sup> RR 4/7/74.

I was taught this in my catechism classes and read it in the treatises I studied. It is my way of thinking, feeling and being—wholeheartedly.<sup>2107</sup>

If the stakes had not been so high—if what I wanted to say was unrelated to the Supreme Pontiff—the problem would have been solved long ago, whatever the losses or inconveniences might have been.<sup>2108</sup>

That is why I kept my opinions to myself for as long as possible.

## 6. Writing the Resistance Manifesto

Monday, April 8, was a very stressful day. After dinner, I lay on the sofa for some rest before giving the usual Monday lecture at the TFP.

When I awoke, I had decided. I called my secretary and dictated the manifesto without interruption from 10:30 p.m. until 1:00 a.m.<sup>2109</sup> Its title: “The Vatican Policy of Détente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?”

With a respectful but very frank language,<sup>2110</sup> it stated our resolve to fight the Vatican *Ostpolitik* fearlessly, within canonical and civil law limits.<sup>2111</sup>

This explanation was essential as an act of legitimate self-defense as Catholics who conscientiously objected to a diplomatic policy that rendered our situation unbearable. Indeed, it made our position as anticommunist Catholics incomprehensible to the public, placing us in a most painful situation.<sup>2112</sup>

After I finished dictating, I went quickly from No. 350, Alagoas Street, where I lived, to the seventh floor of the building on Martinico Prado Street, where Dom Mayer was staying. Dom Mayer, Dr. Paulo Brito and another group member sat and talked. I could not have published this manifesto without first showing it to Dom Mayer.

My great hurry was because Dom Mayer would have to leave for Campos the next day without fail due to the Easter week ceremonies, and he needed to rest.

That is why I did not want to delay. I immediately read the text aloud to gauge his reaction. Dom Mayer received it very well. From the expression on his face, I noticed he found the manifesto extremely moderate.

On the following day, once typed, Dr. Plinio Xavier took the document to Otavio Frias, director of the *Folha*.

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<sup>2107</sup> “The Perfect Joy,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/12/70.

<sup>2108</sup> RR 4/7/74.

<sup>2109</sup> RR 4/10/74.

<sup>2110</sup> “Mango Tree, Desire, and Duty,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/10/84.

<sup>2111</sup> *Letras em Marcha* magazine, November 1976.

<sup>2112</sup> “The Vatican Policy of Détente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?” cit.



## 7. Resisting a Self-Destruction Policy for the Church's Sake

This manifesto was a huge step.<sup>2113</sup> It stood out mainly because it targeted the right spot with the correct language at the right time. Its subject, thesis, language and timing were just right.<sup>2114</sup>

The main point was not that the TFP decided to denounce the Vatican's increasingly leftist policy but that, as Roman and Apostolic Catholics, we had entered a *state of resistance* to that policy.<sup>2115</sup> That was our goal.<sup>2116</sup>

This act of resistance to Paul VI's policies had no other psychological components than love, loyalty and dedication. Since the pope is the monarch of the Holy Church, I sought to defend the kingdom for the benefit of the king even though, in so doing, I would likely incur his displeasure. I do not think any man could prove his dedication more substantially.<sup>2117</sup>

Here is the manifesto's essential message summing up the spirit in which it was written: "In this filial act, we say to the Pastor of Pastors: Our soul is yours; our life is yours. Order us to do whatever you wish. Only do not order us to do nothing in face of the assailing red wolf. To this, our conscience is opposed."<sup>2118</sup>

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Of course, I am not claiming that the TFP statement changed the orientation of Paul VI's diplomacy. The reasons we listed were too obvious not to have been considered long before by the Supreme Pontiff and his closest advisers.

From a tactical point of view, there was no possible comparison between the benefits the Vatican imagined it would reap with the support of the *Moloch*-sized communist world and the drawbacks likely to result from the resistance posed by the TFP spiritual children spread through almost all the Americas and in some European nations. While of faith, we lacked the power with which the communist side was so liberally endowed.<sup>2119</sup>

In short, our statement expressed a respectful but profound disagreement with that policy of rapprochement and confirmed our intention to resist it.<sup>2120</sup>

## 8. "Resistance" as St. Paul Resisted St. Peter

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<sup>2113</sup> RR 4/10/74.

<sup>2114</sup> ESM 4/25/74.

<sup>2115</sup> SD 4/10/74.

<sup>2116</sup> RR 6/2/74.

<sup>2117</sup> "Resisting," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/21/74.

<sup>2118</sup> "Mango Tree, Desire, and Duty," cit.

<sup>2119</sup> "Indispensable Resistance," cit..

<sup>2120</sup> "Archbishop Casaroli Gives TFP Statement a New Foundation," *Catolicismo* No. 282, June 1974.

The word *resistance* was chosen because the Holy Spirit uses it in the Acts of the Apostles to characterize St. Paul's attitude.

St. Paul saw that the first pope, St. Peter, had taken disciplinary action to continue adhering in Catholic worship to practices reminiscent of the ancient synagogues as a source of doctrinal confusion and harm to the faithful. So he stood up and "resisted him [St. Peter] to his face" (Gal. 2:11).

St. Peter did not consider St. Paul's spirited and unexpected opposition an act of rebellion but one of unity and brotherly love. Knowing where he was infallible and where he was not, he yielded to St. Paul's arguments.

Our attitude was one of resistance in the sense that St. Paul resisted; in this, our conscience found peace.<sup>2121</sup>

Our declaration of resistance to the Vatican policy of rapprochement with the communist governments was published in the *Folha de S. Paulo* free section on April 10, 1974.

## 9. A Few Weak Reactions

With great publicity, we also launched this manifesto throughout Latin America and Spain and did some advertising in France, Germany, Portugal, and the United States.

We distributed more than one hundred thousand flyers with the declaration on the streets of Madrid and other cities in Catholic Spain.<sup>2122</sup>

Cardinal Tarancón, the Archbishop of Madrid, published a statement against our manifesto in the Bulletin of his Archdiocese (November 24, 1974). However, he acknowledged that any good Catholic was well within his rights to disagree with Paul VI's politics. All the same, he believed that exercising this

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<sup>2121</sup> "The Vatican Policy of Détente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?" cit. Saint Paul's resistance to Saint Peter is described in Gal. 2:11. The key point on which Dr. Plinio based resistance is stated in the manifesto thus: "Yes, Holy Father, Saint Peter teaches us that it is necessary 'to obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29). You are assisted by the Holy Ghost and supported—under the conditions defined by Vatican I—by the privilege of infallibility. But this does not mean that the weakness to which all men are subject cannot influence and even determine your conduct in certain matters or circumstances. Diplomacy is one of these fields where your action is subject to error—perhaps par excellence. And this is precisely where your policy of détente with the communist governments is situated."

<sup>2122</sup> RR 1/5/75. The document was published in 57 dailies of eleven countries: in Brazil, in 36 newspapers; in Argentina, in *La Nación*, of Buenos Aires and *La Voz del Interior*, of Córdoba; in Chile, in *La Tercera*, of Santiago, *El Sur*, of Concepción, *El Diario Austral*, of Temuco, *La Prensa*, of Osorno; in Uruguay, in *El País*, of Montevideo; in Bolivia, in *El Diario*, of La Paz; in Ecuador, in *El Comercio*, of Quito; in Colombia, in *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*, of Bogotá; in Venezuela, in *El Universal*, *El Nacional*, *Ultimas Noticias*, *El Mundo*, and *2001*, of Caracas; in the United States, in *The National Educator*, of Fullerton, California; in Canada, in *Speak Up*, of Toronto; in Spain, in *Hoja del Lunes* and *Fuerza Nueva*, of Madrid, and *Región*, of Oviedo. In addition to *Catolicismo* in Brazil, it was also published in newspapers and magazines of the various TFPs and kindred entities: *Tradición, Familia, Propiedad*, of Argentina; *Fiducia*, of Chile; *Cristiandad*, of Bolivia; *Reconquista*, of Ecuador; *Cruzada*, of Colombia; *Covadonga*, of Venezuela, and *Crusade for a Christian Civilization*, of the United States.

right constituted disloyalty to the Holy See. The right to be disloyal—what a funny idea!

Archbishop Casaroli made a superficial and fleeting refutation of our declaration of resistance<sup>2123</sup> through his spokesman, Frederico Alessandrini, director of the Vatican press office.<sup>2124</sup> He then fell silent for a long time.

The international spread of Resistance finally induced the illustrious prelate – rightly known as the “Vatican’s Kissinger”— to break his silence with a confusing mixture of innuendos and evasions.<sup>2125</sup>

### 10. *Ostpolitik’s* Failure Becomes Obvious

I have always been careful not to exaggerate the TFP’s role; I hardly ever claimed that it influenced international events.

However, one thing is obvious.

Wherever we distributed this manifesto, its favorable reception or at least the friendly indifference of the vast majority led us to conclude that there was a climate of muted but real and widespread dislike among Catholics for Paul VI’s *détente* policies, which seemed to indicate that he was in a highly isolated position with this policy.

The *détente* appeared successful from the angle of diplomatic relations between foreign ministries and between the Vatican and Moscow. However, its real purpose, which was to prepare the Catholic world to welcome an agreement and collaboration with communism, had not been achieved.

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<sup>2123</sup> Cf. news item on this subject in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 5/17/74.

<sup>2124</sup> In this statement, Alessandrini sought to deny in part the words attributed by the press to Archbishop Casaroli that Cuban Catholics were “happy” under socialism, and that they had no problem with the Cuban government. This denial, which ought to have been issued immediately after the release of the devastating statement attributed to Archbishop Casaroli, was only published twenty days later, and at a time when the TFP’s manifesto of resistance was awakening salutary reactions worldwide. In view of this “denial”, Dr. Plinio asked the TFP Press Service to distribute a statement in which he pointed out that Archbishop Casaroli had only denied two of the statements he had made concerning Cuba, which amounted to an implicit confirmation of all the others. Moreover, it was a denial that provided an even firmer basis for the declaration of the TFP, since His Excellency, in his efforts not to displease Castro, had practiced a policy of silence and retractions, leaving the unfortunate members of the Good Shepherd’s Cuban flock to their fate. This TFP press release was published on May 18, 1974.

<sup>2125</sup> “Resistance, Tarancón, and Casaroli,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/1/74. Let us look at his statements, broadcast by Europa Press: “The Holy See cooperates with all those who have useful solutions for peace . . . While some accuse the Vatican of imbalance in this quest, the Vatican never loses sight of a sense of social or international justice. For this reason, the Holy See does not limit itself to teaching, but also strives for specific action in cases of injustice, even if, at times, these have been forgotten.”

The Europa Press office then added: “Concerning the *Ostpolitik* of the Vatican, Monsignor Casaroli made it clear that this view is not his own, but that of Paul VI.” Monsignor Casaroli further stated that it was “painful for the Holy Father to be attacked and to be unable defend himself publicly when one party or another criticizes some of his actions” (cf. Article “Resistance, Tarancón and Casaroli,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, December 1, 1974).

The communist leaders were unwilling to enter into negotiations between two powers on an even footing unless the person representing the other side was in a position to speak for the whole community as its statutory representative.

Would they not have made this calculation about Paul VI and taken the result of the Resistance Manifesto as a public opinion survey? And would they not inevitably have noticed that Paul VI could not carry Catholic opinion with him?

Even the most superficial objectivity requires us to recognize that Paul VI's détente policy had failed—a failure that the Resistance Manifesto did not cause but made apparent. The fact that it became evident was catastrophic for that policy.

The TFP did that work; it tore off the veil, disclosed the deception, and made the case. If the attitude of 500 million Catholics had any weight in the world, the card had been played, and this card was the Resistance Manifesto.

Until that moment, that was the TFP's most important initiative in all its history.<sup>2126</sup>

## Chapter VI

### Bishop Mayer's Pastoral against Divorce, Followed by an Unprecedented Media Uproar (1975)

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<sup>2126</sup> RR 1/5/75.

### 1. “For an Indissoluble Marriage”

We started a campaign against divorce in 1975. That year, the pro-divorce offensive was particularly boisterous and aggressive.<sup>2127</sup>

Although the threat of divorce was imminent, the CNBB behaved with discretion that was—to put it diplomatically—one step away from complete apathy.

In the leaderless anti-divorce camp, Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer launched his famous pastoral letter, *For Indissoluble Marriage*, eagerly received by the public.

TFP members and volunteers sold a hundred thousand copies of this pastoral letter on the streets for two months.

It was a lightning bolt—but one of life, not of death—that electrified and gave new heart to the discouraged anti-divorce current. Ultimately, the amendment to introduce divorce failed to obtain the number of votes required by the Constitution.<sup>2128</sup>

### 2. The Biggest Media Uproar Brazil Has Ever Seen?

Gradually, as the success of our campaign against divorce became apparent, a storm of media outrage was unleashed against the TFP that systematically gained momentum and covered the whole country.<sup>2129</sup>

The whole thing was reminiscent of the extreme polemical zeal that characterized so many political controversies of the nineteenth century.

The TFP suddenly found itself under attack, through the press or from the rostrum, and faced various accusations.

Some media outlets immediately exploited those accusations, dogmatically asserted and laced with invective, as ready-made tools to ferment the uproar.

### 3. Rumors, Defamation, Slander

In addition to this intemperate approach, these parliamentarians’ accusations were characterized chiefly by a complete lack of supporting evidence and, above all, a lack of substance.

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<sup>2127</sup> This offensive was driven by two projected divorce bills, one presented in the Senate (by Senator Nelson Carneiro) and another in the House (by Reps. Rubens Dourado and Airon Rios).

<sup>2128</sup> “34-75-77,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/25/77.

<sup>2129</sup> This originated in the Rio Grande do Sul’s Legislative Assembly, where many leftist congressmen hatched a plan to put us out of action. In a highly suspicious manner, this soon spilled over all across the country, causing a stir in several legislative assemblies of other States, amongst leftist politicians, and especially in the press, including radio and television.

Strangely, they limited themselves to vague and imprecise charges instead of analyzing our doctrines and works.

They did not use arguments to make their slander believable; they preferred to repeat accusations against us, according to the principle that the more often people heard or read these allegations, the more they would “stick.”

The parliamentarians who attacked us liberally used invective in their speeches and press releases without any trace of rationality or objectivity in their allegations.

For example, their excellencies raised the specter - indeed worthy of condemnation - of ideologies underlying so-called “right-wing” totalitarian regimes. They singled out TFP’s fleeting and secondary aspects, blew them up out of proportion, and tried by hook or crook to create an analogy with the said ideologies.

Having gratuitously affirmed the existence of that analogy, their next step was to draw the terrifying conclusion: TFP was a “Nazi” organization!

Coupled with their aim of vilifying us as much as possible, this artificially created panic and led to conclusions utterly unrelated to reality, which could not resist critical, serious, calm, and objective analysis.

Using such a method, you can charge any person or entity with just about anything.

Any average reader who correctly analyzed those baseless accusations would soon identify them as a lot of hot air.

The charges that we were Nazis or Nazi Fascists were entirely groundless.

It would have been interesting to know whether our parliamentary opponents knew anything at all about the TFP’s political activities and the public performance of its leaders against right-wing totalitarianism. There was abundant, overwhelming evidence of those activities!

We would instead assume their excellencies were unaware of this material. If so, how could they have considered themselves entitled to discuss and raise accusations on the subject?

Their criticisms indicated a state of excitement in which libelous rumors mysteriously circulated and propagated to convince people whose opinions were worthy of serious consideration.

As a result, some of these people, apparently without further analysis, took it upon themselves to bring those rumors to the public's attention verbally or in writing.<sup>2130</sup>

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<sup>2130</sup> “TFP in Legitimate Self-Defense,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, May 21, 25 & 30, 1975. The media uproar spread false accusations of Nazi-Fascist tendencies, subversive activities to reintroduce a monarchy, grooming and training young people for violent practices; the TFP was called a paramilitary organization, a clandestine

#### 4. An Uproar Strong Enough to Overthrow a Government

The virulence of this attack was such that a journalist commented that it would suffice to overthrow a government.<sup>2131</sup>

The whole hullabaloo was an attempt to bring about a federal investigation of the TFP.

They planned to prepare public opinion so that an ever-increasing scandal could gradually accompany the investigation and be kept at boiling point to stymie any signs of independent or critical thinking on the part of the public.<sup>2132</sup>

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All kinds of blows rained down on us, but all clouds dissolved over our heads. We prayed and defended ourselves. It all passed, and we continued to progress.

On that occasion, our adversaries' huge trumpet lost its sound.<sup>2133</sup>

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political party, etc. There were days when more than fifty hostile news items or comments were broadcast by newspapers, radio and television stations around the country. We faced the first nationwide publicity media uproar against the TFP (cf. *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*, cit.).

<sup>2131</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>2132</sup> "TFP in Legitimate Self-Defense," cit. Facing the impossibility of refuting so many accusations, Dr. Plinio serenely waited for them to spread. Then he answered them one by one in a detailed manifesto titled, "TFP In Legitimate Self-Defense," published first in the free section of the *Folha de S. Paulo* on May 21, 25 & 30, 1975, and then in the daily newspapers of all major Brazilian cities. *Catolicismo* No. 294, June 1975, printed the three parts of the manifesto in a single issue.

The charges against the TFP were so empty that the CPI (Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry) of the Legislative Assembly of Rio Grande do Sul—where all the noise had started—eschewed the publication of a final report, leaving the whole matter hanging.

Explaining - ten years later - why no report had been drawn up, Mr. Rubi Diehl, who was the person responsible for providing this report at the time, told the newspaper *Zero Hora* of Porto Alegre, "There was no report because the conclusion would have been that the whole thing had been completely baseless. That would have meant a victory for them, for the TFP, so we did nothing" (*Zero Hora*, July 21, 1985).

According to the same article in *Zero Hora*, Mr. Rubi Diehl also argued that, according to the investigations, the CPI would have had no reason to "indict TFP members for any crimes." Since "nothing had been found," it was clear that the accusations belonged to the world of fantasy.

*Zero Hora* concluded the article with this comment: "The appalling fact is that this famous CPI is the only one, so far, in the Legislative Assembly that was not concluded by a final report" (ibid).

Congressman Rubi Diehl reaffirmed in April 1986 that "there was no proof of any criminal activity on the part of the TFP" after the CPI finished its inquiries (*Zero Hora*, 9 April 1986).

<sup>2133</sup> SEFAC 1/15/76.

## Chapter VII

# “Do Not Deceive Yourself, Your Eminence”: A Message to Cardinal Arns (1975)

### 1. CNBB Opposes Any Repression of Communism



As the Vatican's *Ostpolitik* was forging ahead at the international level, we in Brazil had to deal with human rights policies that members of the Episcopate were promoting along lines that favored communism.

Rightly proclaiming itself the defender of dignity and human rights and denouncing abuses that would deserve categorical condemnation and urgent remedy had they existed as claimed, the CNBB adopted an inexplicably hostile attitude to anticommunist repression and those who carried it out.

Moreover, the hierarchy's obligation to repress communism within Catholic circles, laid down by the unforgettable Pius XII in the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office of July 1, 1949, was no longer fulfilled anywhere in Brazil.

Under these conditions, it was no wonder that those like the CNBB, who were responsible for the complete lack of canonical repression, would sympathize with an utter lack of civil repression as well.<sup>2134</sup>

## 2. Our Position on the Military Regime's Policy of Repression

The military regime followed an anticommunist policy we would not have adopted. I wrote a letter to President Castelo Branco about this point during the military government's early years.<sup>2135</sup>

I believed it was not a good anticommunist tactic to muzzle the press and forbid it from publishing pro-communist propaganda or to forbid communists from doing so because the latter's seeming withdrawal would anesthetize the anticommunist resistance. In people's minds, resistance against communism would lose its elevated doctrinal character, leaving nothing but police repression, which, like all police repression, would often be prone to abuse.

We thought it was better to allow them freedom in all respects as long as they did not have recourse to arms to overthrow the existing order.

Castelo Branco reacted with interest to this letter; he invited us to an audience and told us that he agreed, but nothing was done.

Laws to repress communism followed. We never praised these laws, nor did we have an opportunity to criticize them because the press would not publish criticism of the regime. However, I expressed my opinion to many senior military officers who were my friends.<sup>2136</sup>

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<sup>2134</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.

<sup>2135</sup> That letter, dated January 13, 1967, criticized the media law the government had submitted to Congress for debate (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 194, February 1967).

<sup>2136</sup> When the National Security Law was issued (Decree No. 314 of March 13, 1967), and the military regime was at its height, Dr. Plinio publicly opposed it and asked it be repealed. His statements, published in *Folha de S. Paulo* on March 22, 1967, had a great impact:

"Nothing is more effective to convince people of the need to repeal this law than an analysis - albeit brief - of some of its provisions. For example, article 48 reads: 'The immediate consequence of an

### 3. A White Paper on Communist Infiltration, An Unheeded Suggestion

On the other hand, the military regime had reams of evidence of the existence of communist propaganda in the media, seminaries, and among the country's intellectual classes.

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arrest in *flagrante delicto* or filing a complaint in any of the cases mentioned in this decree shall be the suspension of all rights to exercise a profession, all private employment contracts, and all positions or functions in public administration, a public or joint-stock company until the subject is finally and absolutely acquitted of the charge raised against him.”

“This means that an extremely severe sanction must be imposed immediately on the accused just because the reporting judge has received a complaint (does not mean that any crime has been perpetrated, any evidence of such examined or any guilt proved in any way, much less judicially established). Moreover, the punishment may last indefinitely because, when legal action begins, it is almost impossible to predict how long it will take through its procedural stages, which are often delayed or disturbed by unpredictable events and claims. Such a provision subjecting a possibly innocent person to serious punishment runs counter to the fundamental principles of morality and law, which defines any punishment of the innocent as illicit.

“Similarly grave objections could be made to other Legislative Decree no. 314 provisions. Faced with severity contrary to our legal tradition and the character of our people, we must ask what public interest could possibly justify such a law.

“In the eyes of its supporters, the National Security Law will probably figure as a heroic and bitter but necessary remedy to be imposed in the country's present situation.

“I believe this is precisely where the great unknown quantity lies. Communism is the only evil that appears proportionate to this draconian law, but some of its manifestly unfair provisions would still need to be deleted.

“No organization in Brazil opposes communism more consistently, stubbornly and painstakingly than the TFP. Therefore, we are entirely above suspicion when saying that in our country, the communist threat – defined as an imminent danger of falling under a Marxist regime - is remote. Among us, the Communist Party is discredited and unpopular as many people, willing and able to influence public opinion in our fundamentally Christian nation, have warned against it.

“The real communist threat in Brazil does not come directly from the Communist Party activities but rather from the ongoing, rapid and mostly veiled expansion of progressivism under the labels of Christian socialism, left-wing Christian Democracy, etc. These tend to corrode and destabilize the institution of the family by laws and customs and undermine paternal and maternal authority. They also gradually erode and mutilate private property with a series of socialist and confiscatory laws and regulations.

“In this way, by an almost imperceptible process comparable to erosion, the country is losing its Christian topsoil and our Christian civilization is turning into a socialist one. Over time, as socialism increasingly drops its pretended tolerance, restrains and freedoms and becomes more extreme, we will approach communism.”

“It does not appear to me that the law in question will protect us against this slow and gradual process of ‘socialistization’ (which I do not confuse with ‘socialization’). Nor do I believe that it will serve to stop this process.

“Therefore, the National Security Law, presumably intended to protect us from a non-imminent threat, will put Brazil into a straitjacket without solving its underlying problem. Therefore, I believe this law's repeal or withdrawal by the relevant legal channels would correspond far more closely to the true national interest requirements” (cf. *Folha de S. Paulo*, March 22, 1967, and *Catolicismo*, No. 196, April 1967).

They could have published this evidence to alert the country about these propaganda activities. Based on this material, I suggested that people close to the government issue white papers.

They never did so. They would instead not rely on a positive doctrine but govern solely by force. As a result, people got tired of it at one point, and the military regime buckled.

Within this military regime, some were good friends of the TFP; others were left-leaning opponents who often attacked the TFP and tried to close it down under various pretexts.

While these things happened long ago and need not be recalled here in detail, we did have to deal with such situations several times.<sup>2137</sup>

#### **4. Our Reaction to São Paulo Bishops' Disconcerting 'Itaici Statement'**

Speaking of human rights, on Sunday, November 9, 1975, churches across the State of São Paulo distributed a document titled "You Shall Not Oppress Your Brother." The state's diocesan bishops signed it gathered in Itaici.<sup>2138</sup>

The study of that episcopal text left us deeply bewildered.<sup>2139</sup>

On November 14, the TFP published in the newspapers a message to Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns titled "Do Not Deceive Yourself, Your Eminence."<sup>2140</sup>

We began by emphasizing that the document made some good points it would have been unfair to neglect. The State of São Paulo pastors honored their supernatural mission by expressing their zeal for ensuring that man's natural rights defined in the Ten Commandments were fully respected.

At the start of our message, this praise meant nobody should suspect us of angry unilateralism and injustice.

It was particularly necessary because the significant defect of the bishops' Itaici statement was a similar omission, which the TFP found highly perplexing.

Everyone in Brazil knew that Russia and China were making a gigantic effort to conquer all nations ideologically, politically, and ultimately militarily.

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<sup>2137</sup> Interview with Prof. Marcelo Lucio Ottoni de Castro (recording), 3/8/90.

<sup>2138</sup> The document, published by the Southern Region I of the CNBB, headed by Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns and composed of all archbishops and bishops of the State of São Paulo, was distributed on Sunday, November 9, in the churches of São Paulo, accompanied by a great fanfare in the press.

<sup>2139</sup> "Do Not Deceive Yourself, Your Eminence," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 11/14/75, p. 2.

<sup>2140</sup> "On the Lightning Bolt and the Firefly: The End," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/6/80. This manifesto was published on November 14, 1975, simultaneously in São Paulo's major papers and successively in others around the country, totaling 31 publications (cf. *Catolicismo* Nos. 299-300, November-December 1975).

The violence, corruption, and mismanagement that had plunged Chile into misery and Portugal's example right before our eyes prevented even the most inattentive Brazilians from forgetting this truth.<sup>2141</sup>

Moreover, recent statements by Brazil's highest authorities denounced this danger within our borders. In his August 1 speech that year, the President, General Ernesto Geisel, alluded to communist infiltration in political parties.

In the face of such subversion, what did Cardinal Arns and the bishops gathered in Itaiaci do?

They published perhaps the most virulent (or rather the only violent) document in the history of the Brazilian Church in which they did nothing but criticize the military and its repression of red fascism from beginning to end.

If the São Paulo bishops had remained neutral, they would have pointed out the profoundly Christian and patriotic basis of repressing communism and its urgent need. Only afterward would they have pointed out any flaws they might have discovered in that repression.

Seemingly unaware of this, the Itaiaci document signatories directed their zeal to safeguard the human rights of known or suspected subversive agents rather than to defend their threatened homeland.

Witnessing such an astonishing failure by the pastors of our souls was disconcerting.

Of course, it was their responsibility to ensure that the members of their flock's rights were respected, even if they included subversives or suspected subversives.

Nonetheless, their responsibility to look out for the flock as a whole was even more significant. Their first concern should have been the welfare of the decent and hard-working people that subversives aimed to plunge into misery.

As far as the fight against communism was concerned, they should have focused on foreign subversive agents who were leading impressionable Brazilians astray to impose on the country a Marxist regime that would deny human rights to all.

We were perplexed. What could be behind these attitudes?

## **5. Warning: A Gap Opens Between the Episcopate and the People**

We had reason to fear that this question, which we and millions of people in São Paulo asked, would remain unanswered.

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<sup>2141</sup> The *Carnation Revolution*, which overthrew the Salazar regime on April 25, 1974, hoisted the leading Marxists to power. The land reform they implemented caused the collapse of production: 1.5 million hectares of land were expropriated, and more than 700,000 plots illegally occupied; the land returned to its owners only from 1978 onward. Civil divorce was introduced, and abortion approved.

That is why, in our message, we implored His Eminence not to allow himself to be deceived. While our people continue filling the churches and frequenting the sacraments, attitudes like those of the Itaici document signatories were opening up an ever-widening gap, not between religion and the people, but between the São Paulo bishops and their flock.

To the extent that it ceased combatting communist subversion, the ecclesiastical hierarchy isolated itself from the rest of the nation.

It seemed essential that someone inform the cardinal that subversion was deeply and unalterably unpopular, and the São Paulo hierarchy would become all the less revered and beloved as it continued to condone it.

We would have preferred His Eminence to be made aware of this by faithful and deeply respectful members of his flock rather than by later facing the sheer reality or the agents of subversion's satanic laughter.

How could the devil's agents fail to laugh heartily, seeing they had successfully turned pastors Our Lord Jesus Christ appointed to crush the powers of darkness into instruments of communist expansion?

As Catholics, we ardently wanted to prevent this, and this desire motivated our message, expressed with love and respect even when describing our perplexity and apprehensions.<sup>2142</sup>

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In short, the communist advance in Brazil had nothing to fear from CNBB and its followers.

In those circumstances, it was virtually impossible to prevent many Catholics committed to combating social problems from viewing communists as promising and, in some cases, even ideal comrades in their struggle. That made them natural victims of communist propaganda. They began feeling like "fellow travelers" and formed a "Catholic left" imbued with a spirit of revolt and thirsting for social "justice." Then came all the errors of "Catholic" socialism, and "Catholic" leftism sucked them into communism, dragging in their wake swathes of public opinion whose attention they managed to capture.<sup>2143</sup>

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<sup>2142</sup> "Do Not Deceive Yourself, Your Eminence," cit.

<sup>2143</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.

## Chapter VIII

# The Church of Silence in Chile: The TFP Proclaims the Whole Truth (1976)

### 1. Bishops Protect Dispersed Marxists

Everyone knew that Cardinal Silva Henríquez lent all the weight of his authority to aid Allende's rise to power. He celebrated the latter's festive inauguration and supported the atheist leader as president until his tragic suicide.

Through public statements, the cardinal adapted himself to the order of things that succeeded the Allende regime but did so with a flexibility that cast a dubious light on his integrity. However, manifestations of his apparent sympathy for Chilean Marxists did not cease.

Not long before, his Eminence celebrated in his palace chapel a requiem Mass for the soul of "comrade" Toha, a former communist minister of Allende, who also committed suicide. In attendance were relatives and friends of the deceased (cf. *Jornal do Brasil*, March 18, 1974).<sup>2144</sup>

Many members of the hierarchy took pains to protect the remnants of the collapsed regime. They sought to keep those remnants together as well as they could to prepare a renewed red assault.<sup>2145</sup>

### 2. Paul VI and Bishops Preach "Reconciliation" with Chilean Communists

In this situation, Cardinal Silva Henríquez's publication of the declaration of the Chilean Episcopal Conference (CEC) only muddied the waters even further.

The Chilean Cardinal issued this unfortunate statement to the press, saying he had received a long telegram from the Vatican urging the bishops to

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<sup>2144</sup> "The Vatican Policy of Détente with Communist Governments – Should the TFPs Stand Down? Or Should They Resist?" cit.

<sup>2145</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.

promote reconciliation among Chileans. In other words, the CEC's unfortunate stand was made under the Holy See's instructions.<sup>2146</sup>

In that situation, accepting such a goal and style would mean a disaster for Catholics and a victory for Chilean communists.

The press summarized Paul VI's speech to the new Chilean ambassador, Hector Riesle, as he presented his credentials.

If His Holiness had wished, this presentation of credentials would have been an excellent occasion to remedy the situation. All he had to do was express to the diplomat his joy at seeing the Chilean nation freed from the yoke of a government that led it to a twofold ruin: 1) spiritual ruin because of President Allende's atheist and Marxist ideology; 2) material ruin resulting from overthrowing of the two main pillars of economic normalcy: private property and free enterprise.

At the same time, the Holy Father's words would have served to dissociate his sacred and supreme authority from the pro-Marxist conduct of the archbishop of Santiago, Cardinal Silva Henriquez.

However, the Sovereign Pontiff's speech contained no such message as one might have expected from a pope.<sup>2147</sup>

The August Pontiff deluded himself into the belief that, in a country divided deeply between two huge blocks, communist and anticommunist, it would be possible to bring about an era of harmony in which each side would refrain from "animosities," "resentment," and "vendettas," while continuing to hold to its convictions.

Paul VI's words ultimately advised Chilean Catholics to accept goals and behavior that would demoralize and psychologically disarm them against a ruthless adversary that had plunged Chile into communist misery and would not accept any disarmament.

It was not hard to see that these words aimed to create a situation similar to the reconciliation between Catholics and communists in Chilean politics, which the Holy See was trying to achieve diplomatically in its relations with communist nations.

In the real world, accepting such goals and methods would lead to a disaster for Catholics and a victory for Chilean Communists.<sup>2148</sup>

### 3. The Chilean TFP Proclaims the Whole Truth

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<sup>2146</sup> "Voice of Those Who Silence, Overwhelmed," cit.

<sup>2147</sup> In this speech, delivered on April 6, 1974, the Holy Father expressed his desire for "a brotherly harmony to overcome the animosities and resentments, and to exclude vendettas, involving the restoration of genuine mutual understanding through effective and sincere reconciliation."

<sup>2148</sup> "Resisting," cit.

These and other almost aberrant developments led the Chilean TFP to launch a scathing exposé titled *The Church of Silence in Chile—the TFP Proclaims the Whole Truth*.<sup>2149</sup>

This was TFP’s boldest act of resistance imaginable.<sup>2150</sup>

In the Bible, an expression regarding Abel impressed me even when I was still a child. God told Cain that Abel's blood, shed by Cain, was crying out to heaven for vengeance.

Of course, blood does not cry out, but this means that God’s wrath cried out for vengeance on seeing blood pouring from the body of his honest and faithful son.

In Chile, there was something worse. It was not like Cain killing Abel but Adam killing Abel, his own son. The Pastor was killing the sheep by bringing them closer to communism.

In the spiritual sense, the sheep's blood cried out for revenge. The TFP lent its voice to ensure that this cry was heard.<sup>2151</sup>

#### 4. The Canonical Situation of Pastors Who Abandoned Their Sacred Mission

The Chilean TFP’s work is a historical and doctrinal study based on more than 200 documents showing that almost all of that country’s bishops and much of its clergy actively supported Salvador Allende’s Marxist policies in both victory and adversity.

The book’s last chapters discuss the canonical situation where the pastors who abandoned their sacred mission placed themselves.<sup>2152</sup>

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<sup>2149</sup> At a certain point, the book said about these scandalous attitudes adopted by a vast majority of Chilean bishops and clergy in general: “It is impossible to analyze these facts in the light of Catholic doctrine without thinking about the canonical crimes of schism, favoring of heresy and suspected heresy, if not plain heresy” (cf. *The Church of Silence in Chile—the TFP Proclaims the Whole Truth*, Lumen Mariae Publications, New York-Cleveland, 1976, 442 pp.

<sup>2150</sup> SD 4/10/76.

<sup>2151</sup> SD 3/27/76.

<sup>2152</sup> In its conclusion, the book stated that, in the light of sacred theology and Canon Law, Catholics are not obliged to follow the erroneous guidance of bishops: “Catholics ... objectively have the right and, according to circumstances, the duty—even if they are simple faithful—to resist such Pastors and the clergy that supports them....By *resisting*, we mean to declare and proclaim before Chile and the world by all licit means authorized by natural and positive law, canon or civil, what the conduct of the destructive hierarchs and priests consists of, to make clear its seriousness given the harm it causes the Church and Christian civilization in our country, and to oppose by all means permitted by Morality and law the hierarchs and priests who use their prestige to do harm indicated by the facts related in these pages—a prestige usurped from the sacred posts they occupy....This being so, save for better judgment, we affirm that the cessation of ecclesiastical relations with such bishops and priests is a right of conscience of Catholics who judge it to be unbearable, that is to say, harmful to the Faith and piety and scandalous for the faithful people” (cf. *The Church of Silence in Chile—the TFP Proclaims the Whole Truth*, cit., pp. 350-353). The book appealed to Chilean churchmen and theologians not to applaud the destruction process of the Chilean Church and



## 5. Pinochet's Government Bans Street Distribution; Bookstore Success

I would have liked the Chilean TFP to promote the book with a public campaign. Unfortunately, the now anticommunist government denied them permission to do so!<sup>2153</sup>

Still, bookstore sales had an impact well beyond what anyone could have imagined, averaging 100 books a day. It was a perfect campaign with a huge impact.<sup>2154</sup>

## 6. Adverse Reactions from Moscow Radio, Santiago's Archbishopric and Nunciature; 32 Chilean Priests and 1,000 Spanish Priests Support the Book

Radio Moscow Radio was very pleased with the bishops' attitude. Its deeply biased broadcasts clearly showed delight with their statements attacking the TFP.<sup>2155</sup>

Reactions from bishops and Chilean TFP corresponding replies soon began to emerge.<sup>2156</sup>

*El Mercurio* published the TFP's response to the Bishops' Standing Commission with a front-page headline and prominently displayed the full text on an inside page.

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nation. It exhorted them to come out of their relative silence and publicly express their opinion on this delicate subject's moral and canonical aspects.

<sup>2153</sup> The Chilean TFP was thus prevented from exercising its legitimate right to sell the book in the streets by a government decision that highly pleased the episcopate, which is why it was sold only in bookstores. Three editions (10,000 copies) came out in less than a month. It was one of the biggest successes in Chilean publishing history within its particular genre. The press widely covered its distribution, which became a "mandatory review subject," according to the magazine *¿Que Pasa?* (February 26, 1976).

News agencies sent dispatches abroad, which were published by newspapers in Latin America, the United States and Europe and even behind the Iron Curtain (cf. *Tygodnik Powszechny* of Krakow, 3/28/3/76; *Slowo Powszechnie*, 2, 3 & 4/4/76, and *Kierunki*, 5/2/76, both of Warsaw, *apud A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*, cit.).

<sup>2154</sup> SD 3/27/76.

<sup>2155</sup> In February 1976, Radio Moscow attacked the Chilean TFP on four installments of its Escucha Chile [Listen Chile] program because of the book.

<sup>2156</sup> First, the Archbishopric of Santiago's Public Opinion Department published a note lamenting that the country was forced to deal with the subject of *The Church of Silence in Chile* (*El Mercurio*, Santiago, February 27, 1976). Shortly afterward, another Episcopate's Standing Committee note accused the book's authors and distributors of automatically removing themselves from the Catholic Church (*El Mercurio*, March 11, 1976). In response to both notes, the Chilean TFP pointed out that the archdiocese's statement insisted on ignoring the deep inner conflict afflicting the nation because of the attitude of its prelates and failed to present any refutation of the book's contents or supply any proof that its accusations were false or unjustified (*El Mercurio*, March 4, 1976). They invited the Bishops' Standing Committee to state whether or not the facts the book presented were true, whether they were well documented, and whether its analysis was objective. It concluded: "If you answered yes to these questions, then the inevitable conclusion must be that such prelates and priests are in the state of schism and suspected heresy, as defined by canon law" (*El Mercurio*, March 12, 1976).

The Nunciature's declaration about the TFP appeared in that paper on the same day, albeit in a less prominent position.<sup>2157</sup>

## Chapter IX

# The Sudden, Surprising Anticommunism of High-Ranking Prelates (1976)

### 1. A Confused and Vague Anticommunism

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<sup>2157</sup> RR 3/13/76. The Nuncio in Chile, Bishop Sotero Sanz Villalba, had granted asylum in the Nunciature to terrorist leaders of the MIR (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* - Movement of the Revolutionary Left). This did not prevent him from issuing a "strong" denial of the book's claims, saying its version presented of the said documents was "partial." If the information in *L'Unità* (March 21, 1976), the Italian Communist Party daily that echoed the Nuncio's attitude, was to be believed, Bishop Sotero had said that he had issued his statement "after consultation with the Holy See" (cf. *El Mercurio*, Santiago, March 12, 1976).

In response, the Chilean TFP reaffirmed its full and loving obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff and his representatives in Chile while lamenting that the Nuncio did not find it worthwhile to hear its arguments or admonish it. The document regretfully concluded that "the doors of the apostolic nunciature, which readily opened to grant asylum to members of the terrorist Movement of the Revolutionary Left, remained closed to us" (*La Tercera*, Santiago, March 14, 1976).

Three months later, in June 1976, the Bishops' Conference published in Chilean newspapers a letter they received from Cardinal Villot, Prefect of the Holy See's Council for Public Affairs, stating that *The Church of Silence in Chile* greatly displeased Paul VI, who figured it had "serious and unacceptable accusations" (*La Tercera*, Santiago, June 3, 1976).

In a press release, the Chilean TFP acknowledged the book's accusations were "serious," but that proof that they were "unacceptable" was still outstanding (*La Tercera*, June 8, 1976). In the same month, the TFP launched a statement titled "32 Priests Declare: 'The TFP Is Right,'" reporting that 32 Chilean priests courageously braved potential sanctions to express their solidarity with the book in writing (*La Tercera*, June 9, 1976).

At the end of 1976, the Chilean TFP announced that 1,000 Spanish priests had expressed solidarity with the book's theses (*El Mercurio*, December 22, 1976, *ABC*, Madrid, December 12, 1976, and 27 other Spanish newspapers).

When the news broke that the Chilean TFP's book was causing a stir in Chile, many cardinals and bishops in Brazil began attacking the communist problem with confusing and generic phrases but never going beyond empty words. (Almost the sole exception was Dom Arns, Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo, who made statements favorable to the left.)<sup>2158</sup>

Numerous statements by important prelates were published almost simultaneously and with great fanfare. They appeared suddenly without anyone understanding why they were coming out after the evil had expanded for so many years without ecclesiastical sanctions. As a result, the statements caused more bewilderment than anything else among the Catholic public.<sup>2159</sup>

How long had the cardinals and bishops seen communism spread without saying a word? Why this sudden change? Had they learned anything new they had never heard? Why were they all acting in concert (except for Dom Arns), appearing in public and saying more or less the same things? Like actors entering a theatrical stage, they all showed up suddenly, holding hands and making statements with a vaguely anticommunist flavor.<sup>2160</sup>

These Brazilian bishops learned about the accusations weighing on the Chilean episcopate and realized Chile's situation beckoned similar attacks likely to occur elsewhere.

This partly explained the attitude of the Brazilian cardinals. They were trying to preempt any accusations that were doing in Brazil what their counterparts did in Chile before the publication of a Brazilian book showing how they had gotten in bed with communism. Their mildly anticommunist statements would make it a little more challenging to reproduce in Brazil the accusations raised in Chile. They wanted to be able to retort: "We have already taken a stand against communism."<sup>2161</sup>

## 2. Dubious Pronouncements Favor Some Form of Communism

However, the bishops' pronouncements were highly dubious, ambiguous and sometimes even sympathetic to communism.

Some spoke of "godless communism," but things had changed a lot since the times of Pius XI. Communists were trying to acquire a new look by disguising their spurious tenets as "Catholic" values.

Speaking against "godless communism" was attacking only one of its aspects and leaving it much room for maneuvering.

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<sup>2158</sup> RR 3/13/76.

<sup>2159</sup> "On the Surprising Anticommunism of High-Ranking Prelates," *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 3/7/76

<sup>2160</sup> SD 3/6/76.

<sup>2161</sup> RR 3/6/76.

Their claim that communism is born of hunger and misery, which is untrue, also caught our attention. While hunger and misery can exacerbate Communism, it is born of the corruption of morals, irreligion, and people's malevolence and spite.

Cardinal Eugenio Sales's statement went beyond these vague declarations by stating that he would not engage in an "insane" anticommunist campaign.

What is an insane anticommunist campaign? Would he also have refused to engage in a healthy campaign? Why was he not actively promoting anticommunism? Should the shepherd not be anti-wolf? If communism is the wolf, why was he not against it?

In short, those declarations displayed an anticommunist stance that left plenty of loopholes for communist penetration.

### 3. The TFP Issues a Statement

An old saying goes, "If you see that your neighbor's beard has caught fire, go and soak your own."

All those statements left me with the impression they were soaking their beards by taking preemptive measures to ensure the TFP could not accuse them of being Brazil's Silva Henriquez.

Faced with this maneuver, we had to prove to the public that this "anticommunism" did not deserve to be taken seriously.

A newspaper communique would be fitting to spread this message. I remember where I dictated the manifesto titled "The Surprising Anticommunism of High-Ranking Prelates."

We drove away from the house, and I asked the chauffeur to stop the car in a quiet corner as we reached the Pacaembu Stadium neighborhood. There, I dictated this statement, polished it as best I could and passed it to Dr. Castilho, our top-notch editing specialist.

The next day, I began reading the newspaper and found many new statements in the same vein. So, I adjusted the text and called Dom Mayer, as I never published such statements without running them past him. I read the document to him, and he approved it immediately and without objections.

Dr. Plinio Xavier and Dr. Borelli Machado took the article to *O Estado de S. Paulo*; it was published on March 7, 1976, on the 5th page, a perfect placement for a Sunday edition.<sup>2162</sup>

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<sup>2162</sup> RR 3/6/76. This statement was published in 53 newspapers in all the country's main cities and the countryside. In this manifesto, Dr. Plinio said:

"In Brazil, from 1960 until today, communists have made greater efforts to infiltrate the Catholic environment than any other: seminaries, novitiates, universities and schools, religious associations, media, etc. ... That could easily have been avoided except for the public and active collaboration of many clerics,

#### 4. Expressions of Public Distrust

Our position paper and the following statements created doubts in the public's minds, causing profound distrust and expectation.

If the bishops wanted to take the sting out of our statement, they only needed to be sincere and start taking measures against the leftist clergy.<sup>2163</sup>

How could the CNBB ignore the highly dangerous communist infiltration among the Catholic laity and clergy?<sup>2164</sup>

After reading our manifesto, the public asked, "Are the bishops sincere? Do they want to fight communism? They have many leftist clerics under their authority and do nothing? They are denouncing themselves." This created an atmosphere of perplexity.

## Chapter X

# The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat: An Appeal to the Silent Bishops (1976)

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the discreet and carefully dosed collaboration of an even larger number of them, and the cowardly and lazy laissez-faire attitude of the majority.

"These considerations have led the TFP to take a stand facing the numerous statements of leading prelates simultaneously presented to the public with great fanfare in recent days. ... These statements appeared suddenly and at the same time without any explanation as to why they are being made now, after so many years during which the evil expanded unchecked by ecclesiastical sanctions, and only now, when the problem has reached such frightening proportions. Therefore, the Catholic public does not know what to make of them. ...

"The fact that these pronouncements stick to commonplace generalities while acknowledging the threat of communism makes it hard to take them seriously. ... No, Your Eminences. No, Excellences. This is not enough. If Catholics are to take your anticommunist pronouncements seriously, they must come from ecclesiastical sources, especially denouncing the danger scandalously threatening the Catholic faithful entrusted to the bishops' vigilance and protection. ... Reassure the public by proclaiming a broad and effective plan to eradicate evil. Above all, announce that you have already started implementing this plan. Then and only then will the flock of Our Lord Jesus Christ recognize your statements as the authentic voice of the Shepherd."

<sup>2163</sup> SD 3/27/76.

<sup>2164</sup> "Disconcerting Disconcertedness," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/26/77.

## 1. Similarities of Progressivist Action in Chile and Brazil

These facts paved the way for the accusations raised in Chile to be made in Brazil, albeit from a slightly different angle.<sup>2165</sup>

In 1976, I published *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat—Appeal to the Silent Bishops* as an introductory study to a summary of The Church of Silence in Chile—the *TFP Proclaims the Whole Truth*.

The two books were closely related because the situations in Brazil and Chile concerning the conduct and attitudes of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were similar.

In Chile, even more than here, most bishops (and not only some, as in Brazil) worked to support communist infiltration, as the Chilean TFP book had proved with plenty of documentary evidence.<sup>2166</sup>

## 2. Bishop Casaldaliga and CNBB's Southern Region II

My goal was to show that the communist threat had infiltrated the very fabric of the Catholic Church and alert the population to its dangers by making it stand out more clearly than ever.

I noticed that Brazilian Catholics were dimly aware that this infiltration existed but lacked a systematic explanation of where it came from, how it was structured, and what development possibilities it had. It was also necessary to show that it was not just an isolated phenomenon but a danger constantly on the move. Many people had very confused ideas about all this.<sup>2167</sup>

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This work contained a doctrinal analysis of Brazil's ecclesiastical hierarchy's positions favoring communism, such as Dom Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop of São Félix do Araguaia's openly pro-communist preaching.<sup>2168</sup>

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<sup>2165</sup> SD 3/27/76.

<sup>2166</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2167</sup> SD 7/16/76.

<sup>2168</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit. Dr. Plinio focused especially on the poetry of Dom Casaldáliga cursing private property and all those who owned it: "Damn all fences! Damn, all private property." He called owners "bastards," "presumptuous prostitutes of a common Mother," and "overfed ... like fatted pigs" (cf. *Tierra Nuestra, Libertad*, Editorial Guadalupe, Buenos Aires, November 1974).

He boasted in another book of poems: "They will call me a subversive, Monsignor 'Hammer and Sickle,' and I will answer: I am! ... I have the faith of a guerrilla fighter and a love of revolution. ... I urge people to stand up and overthrow the power and money. ... I believe in the [Socialist] International. ... And I call Order evil and Progress a lie. I have less peace than wrath" (cf. *Canción de la Hoz y el Haz*, pp. 117 & 118).

In his autobiography, Bishop Casaldáliga states: "As for me, the daily life in the light of the faith, the daily and increasing contact with the poor and oppressed--the imperative of charity -- have led me to the understanding of Marxist dialectics and a total political metanoia." In another passage: "The people-people

I raised this question: How could a cleric with such opinions and capable of such attitudes become a bishop of the Church of God?

To make matters worse, concerning the events in Araguaia, Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns declared on his return from Rome that he heard from Paul VI that “messing with Dom Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop of St. Félix, would be messing with the pope himself” (cf. *O São Paulo*, January 10-16, 1976).

How did Brazil’s National Conference of the Bishops react to the scandalously subversive statements by a Catholic bishop? How did the Brazilian ecclesiastical hierarchy defend itself facing this overwhelming evidence of communist infiltration?

This uncomfortable question requires a problematic answer.<sup>2169</sup>

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Dom Casaldáliga was not the only cleric my book voiced doubts about.<sup>2170</sup> It also transcribed a document issued by CNBB’s Southern Region II of the bishops of Paraná, who predicted a communist takeover of Brazil and advised their colleagues to capitulate and collaborate with the invaders.<sup>2171</sup>

In parallel to the episcopate’s sad evolution, the book also showed the struggle waged by the group of Catholic faithful initially gathered around *Legionário* and later *Catolicismo*.<sup>2172</sup> It chronicled the great religious crisis we were fighting in Brazil and, in a way, the history of the Brazilian TFP.<sup>2173</sup>

Although the book’s primary subject was Chile’s situation (which occupied the largest number of pages), the part on Brazil was naturally more interesting to Brazilian readers.<sup>2174</sup>

### 3. An Appeal to the Silent Bishops: Speak!

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—not mandarins, reverends, ladies or families in good standing or owners—have won with Fidel, Allende and Mao.” He went on: “Since I strive to live as a Christian, I know I can and must go beyond communism” (*Yo creo en la justicia y en la esperanza*, Editorial Española Desclee de Brouwer, Bilbao, 1976, p 188. The emphasis is ours).

<sup>2169</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.

<sup>2170</sup> “Catholic Left: Expansions and Silences,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/26/76.

<sup>2171</sup> “Immense Orphanhood Falls upon Brazil,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/27/76. This statement by CNBB’s Southern Region II, which had Parana’s two archbishops and seventeen bishops, was published in Curitiba’s Catholic weekly *Voz do Paraná* (April 25-May 1, 1976). Titled “The Church of Vietnam Is Willing to Survive,” it described the long history of the implementation of communism in Vietnam, favorably presenting it as a “liberation” of the Vietnamese people. It also lavished praise on a statement by “Ho Chi Minh’s Archbishop,” expressing a full-fledged collaborationist approach to communism (article “The Archbishop of Ho Chi Minh,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, October 9, 1977).

<sup>2172</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2173</sup> Dedication on a copy of *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat* given to a personality in Brasilia, 6/2/78.

<sup>2174</sup> SD 7/16/76.

In addition to its doctrine-based approach, the book was, from a certain point of view, more of a historical study than anything else.<sup>2175</sup>

In it, I urgently appealed to the “silent bishops.”<sup>2176</sup>

Why silent bishops?

The ecclesiastical situation in Brazil was as follows:

On the one hand, some bishops openly endorsed socialism and communism. On the other hand, many other bishops faced this reality as if unable to see what was happening.<sup>2177</sup>

The latter comprised the episcopate’s “silent majority.” They usually appeared conservative but saw no need to analyze the situation independently to make a judgment.

In the CNBB meetings, this silent majority consistently voted with the leftist minority, accepting an argumentation it did not bother to examine. The public interpreted this attitude as nonchalant disinterest in temporal matters and became increasingly perplexed as time went on.<sup>2178</sup>

Those bishops should speak up! They were numerous enough and had sufficient prestige to save Brazil simply by reminding the faithful to study the countless pontifical documents on the subject.<sup>2179</sup>

Therefore, I appealed to them: Look, communism is gaining strength. Your silence favors this momentum. You cannot remain neutral.<sup>2180</sup> If there is a *tempus tacendi*, there is also a *tempus loquendi*: There are times when it is right to remain silent, but also times when you must speak out (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

Act! We implore you to do so. Speak, teach, fight! Our country’s guardian angel is standing by to strengthen you in this struggle.<sup>2181</sup>

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I sent our book to all the “silent bishops,” and some answered favorably. The most interesting letter was from Dom José Newton de Almeida, Archbishop

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<sup>2175</sup> RR 10/9/76.

<sup>2176</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2177</sup> SD 2/15/91.

<sup>2178</sup> *I am a Catholic: Can I Oppose Land Reform?* Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1982.

<sup>2179</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2180</sup> “Silence, the Great Lesson,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/6/78.

<sup>2181</sup> *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.



of Brasilia.<sup>2182</sup> One of the things he told me was, “Dr. Plinio, your book is terrible!”<sup>2183</sup>

Within the episcopate, Dom José Newton represented the more right-leaning part of the center. His letter was of some interest because, in addition to acknowledging the importance of my book's issues, it showed how much it disturbed some silent bishops.<sup>2184</sup>

#### 4. From São Paulo's Streets onto “Vatican Desks”

The book's impact was considerable. It sold throughout the country in spectacular numbers. Mr. Rocco Morabito, the correspondent for *O Estado de S. Paulo* in Rome, testified that it could be seen on the desks of people working at the Vatican.<sup>2185</sup>

The book undoubtedly became a thorn in the side of the left.<sup>2186</sup>

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<sup>2182</sup> Most Rev. José Newton de Almeida Baptista (1904-2001). Born in Niterói (RJ), he was Bishop of Uruguaiana (1944-1954), Archbishop of Diamantina (1954-1960), and finally Archbishop of Brasilia (1960-1984). He was also Archbishop of Brazil's Armed Forces (1963-1990). He is buried in the crypt of the Cathedral of Brasilia.

<sup>2183</sup> In his letter, the prelate showed himself very uncomfortable: “I received your book, ‘The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat’ accompanied by your letter. At the same time, it was a gift and an undisguised challenge. It invites me to engage in a public battle of immense scope and gravity, which should be resolved by prayer and a prudent approach of absolute fidelity to principles. There is silence and silence. I have not been silent amid the current unrest that has brought about extremely painful events like the Lefebvre affair on the one hand and that of Dom Adriano Hipólito on the other. But I'd rather remain silent unless I can be sure it will be better to speak.”

He claimed that he was not pained by the facts, of which he was aware, but by their public denunciation, casting doubts on the conduct of the bishops who refused to fight: “I read the book. I confess that it impressed me and caused me pain and sadness, not because I learned anything new but because of the widespread evil it is causing among the majority without discernment. Far from producing any effect on what it is fighting against — people do not know if the attack is directed against communism or the Church — it will sow doubt, uncertainty, a logical reaction of opposites because extremes tend to meet.”

Without considering the clamorous denunciation of an entire Episcopate like Chile's, deeply committed to upholding the communist regime there, or communist infiltration in Brazil radically expressed in Dom Casaldáliga's literary effusions, he commented: “By fighting communism in this way, one falls into the extreme opposite of liberalism, condemning what one intends to exalt. Your book — ‘propter intentionem’ (or so, at least, I would want to believe) — places the Church, pope and bishops in the dock and judges them unceremoniously.”

Dom José Newton continued developing his thoughts and ended with this somewhat pathetic claim, “Dr. Plinio, your book is terrible! It contributes to having our good people lose their love and trust in the Church. The book is disturbing and divisive” (Letter of October 1976—cf. SD 10/19/76).

<sup>2184</sup> SD 10/19/76.

<sup>2185</sup> Report 4/8/77. This journalist reported that “At various times, it was possible to find on Vatican desks a few copies of the book by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, published in São Paulo, which quotes extensively from the writings and poetry of Dom Pedro [Casaldáliga]” (*O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 8, 1977). Four editions of the book were sold in 1,700 cities in 24 states, totaling 51,000 copies.

<sup>2186</sup> RR 5/7/77. This was underscored by its impact on ecclesiastical circles, to the point of eliciting several protest communiqués (with no attempts at refutation).

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According to reports in the daily press, the Metropolitan Curia in Recife published a note in the archdiocese's bulletin about the TFP's campaign on the streets of that capital.

In short, the note accused the TFP campaign of:

- 1) Taking “a rebellious attitude toward the Church’s current renewal;”
  - 2) Having its “positions and attitudes sufficiently repudiated by the CNBB” and “disapproved and condemned by a good number of members of the Brazilian Episcopate, as happened recently in a statement by the bishops of São Paulo;”
  - 3) Speaking “in the name of the Church” without being entitled to.<sup>2187</sup>
- Given these accusations, I dictated a statement replying to Recife’s Metropolitan Curia.<sup>2188</sup>

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The first of these (dated July 29, 1976) came from Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns with his eight auxiliary bishops. This statement was printed in the Portuguese edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*. The second (dated September 30, 1976) was signed by all bishops of São Paulo’s Ecclesiastical Province. Similar pronouncements came from Dom Ivo Lorscheiter, Bishop of Santa Maria (August 11, 1976), in his own name and later in his capacity as CNBB’s Secretary-General (August 13, 1976). None of these ecclesiastical authorities refuted the facts or doctrine in the book. They only expressed disagreement in vague and often bitter terms – a curious contrast to the relaxed and “ecumenical” relationships that they had established so comfortably with various religious sects and socio-economic currents (cf. “The TFP, a Persecutor of Catholic Prelates?” in *Catolicismo*, No. 338, February 1979).

This controversy may be found in *Catolicismo* No. 309, September 1976, and at [www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info](http://www.pliniocorreadeoliveira.info).

<sup>2187</sup> “The Clarity of a Yes or a No,” 8/14/76, apud *Catolicismo* No. 309, September 1976.

<sup>2188</sup> This statement was published in *Diário de Pernambuco* and *Jornal do Commercio*, both of Recife, on August 17, 1976. The following is a summary of the main arguments of this reply:

“The note by the Metropolitan Curia of Recife, composed, to add insult to injury, in the most abysmal Portuguese, remains utterly elusive as far as its purported subject matter is concerned. [It] carefully avoids any condemnation of the book and makes only vague attacks against the campaign. How can something like this possibly be taken seriously? It certainly gives the TFP the right to demand from the Metropolitan Curia a clear and unequivocal explanation of whether the book has anything reprehensible. If there is, why doesn’t the Curia say so? If there is not, why attack the campaign?”

“This Society would like the Metropolitan Curia to state whether it considers the doctrine contained both in the book *Yo creo en la justicia y en la esperanza!* [I Believe in Justice and Hope], and in Bishop Dom Pedro Casaldáliga’s poetry, which the TFP book considers subversive, compatible with the Church’s teaching and her ‘current renewal.’”

“The TFP asks the same question concerning the document issued by CNBB’s Southern Regional II ... which its book has also described as subversive.

“As to CNBB’s pronouncements allegedly repudiating the TFP, would the Metropolitan Curia be kind enough to state what they were and when they occurred? The TFP will answer accordingly.

“As to the ‘pronouncement by the São Paulo bishops,’ ... it concerned the book the TFP distributes in Recife. Replying to it in the press, the TFP asked São Paulo’s Cardinal Archbishop and auxiliary bishops to say whether they considered Dom Pedro Casaldáliga’s poems and reflections [and] the statement by CNBB’s Southern Region II, quoted in the same book, as irreproachable from the standpoint of Catholic doctrine.

## Chapter XI

# Dom Sigaud and Dom José Pedro Costa Accuse Dom Pedro Casaldáliga and Dom Tomás Balduino; The CNBB Reacts

### 1. Dom Sigaud's Report to the Nunciature Raises a Ruckus

Between February and May 1977, Dom Geraldo Sigaud, Archbishop of Diamantina, and Dom José Pedro Costa, then Archbishop Coadjutor of Uberaba, denounced the spread of communism among Brazilian Catholics.

A great uproar followed.<sup>2189</sup>

I was closely associated with Dom Sigaud for many years until relatively recently, so I got to know him and appreciate his intelligence and culture. It was pretty clear to me how much decisive force he would have invested in his initiative, both in selecting the documents presented to the Apostolic Nunciature and presenting his line of argument.<sup>2190</sup>

*Jornal do Brazil*, one of the country's largest daily newspapers, published three pages of the report (in São Paulo, *O Estado de S. Paulo* printed it

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"These uncomfortable questions ... have remained unanswered. Was the Metropolitan Curia of Olinda and Recife aware of this? If it was, why did it not mention it in its statement? If it did not know, here is the information. We invite the Metropolitan Curia to use it and explain to the public of Recife just why the prelates of São Paulo remained silent.

"'Speaking on behalf of the Church' is to speak as an authority vested by Our Lord Jesus Christ or by canon law with the power to do so. We invite the Metropolitan Curia to state on which page of the book the TFP has improperly arrogated the right to do so and, if nothing is found to justify this accusation, to withdraw it, and thus honoring an elementary obligation of justice and fairness.

"Beyond the Metropolitan Curia, the TFP takes the liberty to put these reflections and questions to Archbishop Helder Câmara. Indeed, he has been so frequently involved in the problems discussed in our book that its subject seems to cry out for his personal statement.

"The TFP has written this text inspired by the Gospel precept: 'Let your words be yea, yea; nay, nay' (Mt. 5:37). All it asks in reply is the clarity of a 'yes' or a 'no.'"

<sup>2189</sup> "On the Lightning Bolt and the Firefly: The End," cit.

<sup>2190</sup> "Bewildering Bewilderment," cit.

in full). In it, Dom Sigaud argued in support of his accusation stigmatizing the Bishops of São Félix do Araguaia and Goiás Velho as communists.<sup>2191</sup>

It was a pity that no newspaper in São Paulo published the lucid, cleverly nuanced, precise and brave text of the Coadjutor Archbishop of Uberaba. Any Brazilian witnessing the tragedy of the contemporary Church here with Catholic eyes and heart could only feel admiration and gratitude for Dom José Pedro Costa's frank and timely intervention.<sup>2192</sup>

The Holy See ordered an investigation and entrusted it to Dom José Freire Falcão, Archbishop of Teresina, but it was allowed to peter out quietly without results.<sup>2193</sup>

## 2. CNBB's Uneasiness

However, the Bishops' Conference reaction was altogether different.

After Dom Sigaud's courageous initiative, the whole atmosphere around the episcopate seemed to quiver with astonishment and consternation. "What, there are communist bishops? How can a bishop dare to say something like that about two of his colleagues?" This appeared to be the subtext of all CNBB statements.<sup>2194</sup>

For example, Cardinal Vicente Scherer, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, and Dom Afonso Niehues, Archbishop of Florianopolis, argued that Dom Casaldáliga and Dom Tomás Balduino were not communists because it was unbelievable that a bishop should be a communist!

Yet, any catechism student ought to know that any individual bishop may fall into heresy and thus can also become a communist.

Moreover, anyone with an average knowledge of Church history knows numerous examples of bishops who have fallen into heresy over the centuries. Why should the same thing be impossible in the 1970s with a Brazilian bishop?

Did the two authors of the 'refutations' of the evidence Dom Sigaud presented hope to convince anyone?

Other bishops reacted differently, stating that Dom Casaldáliga and Dom Tomás Balduino were not communists simply because they were not...<sup>2195</sup>

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<sup>2191</sup> "It's Not, It's Not, It's Not," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/28/77.

<sup>2192</sup> "Bewildering Bewilderment," cit.

<sup>2193</sup> "On the Lightning Bolt and the Firefly: The End," cit.

<sup>2194</sup> "Bewildering Bewilderment," cit.

<sup>2195</sup> The list of prelates who reacted in this way is considerable: Aloisio Cardinal Lorscheider, Archbishop of Fortaleza and CNBB president; Most Revs. Ivo Lorscheider, Bishop of Santa Maria and CNBB secretary-general; José Maria Pires, Archbishop of João Pessoa; João Batista da Motta e Albuquerque, Archbishop of Vitória; José Brandão de Castro, Bishop of Propriá; Quirino Adolfo Schmitz, Bishop of Teófilo Otoni; Jaime Luís Coelho, Bishop of Maringá; Frederico Didonet, Bishop

Dom Aloisio Lorscheider, Dom José Maria Pires and Dom Frederico Didonet added a slight variant: The two bishops should not be considered communists because they, Dom Aloisio, Dom Pires and Dom Didonet, were personally acquainted with them and knew they were not. Therefore, what Dom Tomás Balduino and Dom Casaldáliga might have said in private conversations with Dom Aloisio, Dom Pires, and Dom Didonet brought down Dom Sigaud's solemn and impressive arguments.<sup>2196</sup>

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Regarding Dom Pedro Casaldáliga's doctrinal position, what I had to say had been said only too well in my study, *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*. I was the first in our country to draw attention to the subversive content of the verses published by the turbulent prelate.

However, when addressing the subject of Dom Casaldáliga and Dom Balduino on many occasions, Dom Sigaud did not mention my publication.

I put aside the idea this could be due to pettiness, as I had never seen it in him in so many years of collaboration. He must have had other reasons. I respected that and did not intervene in the debate until my silence became inexplicable to countless friends all over Brazil, who honored me with their confidence.

I finally consented to speak out, thanks to their increasing pressure.<sup>2197</sup>

In August 1977, writing in the *Correio Brasiliense*, Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer proposed that the Brazilian bishops publish a collective pastoral letter against communism. His suggestion encountered a wall of silence and died a lonely death.<sup>2198</sup>

### 3. "Messing with Dom Casaldáliga Means Messing with the Pope"

It was unlikely that those evils would be remedied without Paul VI's intervention, and he did not signal any intention to intervene.<sup>2199</sup>

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of Rio Grande; Moacir Grechi, Bishop of Acre-Purus; Alano Pena, Auxiliary Bishop of Marabá; Lelis Lara, Auxiliary Bishop of Itabira.

<sup>2196</sup> "He's Not, He's Not, He's Not," cit.

<sup>2197</sup> Dr. Plinio addressed this issue in the articles, "Bewildering Bewilderment," "He's Not, He's Not, He's Not," cit., and in an interview with *Jornal do Brasil* on May 8, 1977.

<sup>2198</sup> "On the Lightning Bolt and the Firefly: The End," cit.

<sup>2199</sup> *Indigenous Tribalism, Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1977. Let us recall once again that Cardinal Archbishop Paulo Evaristo Arns when arriving from Rome, said that he had heard Paul VI himself say that whoever "messed with Dom Pedro Casaldáliga would be messing with the Pope himself" (cf. *The Church Facing the Escalating Communist Threat*, cit.).

Communist influence in Catholic circles has since continued to grow but with new and highly worrying aspects, including a communist-missionary ideal looming on the horizon. I will return to this subject.

## Chapter XII

# 1977: Divorce Is Approved After the Bishops' Lackluster Stand

### 1. They Could Hardly Have Said Less – or Worse

In the second half of the 1970s, a final assault by divorce proponents resulted in its approval.

In 1977, the CNBB finally—albeit half-heartedly—decided to join the fray in defense of Catholic marriage.<sup>2200</sup> However, its statements and those of its representatives appeared more than pathetic. The newspapers published vapid and meaningless statements that were genuinely lamentable.<sup>2201</sup>

Catholics naturally tended to rely on their pastors' initiative to address religious crises, but that initiative showed little intelligence or know-how and scarcely any desire to win.

With notable exceptions, through their spokesmen in Congress, the voice of Brazilians opposed to divorce sounded feeble and unconvincing.

In that emergency, the relevant know-how would require the country's bishops to publish a collective pastoral letter signed by all of Brazil's cardinals, archbishops and bishops as soon as rumors of the proposed campaign to introduce divorce were heard.

A collective pastoral letter does not necessarily have to contain great new thoughts or findings. It would have been sufficient for the bishops to give the faithful an intelligent synthesis of Catholic teaching against divorce to provide arguments based on Scripture, Tradition and the Church's Magisterium in

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<sup>2200</sup> "34-75-77," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/25/77.

<sup>2201</sup> "Silence, the Great Lesson," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/6/78.

simple, direct and true-to-life language. They should make a frank and unequivocal condemnation of the sin committed by anyone voting in favor of divorce-supporting candidates or by legislators who voted for divorce. They should also have made a clear pronouncement on the sin committed by married people, calling “remarriage” the adulterous union built on the ruins of their valid marriage, and mentioned canonical penalties, the particular judgment *post-mortem*, and the Last Judgment.

This pastoral letter should be read in installments at all Masses in Brazil’s churches, chapels and oratories. It should be followed by a statement that no Catholic could vote with a clean conscience for any congressmen who expressed pro-divorce views. A list of their names should be read at all Masses immediately after the vote for or against divorce and repeated often throughout the following election campaign.

Furthermore, as their sacred trumpets sounded the alarm in the House of God, they would invite the Catholic people to flood Congress with messages asking that the constitutional reform introducing divorce be rejected.

Someone could argue that it would have been difficult to write an urgent pastoral letter like the one I have just outlined. However, this pastoral letter existed for two years and was circulated with brilliant success during the 1975 discussion of the pros and cons of divorce.

It was the key that locked Brazil’s gates to divorce. Bishop Antonio de Castro Mayer published it under the title *For an Indissoluble Marriage*. The TFP sold one hundred thousand copies of this 64-page document throughout Brazil.

The bishops could have endorsed this unparalleled defensive instrument of tried-and-tested popularity by a simple joint decree. On a much more modest scale, a clear and bold statement by CNBB could have done the job, striking a resounding and victorious blow.

What did the CNBB and the episcopate do with this text? They left it to mold in a drawer and followed a different route.

Brazil had 267 bishops, only 104 of whom spoke out against divorce.

On the other hand, almost all of those who spoke out - and some did so many times - said very little.

Instead of strong and convincing pastoral letters based on sound Church doctrine, they addled the minds of the faithful with a desultory drizzle of press interviews and brief communications repeating few shockingly weak arguments against divorce.<sup>2202</sup>

CNBB’s Itaici Assembly in February 1977 had referred in a brief and colorless statement to a note published in 1975 with slightly more dynamic

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<sup>2202</sup> “Fireworks, Not Bombards,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 6/25/77.

contents. For a reader to enjoy the salutary effect of this dynamism in 1977, he would have to seek out 1975 newspapers to see what the CNBB had said...

The note did not quote the Old or New Testament or cite any Church Father or Doctors, popes or saints. It just said that “one of our major newspapers” criticized some sectors of Congress’ “unseemly haste” in their efforts to legalize divorce.

The episcopate could not have said less on the subject nor offered a sorrier spectacle.

## 2. CNBB Refuses to Act Upon Dom Mayer’s Suggestion

Dom Antonio de Castro Mayer, Bishop of Campos, gave the most shining example of opposition. On April 28, 1977, he sent the CNBB president a telegram with suggestions on how to react to the divorce bill debated in the House.

A comparison between Dom Mayer’s aspirations and CNBB’s pronouncements perfectly illustrates the deep divide between the two sides.

On April 30 of that year, the newspaper *Folha da Tarde* published Dom Mayer’s telegram to CNBB full of the wise counsel the bishops’ representatives ignored to take actions opposed to its suggestions:

As the distinguished members of the Senate and House know that their mandate is to legislate according to their voters’ wishes and aspirations, I am confident they will not approve divorce if they feel that most Brazilians are against it. “This majority’s repudiation of divorce would quickly become impossible to ignore if the CNBB urgently published and widely disseminated a document showing that approving divorce would seriously violate God's law, disrupt the natural order, undermine public and private morality, shatter the family, and ruin the nation. Therefore, I express to Your Eminence my desire to see the CNBB publish such a statement as a special communique dedicated only to this matter and entirely free from considerations on any other issues.

Had the CNBB acceded to this request, it could have celebrated a day of glory, while divorce promoters would have suffered a defeat in that long battle.



But the CNBB refused to listen.<sup>2203</sup>

### 3. Approved on the Sly, Divorce Paved the Way for “Free Love” in Brazil

The divorce project progressed so quietly at almost every stage that many expected it to be defeated.<sup>2204</sup>

In a TFP statement published in the free section of *Folha de S. Paulo* and the daily press throughout Brazil, I called on all pro-divorce congressmen to spare our country the trauma of such a transformation.<sup>2205</sup>

I received detailed replies from anti-divorce lawmakers. Senator Nelson Carneiro and other proponents of the divorce bill possibly made equally weighty statements, but what I read of them in the papers was poor.<sup>2206</sup>

Due to the approaching summer holidays, the parliamentary quorum was small, and the projected bill seemed likely to fail due to a lack of numbers.

However, almost at the last minute, pro-divorce congressmen arrived unexpectedly from all over the country, and the confident expectation that the divorce bill would not pass turned into a cruel disappointment.<sup>2207</sup>

The bill was approved in a frenzy of enthusiasm from artificially overcrowded galleries, with the slumbering nation blissfully unaware of the poisonous sweets the Congress had served it.<sup>2208</sup>

This is how the indissolubility of marriage’s glorious enshrinement in the 1934 Constitution was effaced like a ring falling off a withering finger. A wound called divorce opened up in the ring’s place.<sup>2209</sup>

The abolition of the marital bond’s indissolubility in Brazil started marriage’s inexorable decline and a long descent down the slippery slope toward “free love.”

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<sup>2203</sup> “But the CNBB Refused...” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/16/77. Years later, Eugenio Cardinal Sales, then Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, publicly acknowledged that the divorce bill had passed because the CNBB did not fight to prevent it. The cardinal said: “If the Church in Brazil had fought as Cardinal Motta did, divorce would not have been approved” (*O Globo*, September 21, 1982).

<sup>2204</sup> “34-75-77,” cit.

<sup>2205</sup> “34-75-77,” cit. This statement, “Facing an Imminent Vote on Divorce,” was published in *Folha de S. Paulo* on June 14, 1977, and later in dailies throughout the country. In it, on behalf of the TFP National Council, Dr. Plinio warned divorce opponents of unforeseen events that could give victory to divorce.

<sup>2206</sup> “Silence, the Great Lesson,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/6/78.

<sup>2207</sup> “34-75-77,” cit.

<sup>2208</sup> “Silence, the Great Lesson,” cit.

<sup>2209</sup> “34-75-77,” cit.

**Chapter XIII**  
**Indigenous Tribalism, the**  
**Communist-Missionary Ideal**  
**For Brazil in the Twenty-First Century**  
**(1977)**

**1. Campaigning Against Saints and Missionaries That Catechized Brazil**

I noticed a growing tendency in Brazilian textbooks to “rewrite” the country’s history in a spirit increasingly critical of Portuguese colonization and the missionaries’ civilizing influence.<sup>2210</sup>

These tenets had gained momentum for years. Dom Pedro Casaldáliga’s poetry and writings are a good example. He denigrated the evangelizing work of saints and missionaries and did not even spare Saint José de Anchieta, the Apostle of Brazil.<sup>2211</sup>

Some liberation theologians went so far as to state that it was a bad thing to convert the indigenous peoples from their religions to Christianity and that missionaries should allow themselves to be “catechized” by Amerindian paganism, which allegedly offered a more authentic vision of certain aspects of divinity and man’s relationship with the cosmos. That could also be inferred from the writings of the former Franciscan friar Leonardo Boff, which anyone can read for himself (cf. *Jornal do Brasil*, section *Idéias e Ensaíos*, October 6, 1991).

Allegations of this kind, which until a short time before would have made their proponents appear delusional, gained so much ground in Europe that the city of Puerto Real - the port of the Catholic Kings near Cadiz (Spain) - decided to erect a monument (carved by a friend of Fidel Castro, the Ecuadorian artist Guayasamín) in reparation to “victims” of the Discovery and tarnish the name of Isabel the Catholic, the great queen who supported Christopher Columbus’ expedition. This monument was never built thanks to a healthy reaction by the Spanish public primarily channeled by a vigorous repudiation campaign by TFP-Covadonga.

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<sup>2210</sup> *Draft Constitution Anguishes the Country*, cit.

<sup>2211</sup> Blessed José de Anchieta was canonized in 2014.

## 2. A Romantic Vision of the Primitive Indians' 'Communist' Society

As early as 1977, when this movement was still in its early stages, I denounced this ideology in a book titled *Indigenous Tribalism, the Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the Twenty-First Century*.

Based on solid documentation, the work predicted precisely what is happening today.<sup>2212</sup>

The Church teaches that the usual way for man to be saved is to be baptized, believe, profess, and live by the doctrine and law of Jesus Christ. Therefore, bringing people into the Church means opening the gates of heaven to them and saving them. This is the purpose of the Mission.

Being a missionary in Brazil is mainly about bringing the Gospel to the Indigenous tribes and providing them with supernatural means to enable them to reach their celestial goal by observing the Ten Commandments of God's law. It is to persuade them to free themselves of superstitions and barbaric customs that enslave them in their ancient and unfortunate stagnation. It is, therefore, to civilize them.

Now, what do "modern" missionaries think?

"Catechize? Preach the Gospel? What for?" – were the questions of up-to-date missiology. *The Gospel is anti-selfishness, and native tribes have already assimilated it so thoroughly that teaching it to them is no longer necessary.*

In short, indigenous tribes are much more models for us than we are for them.

Why? Because of the analogies between life as an Indigenous tribe member and life in a dreamed-of utopian communist society with the tribal community of property, no striving for profit, capital, wages, employers, employees or institutions except for the tribe. The latter assimilates all individual liberties of this small, dispossessed, unproductive and uncompetitive human group where people live happily and without problems for jettisoning their "ego" and "selfishness."

The sexual community is seen as a corollary of the community of property.<sup>2213</sup>

Undoubtedly, this idyllic vision of Indigenous tribes in the great forest, which new missionaries present as mankind's ideal in the twenty-first century, was intended to describe a society organized on a communist basis.<sup>2214</sup>

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<sup>2212</sup> "America: Hope of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Agência Boa Imprensa news release, 1<sup>st</sup> fortnight of October 1992.

<sup>2213</sup> *Indigenous Tribalism, Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the Twenty-First Century*, Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1977.

<sup>2214</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

### 3. Inspired by Levi-Strauss' Structuralism

Can our indigenous populations be described as communists? The question could only make you smile.

An Indian has absolutely nothing in common with a communist as far as his doctrine, mentality or aims are concerned.

At best, the indigenous tribes' way of life provides faint traces of analogy with a communist regime except for one of those coincidences that often appear when you compare early and later stages of development, when decay sets in, such as childhood and old age.

The reason why primitive peoples have a community of property (almost exclusively) is not because they are doctrinally opposed to private ownership.

Early stone-age men did not refrain from using polished tools because they thought it wrong to do so; they had not invented them yet.

Therefore, an Indian cannot be equated with a "civilized" man who knows private property, the monogamous and indissoluble family, and all things that emerged and flourished thanks to these institutions. He has an aversion to these principles and their results and thus rejects and wants to abolish them.

In short, one could compare an indigenous nation to a plant that has not grown but could still grow. However, an enemy of family and property who dreams of communitarianism or tribal communism is a destroyer.

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In reality, however, a much bigger issue emerged behind what might be called the neo-missiology question. Brazilian missionaries (and foreigners working here) had pronounced affinities, at least in general terms, with structuralism<sup>2215</sup>— a school of thought that had a profound impact on socio-economic issues. Its most famous exponent was Lévi-Strauss.<sup>2216</sup>

According to Lévi-Strauss, Indigenous society "resisted history" and adhered to the way of life of the pre-Neolithic period, the one closest to the human ideal and society to which we should return.

### 4. How Did They Introduce this Philosophy in the Church?

Many missionaries, some still young, entered Brazil's jungles imbued with a greater or lesser degree of muddleheaded progressivism and leftism.

It is no wonder that under the influence of such tendencies and opinions, these missionaries formed astonishing ideas about the living conditions of Indigenous people. Among other traits, they were marked by cruelty, elementary primitivism and a most melancholy stagnation. Yet, to these missionaries, the

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<sup>2215</sup> *Indigenous Tribalism, the Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the Twenty-First Century*, cit.

<sup>2216</sup> "America: Hope of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/3/74.

Indians appeared to possess great learning; their tribal organization seemed to be a masterpiece of anthropological wisdom, so they were like a model that civilized people should follow.

The biggest problem these delusions raised was neither with the missionaries nor the Indians.

The question was how this philosophy was able to infect the Holy Catholic Church, poison seminaries, lead missionaries astray, and turn the purpose of missions on its head—all with strong ecclesiastical support.

The fact that this cancer emerged in the Church's missionary sector begged another question: Was this not a metastatic tumor located in a much more central spot within the Holy Church's non-missionary organizations?<sup>2217</sup>

These questions hung in the air unanswered.<sup>2218</sup>

## Chapter XIV

# Facing Carter's and Paul VI's "Human Rights" Policy (1977-1978)

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<sup>2217</sup> *Indigenous Tribalism, the Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the Twenty-First Century*, cit.

<sup>2218</sup> This book on tribalism sold very well. First published in *Catolicismo* No. 323/324, November-December 1977, it went through 9 editions, with 82,000 copies. In January 1978, TFP members and volunteers went out on book advertising caravans that visited 2,963 cities in Brazil. A second part was added to its latest editions in 2008, commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its release. In it, journalists Nelson Ramos Barretto and Paulo Henrique Chaves report on their observations at the State of Roraima's Raposa-Serra do Sol reservation and in the States of Mato Grosso and Santa Catarina. Their interviews with various personalities confirm the theses of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira on every point.

*Indigenous Tribalism, the Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the Twenty-First Century*, was referred to as "prophetic" by the Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Marco Aurelio de Mello in his statement of reasons during the judicial proceedings concerning the controversial demarcation of indigenous lands at Roraima's Raposa-Serra do Sol reservation. He said: "It is also worth noting that, in 1987, Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, author of *Indigenous Tribalism, the Communist-Missionary Ideal for Brazil in the Twenty-First Century*, as the draft for the 1988 Constitution was in preparation: "By adopting such a hypertrophied notion of the rights of Indians, the projected constitution paves the way for an eventual recognition of various Indigenous groups as having something like a sovereignty *diminutae rationis*; self-determination, to use the consecrated expression." (*Draft Constitution Raises Anxiety in the Country*, Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 1987, p 182; and p. 119). "These are prophetic words because, in September 2007, Brazil voted in the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 700, April 2009).

## 1. Carter's One-Way Policy: "Human Rights" for Leftists Only

In 1977, when Carter became president of the United States, he sought to establish a kind of Holy Alliance around the world to judge the legitimacy of contemporary governments.

Legitimate governments would respect human rights; those that refused to do so would be considered illegitimate.

If a government refused to respect human rights, it would deserve to be deposed; if it did, it would deserve to be maintained.

The focus was on democratic legitimacy.<sup>2219</sup>

The left was the major beneficiary of the global wave of "Carterism" that favored subversives and terrorists, so it was perfectly understandable that all left-wing political currents supported it.<sup>2220</sup>

President Carter's extremely conciliatory politics toward Russia and its satellites should also be regarded as leftist.<sup>2221</sup>

He favored all America's enemies, for example, by initiating a highly concessive political "opening up" to Cuba,<sup>2222</sup> while doing nothing to end the dictatorship of its extremist regime, by far the most terrible ever seen in the Americas.<sup>2223</sup>

Inspired by heaven knows what propaganda,<sup>2224</sup> Carter spent his time pressuring the continent's Latin American nations to make them respect "human rights," of which he seemingly considered himself as the standard-bearer worldwide.<sup>2225</sup>

The media joined his efforts by exerting huge pressure as well.<sup>2226</sup> Communists or leftists being prosecuted or already convicted in those various nations directly benefited from this.

In focusing his efforts on Latin America, Mr. Carter was no doubt motivated by a genuine concern for the human rights that every rational being, including communists and their ilk, undoubtedly have, particularly in cases where individuals of any nation come under suspicion for no good reason.

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<sup>2219</sup> RR 6/18/77.

<sup>2220</sup> "A Psychological Litmus Test for the Reader to Use," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/6/78. In this article, Dr. Plinio pointed out that a certain kind of leftist is only interested in the "human rights" of those who are fighting for subversion, for communism, and chaos. To the rights of the victims of these three forms or degrees of revolution, on the other hand, he will found to be indifferent, if not downright hostile.

<sup>2221</sup> "Discontent of the Right and Center," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/21/78.

<sup>2222</sup> "Sequins, Dances and Dancers," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/21/78.

<sup>2223</sup> "Access to Embassies, the Decisive Test," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/27/80.

<sup>2224</sup> "While Carter Makes His Racket..." *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/24/77.

<sup>2225</sup> "The White House Responds," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/25/77.

<sup>2226</sup> "While Carter Makes His Racket..." cit.

However, Mr. Carter should not have lost sight of the fact that the vast majority of those communists were suspected or convicted of attacking the sovereignty of Latin American nations already battered over previous decades by revolutionary psychological warfare and bloody crimes on Moscow's behalf.<sup>2227</sup>

So, what "human rights" were these? Are only liberals to be considered human and alone have "human rights"?<sup>2228</sup>

The furious "human rights" campaign waged against anticommunist governments while saying nothing about communist dictatorships and their human rights violations revealed a clear bias in favor of communism.

Was all this sound and fury only intended to ensure respect for "human rights," or was something else behind it?<sup>2229</sup>

## 2. The American TFP's Manifesto

I had the opportunity to talk to the directors of the American TFP and pass on some notes about these Carter maneuvers to them.

In these notes, I commented that Carter was setting himself up more or less as the pontiff of a new morality (those who speak of human rights talk of morals) and hoisting himself as the interpreter of that international morality.

He knew all about "human rights" and their entire catalog. As President of the United States, he had the right to decree that governments be deposed or upheld based on their human rights records.

In other words, he was exercising a kind of omnipotence under the guise of democracy.

So, at this pinnacle of democratic achievement, we now found a kind of elective autocracy. As long as Carter was in office, he appeared to consider himself not so much the president of a superpower as the legislator of a particular morality and, simultaneously, the judge who verifies the offense and imposes the punishment.

Therefore, we faced a situation entirely opposed to the principles on which human rights are based, which require that every nation's sovereignty be respected. To me, this argument seemed unanswerable.

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I sent this to the American TFP, which drafted a document with a title that said it all: "Human Rights in Latin America—Carter's Democratic Utopianism Favors Communist Expansion."

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<sup>2227</sup> "The White House Responds," cit.

<sup>2228</sup> "A Psychological Litmus Test for the Reader to Use," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/28/78.

<sup>2229</sup> "Cheeky Impartiality Facing a Macabre Topic," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/9/77.

The American TFP's study noted that the Carter administration had arrogated to itself the right to issue dogmatic definitions concerning a large number of controversial points, as though it were a kind of infallible Vatican qualified to make absolute judgments binding upon all nations, and thereby to determine the nature of the civil liberties that all countries should accept.

I advised them to present this study to members of both houses of the US Congress, the State Department and influential figures in American public life.

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The manifesto was delivered by hand to the Office of Human Rights, located in the State Department. It was like silver nitrate applied to a sore spot.

Upon delivery, the head of the office received the document carelessly, without much interest.

His attitude changed when he read its first lines.

He shouted to an officer and said, "Hey, you, come and look at this!" He asked that official to make three copies, one for his use.

He asked what the TFP was and took notes.

He realized the document's importance and that it deserved attention.

Therefore, the American TFP rendered an outstanding service.

Since May 1977, we in Brazil and other TFPs in the Americas distributed this document everywhere for obvious reasons.<sup>2230</sup>

### 3. Paul VI's Unexpected Intervention

That was the background against which, on July 4, 1977, during the audience for the delivery to Paul VI of the credentials of the Brazilian ambassador, Mr. Expedito de Freitas Resende, the pope responded to the diplomat's greeting with a speech that caused much comment.

The Brazilian press published Paul VI's speech the next day, July 5, and the first reactions to His Holiness's words began slowly and respectfully emerging around us.<sup>2231</sup>

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<sup>2230</sup> RR 6/18/77. Latin American foreign ministries pressured by Carter started to fight back with many of the arguments in the American TFP study, making the U.S. President's shortsighted "human rights" policy appear in a less favorable light.

<sup>2231</sup> The pope's remarks caused unease in large sectors of the public and were front page news on the July 5 issue of *O Estado de S. Paulo*. The text said: "Pope Paul VI ... has indirectly warned the Brazilian government against instances of arbitrariness or human rights violations that occurred in the country ... Paul VI pointed out that 'the search for efficiency (in the implementation of economic policy) and the need to ensure the necessary public order' should not be permitted to create 'arbitrary situations or violations of the inalienable rights of the human person.'"

"In Brasilia, Paul VI's warning has been received with surprise and displeasure ... The government did not expect Pope Paul VI to initiate this new phase of controversy with the Brazilian regime



The next day, July 6, Rome's *L'Unità*—the Italian Communist Party's official mouthpiece—published a telltale commentary frankly applauding the pontiff's words.

Here is a quick summary of how the communist daily interpreted Paul VI's words. It began by painting a biased picture of the situation in Brazil, alleging that its "difficulties in the political and economic field" were multiplying. There was galloping inflation. Faced with general discontent, the government imposed 'tough measures.' The prospect of the presidential succession made the outlook even worse.

The government, afraid of the opposition, impeached Congressman Alencar Furtado, and the dialogue between MDB [the Brazilian Democratic Movement], the "only opposition party allowed by law" and ARENA [National Alliance for Renewal] was paralyzed.

*L'Unità's* description of the Brazilian situation was entirely unilateral, simplistic and biased. It was marked by mental rigidity typical of hyper-theoretical communists and foreigners who did not know Brazil and our famous *jeitinho* to overcome difficulties with creative and street-smart resourcefulness.

After gratuitously presenting the situation as "dramatic," *L'Unità* gleefully stated that "in a situation that provides so many occasions for tensions to arise, Paul VI's words ... may easily become the subject of internal debate within circles close to the dictatorship and its opponents."

As far as this is concerned, *L'Unità* was right. The pope's words would serve for nothing but to increase tensions among us.

Had they been uttered by Pius XII or Pius XI, they might have succeeded in plunging Brazil into revolt with our "street-smart resourcefulness" being unable to prevent it.

*L'Unità* quoted this passage from Paul VI's speech to show its inflammatory nature: "The search for efficiency and concern to ensure the necessary public order" should not be permitted to "create arbitrary situations or violations of the human person's inalienable rights."

How could anyone in a Catholic country sensitive to every word from the Chair of Peter expect this call to our government in the person of its ambassador would not create tensions? If the Holy See had evidence of the violation of so-called "human rights" (Pius XII, Pius XI and their predecessors would call them man's natural rights as a creature of God and Christian rights, avoiding any

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on the Church's behalf. ... Official information suggests that ... to say the least, Paul VI's comments on the issue of human rights in Brazil ought to be considered 'inopportune and unacceptable.'"

concession to secular parlance), it would have been fitting for the pope to have sent that evidence directly to our government through the proper channels.

Had the government ignored that evidence, the Holy See could have entrusted the matter to the Brazilian Episcopate to bring it to the government's attention and, if necessary, to public opinion. Nothing could have been right.

If none of these measures proved effective and the Holy See had no other option but to protest publicly, the pope would have been justified in his actions.

However, provided there was the necessary evidence, that protest could only be accepted as a noble, impartial and paternal gesture of pastoral solicitude if the pope first emphatically condemned the unspeakable atrocities committed by other governments and specifically communist ones.<sup>2232</sup>

To name only two examples of such atrocities, in those days, Russian dissidents were repressed, and the Ethiopian communist government slaughtered thirty thousand of its opponents.<sup>2233</sup>

The communist regimes with whose leaders the Holy See openly pursued a policy of *détente* continued committing gruesome atrocities. This begs the question of why, of all countries, the pope singled out Brazil for this rebuke. Why?

The Italian communist daily needed no gift of prophecy to predict that Paul VI's high-profile intervention would increase tensions among us.

Now, if a communist newspaper could foresee that inevitable reaction, how could Paul VI, trained in one of the world's highest and most distinguished schools of diplomacy – the Vatican – fail to see it?

It is not difficult to imagine the perplexity of any Catholic or Brazilian with a basic understanding of things when faced with this question.

The perplexity increased as *l'Unità*, applying its comments to the other countries of South America, concluded:

“With the pope's statement and similar ones by Carter and his Secretary of State, it is plain to see how South American dictatorships, orphaned ideologically, are forced every day to face the fact the source of their ideological and cultural *raison d'être* is drying up. For Catholics and Latin Americans ... the United States president and the pope are the symbols that dominant powers

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<sup>2232</sup> “Rome's Communist Daily Applauds Paul VI,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/16/77.

<sup>2233</sup> “The Pope Analyzes Brazil's Situation—TFP Sends Telegram to Paul VI,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/12/77. On the same day (July 5, 1977) that it printed Paul VI's speech to the Brazilian ambassador to the Holy See, the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* also reported that “about 30,000 civilians - mostly students, teachers and peasants opposed to the new government's Marxist orientation - have been killed in Ethiopia since the military seized power.” Amnesty International provided a ghoulish detail: The communist government abandoned the bodies of one thousand students slaughtered in Addis Ababa on that city's sidewalks, where they became food for hyenas. Yet, Paul VI said not a single word against the repression of Russian dissidents or the massacre in Ethiopia.

always want to be identified with. The fact that these symbols oppose dictatorships ... is causing instability among the ruling classes.”

Hence, according to *l'Unità*, coups and counter-coups between the government and the opposition would ultimately favor communism.

The article gleefully concludes with the words of a leftist Uruguayan politician: “Everything will depend on our friends around the world.”

From this context, it is evident that one of these friends who was already shaking up the country was none other than Paul VI.

#### 4. Perplexity at Paul VI's Deplorable Omission

Hence, as president of the TFP National Council, I sent Paul VI a telegram. It was published in the free section of *Folha de S. Paulo* and several newspapers in São Paulo.<sup>2234</sup>

In this telegram, I said:

“Your Holiness,

Driven by its profound and filial veneration for the infallible Chair of St. Peter, the members of the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) consider it their duty to present to Your Holiness their thoughts and feelings related to Your Holiness' statements and attitudes concerning the implementation of the sacred principles of natural law and Christian morality in Brazil and the contemporary world.

We felt considerable perplexity, Most Holy Father, when it became clear that your speech addressed to the Brazilian Ambassador on the 4<sup>th</sup> showed fatherly concern over human rights violations said to have occurred during acts of repression against communist agitators, of which your Holiness appears to have been informed. However, it contained no criticism of the systematic and devious violations of human rights being committed in our territory under the aegis of international communism based in Russia, whose agents continually instigate class struggle and social revolution in a patent infringement of our sovereignty. It is painful to point this out, but the friendliness, if not complicity, with Soviet maneuvers by

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<sup>2234</sup> “Rome's Communist Daily Applauds Paul VI,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 16/7/77. This telegram drew international repercussions. First published as a paid ad in *Folha de S. Paulo* (12/7/77), it was printed in 36 Brazilian publications. In the United States, the American TFP telegraphed the Apostolic Nuncio in Washington, also expressing its perplexity. In Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela, our sister organizations published it in newspapers of their respective countries. In Spain, Covadonga distributed 125,000 copies of this text.

ecclesiastics and laypeople of the so-called Catholic left favors this agitation. A good example of this attitude is some poetry and doctrinal statements by Dom Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop-Prelate of São Felix do Araguaia.

“The cordial relations between the Vatican and the Russian government encourage us to hope that a protest from Your Holiness might influence and persuade the Soviets to cease their subversive pressure in Brazil and throughout Latin America, felt as a nightmare by families in Brazil and neighboring countries. By helping to eliminate such pressure, Your Holiness would make a most valuable contribution to diminishing the communist threat, thus preventing situations likely to give rise to excesses of anticommunist repression to which You have alluded.

“Permit us to say that if Your Holiness’ solicitude, crossing the ocean and our country’s borders, is significant enough to find expression in a public statement about those excesses, Your Holiness will also, and with the utmost urgency, address similar public statements to communist governments to express your horror at their continuing atrocities against the peoples they rule. Examples of these atrocities are the repression only days ago against Russian dissidents and the slaughter of thirty thousand political opponents by the communist government of Ethiopia.

“The unfortunate Vietnamese families fleeing from communism and adrift in Far Eastern seas in fragile boats seem particularly worthy of Your Holiness’ paternal outpouring of support and protection. They find themselves in utter misery and without any help from nearby non-communist governments, presumably also under pressure from the communists. We, therefore, beseech Your Holiness to make a gesture of worldwide impact that will alleviate their sad fate!

“We respectfully ask Your Holiness to forgive us if we add that your silence on such events plunges us into a most painful perplexity.

“By expressing to Your Holiness these feelings, which countless Catholics indeed share in Brazil, Latin America and all over the world, we hope to help prevent the formation in the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church of a growing sector of stalwart Christians who are watching these developments with

sadness but have so far remained silent. Their numbers are rising daily, constituting a suffering sector in Christendom relegated to a situation reminiscent of the early catacombs and very similar to the Church of Silence behind the Iron Curtain.

“Asking Your Holiness’ blessings, we remain with all due veneration.”<sup>2235</sup>

About two months later, I sent a telex to Paul VI and President Carter, asking them to carry out a vigorous action befitting their high-ranking offices to help the glorious and unfortunate Vietnamese refugees on the high seas.<sup>2236</sup>

After all, these low-income families’ state of helpless misery threatened to call into question the authenticity of their worldwide campaign for human rights.<sup>2237</sup>

An estimated two thousand South Vietnamese were adrift on the high seas, crammed into unseaworthy vessels that put their lives at risk every day in turbulent waters. Whenever they reached a Southeast Asian port, they were refused permission to go ashore and sent back on their perilous journey.<sup>2238</sup>

An article in the Scottish magazine *Approaches*, in its October 1977 issue, mentioned that the *Daily Telegraph* of Corpus Christi (Texas) reported complaints from anticommunist Vietnamese refugees. They had counted 51 ships of various nationalities that had passed them by without rescuing them. One was an American aircraft carrier of the Pacific Fleet. They were finally rescued by the English tanker *Cavendish*.<sup>2239</sup>

It is perfectly fine to protest against the violation of human rights, even those of terrorists, if genuinely violated.

But this question remained: Why did the apostles of “human rights” refuse to protect the rights of the courageous Vietnamese who legitimately expressed discontent with the communist takeover? What concept of human dignity was this?<sup>2240</sup>

These true heroes’ tragic and undeserved situation made it abundantly clear that the fear of displeasing communist governments paralyzed that whole region and curtailed the freedom of movement of nations and private shipping companies that, under normal conditions, would have acted very differently.

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<sup>2235</sup> “The Pope Analyzes Brazil’s Situation—TFP Telegram to Paul VI,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/12/77.

<sup>2236</sup> “The White House Responds,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 11/25/77—The telex was sent on September 20, 1977 and then published or reported on in 28 Brazilian newspapers (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 321, September 1977).

<sup>2237</sup> *Catolicismo* No. 321, September 1977, p. 3.

<sup>2238</sup> “The Epic Fight of Noble Non-Conformists,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 3/7/77

<sup>2239</sup> “Psycho-Litmus [Test] for the Reader to Use,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/28/78.

<sup>2240</sup> “The Epic Fight of Noble Non-Conformists,” cit.

Since the Throne of St. Peter is the highest and most potent beacon of justice and charity among men, Paul VI needed to appeal to all earthly powers able to help the poor men and women and do whatever they could on behalf of His Holiness' unfortunate spiritual children.

So, the TFP respectfully appealed to the pope to speak out on behalf of those unfortunate, sure it was interpreting the wishes of all those for whom the words "*human rights*" had an elevated Christian meaning.<sup>2241</sup>

## Chapter XV

# Brazil in the Climate of 'Political Openness' (1979)

### 1. A Policy of Broad Trust and Forgiveness

People soon became convinced that a policy of broad trust and forgiveness, including releasing mere suspects and even those found guilty of subversion, would ease tensions, pacify the spirits and re-establish peace in Brazil.

In 1978, when the military regime was still in full force,<sup>2242</sup> the "opening up" process followed.<sup>2243</sup>

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<sup>2241</sup> *Catolicismo* No. 321, September 1977. This passionate but respectful appeal was received with the greatest coldness. Nothing that was asked was actually done. It was only when John Paul II ascended to the papal throne that the Holy See made several public appeals on behalf of those people. Dr. Plinio then sent a telegram to the Nuncio, Archbishop Carmine Rocco, asking him to convey to His Holiness the expression of our heartfelt support for such gestures (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 350, February 1980).

<sup>2242</sup> *Draft Constitution Anguishes the Country*, cit.

<sup>2243</sup> "TFP's Categorical Denial," *Correio do Povo*, Porto Alegre, 10/4/80.

This “openness” was supported and honored by the great majority, if not all, members of the national episcopate and, as far as I know, was unopposed by any of Brazil’s residential bishops.<sup>2244</sup>

Of all the trump cards that leftists had in their hands when the military regime ended, none were even remotely equal in importance to the advantages the left obtained in Catholic circles between 1964 and 1985.

The anticommunist reaction of the military regime, which, more than once, used excessive force in police crackdowns, was at the same time characterized by almost absolute ideological liberalism, which allowed the left every freedom to infiltrate education and the mass media.<sup>2245</sup>

The most striking feature of this policy of openness was the restoration of political freedom to leftists of all types, who had been restrained since the 1964 coup.

These benefits also extended to those subjected to repressive measures because of subversive activities and acts of terrorism.<sup>2246</sup>

## 2. I Neither Asked for or Opposed the ‘Openness’ Policy

The TFP neither asked for nor opposed the policy of openness but accepted it when it happened.

In several public statements in my name and not in the TFP’s (but with the general agreement of its ranks), I undertook to collaborate with the new order by suggesting possible solutions given the risks this opening would likely bring in its wake—as always happens in public life—and pointing out advantages that could accrue to the country.<sup>2247</sup>

Many saw the “opening-up” process reduced to purely practical aspects—opening prison doors to political prisoners and the country’s borders to those in exile.

For them, the opening-up process would be complete as soon as all those people were free, pampered and praised by the media.

According to this rudimentary concept, the opening-up process would not benefit the country but only those who attempted to act against its interests or at least in a manner suggesting they intended to do so.

Someone less blinkered might have objected quite rightly that the openness promoters aimed at much more than that. Since democracy was defined as the participation of all in the country’s government, fully implementing a democratic system would mean giving every citizen the share of

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<sup>2244</sup> “I Agree-Disagree,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/8/83.

<sup>2245</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2246</sup> “I Agree-Disagree,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/8/83.

<sup>2247</sup> “TFP: Bombs and Wayward Openness,” *Catolicismo* No. 358, October 1980.

decision-making power to which he was entitled according to democratic principles. Implementing democracy was an opening-up process.

Accordingly, every citizen had the right to speak, write, and do as he pleased, with freedom in continuous expansion and undefined contours.<sup>2248</sup>

To many, it seemed that once this freedom was established, every problem would eventually resolve itself.

They forgot that open-ended liberalization could neither create nor consolidate true freedom. The more everyone was encouraged to do as they wished, the more such liberalizations would lead us to anarchy, which would inevitably end in a terrible dictatorship.<sup>2249</sup>

As we will see further on, the left managed to reap all the benefits from the liberties thus obtained.<sup>2250</sup>

## Chapter XVI

# Liberation Theology: An Analysis of the Puebla Document Published in *Folha* Articles (1979)

### 1. Expectations from the New Pope

Amid these political ups and downs came the news of Paul VI's death on August 6, 1978.

He had announced that the Church was the victim of a mysterious “self-destruction” process, and the “smoke of Satan” had entered it.<sup>2251</sup>

The late pontiff - before whose remains I bowed down with due reverence - departed for eternity, leaving behind the process of self-destruction

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<sup>2248</sup> “PdQncP,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/8/80.

<sup>2249</sup> “Dictatorship in Openness?” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/16/84.

<sup>2250</sup> *I am a Catholic: Can I Oppose Agrarian Reform?* cit.

<sup>2251</sup> Allocutions of 2/7/68 and 6/29/72 respectively.



in progress and the smoke of Satan expanding. What would his successor think about the self-destruction and the smoke?<sup>2252</sup>

In 1974, the existing TFPs published their statement on Vatican *Ostpolitik* and Paul VI's policies toward communism, so different from those of Pius XII, his predecessor.

Until then, I had not heard, at least from a genuine Vatican source, even one pronouncement on communism to balance what might be called – to put it mildly – the one-sidedness of that *Ostpolitik*.<sup>2253</sup>

All the popes who preceded John XXIII taught and acted in such a way as to make it clear to all Catholics that collaboration with communism was impossible as it was fundamentally opposed to the Church's doctrine and mission.

It was public and notorious that during the pontificates of John XXIII and Paul VI, a significant change occurred concerning this question. The conviction that Christianity and communism are incompatible gradually eroded in the minds of countless Catholics. Many went so far as to affirm, unchallenged, that the Catholic Religion and communism could reconcile quite well.

What would John Paul II say and do?<sup>2254</sup>

## **2. In Puebla, a Very Serious Warning about Liberation Theology**

In January 1979, John Paul II came to Puebla in Mexico for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of CELAM.<sup>2255</sup>

He met with representatives of the Bishops' Conferences of the 22 Latin American nations and, among words of greeting and affection, issued a severe warning: Liberation Theology was cancer in the bowels of Latin American Catholicism. And, like any cancer, it would eventually metastasize.<sup>2256</sup>

John Paul II pointed out that those who proposed a Church that only considered the temporal sphere had a peculiar notion about Jesus Christ. They saw him “not [as] the true Son of God” but a “prophet,” a “herald of the Kingdom and God's love,” and more precisely, a prophet and messenger of a peculiar kingdom: a political leader revolted against Roman domination, a “revolutionary” involved in “class struggle;” in short, the “subversive of Nazareth.”<sup>2257</sup>

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<sup>2252</sup> “Clarity,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 8/16/78.

<sup>2253</sup> “Mango Tree, Desire and Duty,” cit.

<sup>2254</sup> “And John Paul II?” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/28/78.

<sup>2255</sup> RR 12/15/79.

<sup>2256</sup> “Lightning Bolt, Firefly, Silence,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/29/79.

<sup>2257</sup> “The Puebla Message: Notes and Commentaries-II,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/7/79.

Supported and spread even by clerics, liberation theologians strove as much as possible to implement a pastoral policy to secularize Church activities and relegate to the background what should always come first, i.e., catechesis, the moral education of the Christian people and the distribution of the sacraments—in short, the salvation of souls. Instead, they focused on the Marxist class struggle. The pope urged the bishops to take appropriate measures.<sup>2258</sup>

Latin America was the Church's great hope for the 21<sup>st</sup> century - everything here is Catholic, at least in name and intent.<sup>2259</sup> Thus, many saw the Puebla Conference as a beacon of hope.

If that Conference confirmed the hopes awakened here and there, it might reduce the threat of communism on one front it used most effectively: the Catholic environment. It also would make it possible to do something against the distorted picture of religion used to justify atheism and collectivism.<sup>2260</sup>

### 3. Closing One Leaf of the Door but Leaving the Other Open

I studied the pope's speech in Puebla and, in an article in the *Folha de S. Paulo*, expounded on the questions it raised and the joys and hopes I experienced reading it.<sup>2261</sup>

Naturally, the effect of John Paul II's words was far-reaching since the Catholic media was widely infiltrated by "apostles" preaching the double thesis that the Church exists only to serve man and that only Marx understood and correctly taught the true nature of man and how to serve him.

However, those who were aware of the current stance on this question and read John Paul II's message could not help but wonder whether this document, with its unequivocal anti-Marxist position, was also meant to condemn the communist regime as such without referring to Marx's philosophy.

After all, communism's latest twist was to admit that a non-Marxist could advocate its socio-economic system based on a non-Marxist philosophical foundation. But he was free to justify his socio-economic preferences with any religious or atheist system's philosophical reasoning he deemed most appropriate.

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<sup>2258</sup> "Lightning Bolt, Firefly, Silence," cit.

<sup>2259</sup> "CNBB Enigmas," *Catholicismo* No. 350, February 1980.

<sup>2260</sup> "As Long as She Marries Joseph," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/27/79.

<sup>2261</sup> "Say but a Word," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/1/80. On this topic, there were five successive articles in *Folha de S. Paulo* (3/26/79; April 7, 14 & 26, 1979; 5/19/79).

The pope's message had no such condemnation. In other words, it closed one leaf of the door to Marxist collectivism while leaving the other open to all sorts of non-strictly Marxist collectivism.<sup>2262</sup>

#### 4. Brazilian Bishops React to the Puebla Message

Ultimately, what mattered most was the almost unanimous reaction of the bishops assembled in Puebla to the pope's message.<sup>2263</sup>

In this sense, John Paul II's speech in Puebla was ineffective in Brazil for some time. Anyone who witnessed with consternation the support bishops and priests gave the various forms of agitation and protests that took place in the country in 1979 and subsequent years—as we shall see below—can attest to this.<sup>2264</sup>

## Part XI

### Books and Campaigns of Great Repercussion in the Eighties

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<sup>2262</sup> “The Puebla Message: Notes and Commentaries-IV,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/26/79.

<sup>2263</sup> “The Puebla Message: Notes and Commentaries-V (end),” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/19/79.

<sup>2264</sup> “On the Lightning Bolt and the Firefly: The End,” cit.

# Chapter I

## Sandinista Night, A Liberation Theology Event (1980)

### 1. Public Event at PUC, Confidential Meetings in Taboão da Serra

In early 1980, with the military regime's "opening-up" process in full swing, we witnessed an event organized by liberation theology leaders in the Auditorium of the Pontifical Catholic University (TUCA) in São Paulo, the Archdiocese of Cardinal Arns and under his patronage.

I heard that more private meetings would be held in Taboão da Serra,<sup>2265</sup> near São Paulo, on an old country estate belonging to the Chancery, where they had erected buildings of considerable size.<sup>2266</sup> These houses included the Paul VI Institute (Leader Training Center of the Archdiocese of São Paulo).

The conference – its internal agenda surrounded by great secrecy – was attended by more than 160 bishops, priests, nuns, laypeople of both sexes (sociologists, economists, pastoral workers, members of the Basic Christian Communities) and Protestant pastors from 42 countries.<sup>2267</sup>

They most likely dedicated the Taboão da Serra meetings to secret discussions of doctrinal and tactical matters while holding a *Theology Week* in the Auditorium of the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (TUCA, at 1024 Monte Alegre St.). The latter, organized by the Theology Department of that university's Institute of Special Studies, focused on "The Church in Latin America." It was held with daily public sessions from February 21 to March 1.

As Cardinal Arns mentioned in his opening speech, Theology Week was organized at the request of the Ecumenical Association of Theologians, which wanted to "get in touch" with members of the Basic Christian Communities and popular movements on São Paulo's outskirts.

TUCA's evening sessions reinforced the Taboão da Serra's conference since the topics discussed there were transmitted to activists of the Basic

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<sup>2265</sup> SD 2/29/80.

<sup>2266</sup> Message recorded for Bishop Mayer, 3/2/80.

<sup>2267</sup> The Fourth International Ecumenical Congress of Theology was promoted by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, an organization of left-wing Protestants and Catholics. The congress' general theme was "The Ecclesiology of the Basic Christian Communities." It was held from February 20 to March 2, 1980. A private security firm was hired to prevent strangers from obtaining access.

Christian Communities, who made up most of the participants.<sup>2268</sup>

## 2. Inciting Violence and Guerrilla Warfare in the Name of Catholic Doctrine

I sent TFP members to these public sessions as observers. They told me that this meeting went far beyond what anyone could have imagined, and the atmosphere was a call to civil war.<sup>2269</sup>

From beginning to end, the whole thing was nothing but an incitement to violence and guerrilla warfare in the name of Catholic doctrine and a new interpretation of the Gospel.<sup>2270</sup>

## 3. Dom Arns: Go to Nicaragua “to Learn”

The most scandalous session was on February 28, held in the PUC auditorium, and it became known as *Sandinista Night*.<sup>2271</sup>

The evening’s highlight was the delivery to Dom Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop of São Félix do Araguaia, of a Sandinista guerrilla uniform; he donned its jacket at once.

That session’s speakers—all fully committed participants in the Sandinista Revolution or members of the Nicaraguan government—made a cohesive and well-coordinated team. Their speeches consisted of appeals, sometimes more, sometimes less explicit, to congress’ participants, mostly connected with Catholic leftist movements, to redouble their efforts to push Brazil down the same path they managed to drag Nicaragua down.

On March 1, it fell to the Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns, to give the closing address that formally ended the congress held at TUCA. Here are his highly significant words:

How should we end this? There is no ending; the whole thing has just started. ... Let’s ask this question - enough theology, let’s take action: where are the groups ready to go to Nicaragua to learn? I will answer you: I know that groups in São Paulo are preparing their journey there with their bags packed and ready to go. They even have the permission of the Archbishop of São Paulo... (cf. *O São Paulo*, March 7 to 13, 1980).<sup>2272</sup>

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<sup>2268</sup> “On ‘Sandinista Night,’ Incitement to Guerrilla Warfare,” *Catolicismo*, July-August 1980.

<sup>2269</sup> SD 2/29/80.

<sup>2270</sup> Message recorded for Bishop Mayer, 3/2/80.

<sup>2271</sup> “Access to Embassies, the Decisive Test,” cit.

<sup>2272</sup> “On ‘Sandinista Night,’ Incitement to Guerrilla Warfare,” cit.

Our observers recorded all parts of the event because, as the sessions were public, we placed the tape recorder on the table without the lecturer's permission and took the tapes home when the session ended. We thus obtained all the material by sincere and straightforward means.

#### 4. Sandinism, a Fruit of Liberation Theology and the BCCs

Studying this material, it is evident that the radically egalitarian character of the Sandinista ideology left no room for doubt that Sandinism was either identical to or closely related to communism.<sup>2273</sup>

The Sandinistas represented a united front of various forces, with so-called "Christian revolutionaries" occupying a prominent position. These, in turn, formed a united front representing the Basic Christian Communities and similar movements.

Many priests acted as the Revolution's preachers and chaplains. This ecclesiastical revolution was theological and identified with liberation theology. Its grandmaster was Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, a participant of the Fourth International Congress of Theology and one of the speakers at the Theology Week's opening session. Incidentally, he was present at the session that became known as "Sandinista Night."

Thus, we found ourselves facing a new Church with a new structure and a new social morality, the doctrine of which was indistinguishable from Marx's teachings. Its goal was to inspire a socio-economic class struggle that would not shy away from armed conflict if necessary to pursue its aims. It was subversion by another name.<sup>2274</sup>

*Catolicismo* recorded the sessions (which, as mentioned, any member of the public in attendance was free to do) and published them with my comments in its July-August 1980 issue.

TFP caravans distributed this story throughout Brazil (36,500 copies). TFPs in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Spain reprinted my study of the *Sandinista Night* in their respective countries, which, together with the publication in Brazil, meant 80,500 copies.<sup>2275</sup>

#### 5. Dom Pele's Evasive Answers to Inconvenient Questions

Dom José Maria Pires, then Archbishop of João Pessoa, better known in Brazil as "Dom Pelé," presided over the panel in one of these public sessions in

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<sup>2273</sup> Message recorded for Bishop Mayer, 3/2/80.

<sup>2274</sup> "On 'Sandinista Night,' Incitement to Guerrilla Warfare," cit.

<sup>2275</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

the PUC auditorium. One of our members presented him with a list of seven questions I had drawn up.

Dom José Maria Pires received the questions, read them in silence, put on a troubled face and replied more or less: “These are very good questions, but there are many of them, and it is already late. I will try to answer by giving a general idea.”

He then gave a confusing answer to the first question and ignored the others, so the audience never heard the other six questions.<sup>2276</sup>

If these questions had been read out at the congress, they would have had the effect of a “bombshell.” This TFP bombshell was planted there without violating any State or Church law.<sup>2277</sup>

## Chapter II

# I am a Catholic: Can I Oppose Agrarian Reform? (1981)

### 1. “The Church and Land Issues” (IPT), a Land-Reform Neutron Bomb

Before the Taboão da Serra meeting, the CNBB published a ‘neutron bomb’ document titled “The Church and Land Issues” (IPT). It favored the compulsory division of large and medium-sized rural properties. One hundred

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<sup>2276</sup> Message recorded for Bishop Mayer, 3/2/80. Here are the questions presented to Dom José Maria Pires: “1. In Puebla, John Paul II condemned liberation theology in no uncertain terms. Does this congress admit this condemnation to be doctrinally consistent with Revelation and the Magisterium of the Church? 2. Does this congress admit that the abuses denounced by John Paul II took place? 3. If the first two questions are answered in the affirmative, what is the congress doing or intending to do to set to rights the liberation theology movement and the Basic Christian Communities? 4. Will the congress want to thank John Paul II for his corrections and express its intention to submit? 5. If questions 1 and 2 are answered negatively, does the congress intend to defend itself before John Paul II or to keep silent? 6. How would such a defense be presented? Would it be made public? 7. Would that defense be sent to John Paul II before his coming to Brazil, or will Brazilian leaders of the liberation theology movement await his arrival to issue a public statement or request an audience?”

<sup>2277</sup> SD 2/29/80.

and seventy-two bishops approved the document,<sup>2278</sup> and its publication created a huge stir all over the country.<sup>2279</sup>

The document's terms were so categorical that they could easily give an unsuspecting reader the impression that supporting agrarian reform, as it advocated, was an indispensable prerequisite for any Catholic wishing to remain faithful to Church teachings.<sup>2280</sup>

## 2. Unproven Facts, Doctrine Alien to Church Teaching

During my detailed analysis of “The Church and Land Issues” and the bishops’ numerous statements about the land problem in Brazil, I wondered if that mass of documents was consistent with Rome’s teachings.

This question was legitimate because the supreme magisterial authority belongs to Peter's successor and applies directly to each Christian.

When I compared these documents with Church teachings, I drew very worrying conclusions.

First of all, in many questions that it addressed, “The Church and Land Issues” favored pro-land reform conclusions not grounded in the teachings of the Supreme Magisterium imposed on all Catholics or the uniform teaching of the Church’s ordinary and universal Magisterium throughout the ages.<sup>2281</sup>

Moreover, I found discrepancies between CNBB’s and many Brazilian bishops’ pro-land-reform positions and the teachings of papal documents.

Finally, when supposedly assessing the situation in the real world, the document made mostly unsupported general statements or based on tenuous documentation.<sup>2282</sup>

The document clearly expressed its authors’ disapproval of medium—or large-sized properties while enthusiastically proclaiming its preference for small properties, which presumably could be fully managed by one family without the help of employees.

## 3. Basic Reforms

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<sup>2278</sup> “The Hyssop War,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 10/5//81.

<sup>2279</sup> “The Outburst Begins,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/20/81. This meeting of the Bishops’ Conference took place in Itaici from February 5 to 14, 1980.

<sup>2280</sup> *Warriors of the Virgin: The Reply of Authenticity – TFP Without Secrets*, Editora Vera Cruz, São Paulo, 1985, p.160, footnote 7. This distorted view of the fidelity owed to pro-land reform bishops’ erroneous opinions was widespread among prominent members of the national episcopate. One example is this statement by Dom Moacir Grechi, then bishop-prelate of Acre Purus: “The Christian businessman who fights agrarian reform directly opposes the Church and acts in absolute contradiction to his faith” *Folha de S. Paulo*, August 29, 1985).

<sup>2281</sup> Cf. Henricus Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Herder, Friburgi Brisgoviae, Editio 21-23, 1937, Nos. 1683 & 1792.

<sup>2282</sup> *I am a Catholic: Can I Oppose Agrarian Reform?* cit.



The IPT announced that the CNBB would publish another document demanding urban reform based on applying land-reform principles to urban lands in 1981. Similar reforms affecting industrial and commercial enterprises, which CNBB's leading representatives continued to advocate, were envisaged for a more distant future.<sup>2283</sup>

I also noticed, in passing, that the document contained many indications of Marxist doctrinal influence and implicit misrepresentations of Catholic doctrine (to put it mildly).<sup>2284</sup>

#### 4. The Right of Catholics to Oppose Land Reform

Meanwhile, in my quiet office, I was working on the book, *I am a Catholic, Can I Oppose Agrarian Reform?*

Thought out and written in my scant spare time over several months of reflection and study, this book was intended as a reaction to IPT to justify my claim that as a Catholic and a Brazilian, I had the right to oppose agrarian reform.

All Catholic intellectuals who disagreed with IPT, as I did, were entitled to this right, particularly farmers or owners of urban real estate, large or medium. Like small owners, the latter were entitled to keep and possess their legitimate property with a tranquil conscience.

At the same time, a young friend of mine, the brilliant economist Carlos Patricio del Campo, was working on an economic analysis of IPT to be published in the same book.<sup>2285</sup>

#### 5. Itaici-81's Vertiginous About-Face: Reforms Are Dropped from the Agenda

Contrary to our calculations, our studies took a long time and were more complicated than expected. Although we planned to publish the book before the bishops' general assembly of Itaici-81, it only came out in early March 1981.<sup>2286</sup>

As we started, we assumed that its publication would naturally provoke heated discussions proportionate to its theses' categorical nature, especially its distribution scope.<sup>2287</sup>

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<sup>2283</sup> "The Outburst Begins," cit.

<sup>2284</sup> "The Horse, the Witch, and the Little Son," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/22/80.

<sup>2285</sup> Carlos Patricio del Campo is an agricultural engineer from the Catholic University of Chile and an Agricultural Economics graduate (M.S.) of the University of California at Berkeley.

<sup>2286</sup> CNBB's 19<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was held in Itaici (Indaiatuba-SP) from February 17 to 26, 1981.

<sup>2287</sup> "The Outburst Begins," cit. In an article in *Folha de S. Paulo* titled "The Horse, the Witch, and Her Little Son" (5/22/80), Dr. Plinio announced in advance that he was "fine-tuning" a study on "The Church and Land Issues." In the article, he said he noticed many traces of Marxist doctrinal influence in the IPT, which was full of misinformation about Brazil's real situation. The few sources the Itaici document failed to cover its many claims; it made many gratuitous assumptions and vague and ambiguous generalizations.

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The CNBB, so impetuously pro-land reform in its Itaici-80 statement, surprisingly appeared to backpedal in its Itaici-81 statement.<sup>2288</sup>

The main topic addressed in 1981 was that of vocations to the priesthood...

There could hardly have been a more appropriate subject for that top ecclesiastical body meeting. However, seeing that it was common knowledge that pro-land-reform bishops held exactly the same doctrinal positions as in 1980, it was impossible not to feel uneasiness at their apparent indifference to the comprehensive reforms they had proclaimed as urgent and indispensable only a year earlier.

How were we supposed to explain this contradiction? What power, circumstance or event had intervened with sufficient force to bring about such a radical change of direction from one year to the next? I do not know.

### **6. *I am a Catholic; Can I Oppose Land Reform?* is widely distributed**

Thanks to the young TFP volunteers's selfless and admirable zeal, four editions of the book (29,000 copies) were sold – an excellent result.<sup>2289</sup> I am honored to note that I wrote this book in my capacity as president of the TFP National Council.<sup>2290</sup>

Strangely enough, despite the great number of copies sold, no one in the pro-land reform Catholic camp offered any rebuttal. March, April, May and June passing uneventfully.

### **7. Another About-Face: Bishops Incite the People to Armed Struggle**

Suddenly, from July 1981 (five months after Itaici-81 and four months after the publication of *I am a Catholic*), many bishops began firing off pro-reform statements.<sup>2291</sup>

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<sup>2288</sup> "Zigzag," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/21/81.

<sup>2289</sup> "The Horse, the Witch and the Little Son," cit.

<sup>2290</sup> "The Outburst Begins," cit.

<sup>2291</sup> "The Outburst Begins," cit. Here are three examples:

Dom Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop of São Felix do Araguaia: "The Christian ideal is identical with the ideal of socialism." "I am not canonizing Soviet or Cuban socialism, but there are positives: Cuba has shown us how to provide health and education for all its people .... Socialism, as practiced in Nicaragua, is a good way forward" (cf. *Jornal do Brasil*, June 17, 1981).

Dom Quirino Schmitz, Bishop of Teófilo Otoni: "When poor families are getting poorer, and the rich say...that all is well, the people must use aggressive means to claim their rights." Earlier, the prelate stressed that "Saint Thomas Aquinas... speaks about armed civil conflict as a strategy for the restoration of justice and freedom" (cf. *Jornal do Brasil* June 7, 1981).

Dom Ivo Lorscheiter, Bishop of Santa Maria and CNBB president: "In extreme cases, armed struggle is the only solution for achieving social change...and the Church must accept this as inevitable."

In other words, the bishops were driving a communist revolution in Brazil, and the book's scope and timeliness became more than obvious. While the CNBB had supported the left at Jango's time, it had now become its spearhead.

Theirs was a 'psy-revolution' that resorted to violence much less than to revolutionary psychological warfare techniques. Its vehicle was the so-called liberation theology, which kept festering despite John Paul II's condemnation in Puebla. The movement lost neither its intensity nor its revolutionary force.

The situation we faced was that if Brazil became communist, the CNBB would have helped it by opening the gates to land reform.

### 8. "We Are Catholic. The IPT Is Not"

When an opponent draws his saber in fencing, the other parries the blow.

Our new book, *I Am a Catholic, Can I Oppose Agrarian Reform?* was our effort to parry the land reform blow. It demonstrated beyond any doubt that the Itaici document was socialist and that IPT's doctrine was incompatible with sound Catholic doctrine.

The book's message was simple: "We are Catholic; your document is not."

Although not uttered in so many words, this was the book's underlying argument.<sup>2292</sup> The fact that we were Catholics was so notorious and beyond doubt that it was our best weapon.<sup>2293</sup>

In short, after sustaining blows from the TFP, the land reform movement once again reared its ugly head.

The CNBB had implied that a Catholic could not oppose land reform, so we reacted immediately by raising this question in the book's title: Can a Catholic oppose land reform, yes or no? Answer: a Catholic not only can but should oppose land reform!

It was the first book in which we touched the sore spot. There was no rebuttal.<sup>2294</sup> No one refuted nor condemned our arguments.<sup>2295</sup>

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He also said the clergy "cannot stand idly by...waiting for things to happen. We must be prepared to fight" (cf. *Jornal do Brasil*, July 5, 1981).

<sup>2292</sup> SD 1/22/81.

<sup>2293</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 1/18/81.

<sup>2294</sup> SD 2/15/91.

<sup>2295</sup> Little Dispatch 6/30/86.

## Chapter III

# Worldwide Denunciation of French Self-Managing Socialism Changes the West's History (1981)

### 1. The Socialist Project's Worldwide Scope: TFPs Join the Fray with a Message

In December 1981, the scope of our action expanded enormously with a great international campaign involving thirteen TFPs and reaching all seven continents.

The campaign started by launching a message to the Western public titled “What Does Self-Managing Socialism Mean for Communism: A Barrier? Or a Bridgehead?”<sup>2296</sup> It was a detailed and critical analysis of the self-management program proposed by François Mitterrand, France's newly elected President.

The thirteen TFPs at the time endorsed this work I had written and published it in their names.

To gauge the scope of this study, one needs to remember that the term *self-managing socialism* expressed a global propaganda novelty that became fashionable among the left before President François Mitterrand's election.

Every intellectual wishing to show he was “up-to-date” called himself a self-managing socialist.<sup>2297</sup>

In people's perception, the notion of “socialism” and “socialist” was so unappealing and archaic that it required a facelift – much as a graying lady would need to dye her hair.

The “self-managing” label was an attempt by socialists to revitalize and rejuvenate their image.<sup>2298</sup>

The *Projet Socialiste pour la France des années 80* [Socialist Project for France in the Eighties] -- the platform on which the Socialist Party disputed the elections—explicitly and unashamedly jumped on this movement's bandwagon.

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<sup>2296</sup> Interview with the weekly magazine *Isto É* (recording), 12/10/81

<sup>2297</sup> In Brazil, “self-management” fashion arrived with a bang. In this context, a well-known left-wing journalist, Paul Singer, stated: “After the amnesty allowed them to return to Brazil, militants exiled to Europe brought back their experience of the self-managing socialism that flourished in France (cf. “In Ten Years of Government, Nothing Happens by Accident,” in *Democracia Socialista*, March 13, 2013).

<sup>2298</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

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It might seem strange that thirteen associations, twelve from countries other than France, judged themselves competent to present a message to the Western public, commenting primarily on the recent French elections.

However, such an objection would only have occurred among people unaware of the true scope of Mitterrand's *Projet socialiste*, the nature of the French Socialist Party, and the inevitable and far-reaching repercussions that the socialist victory would have on the political and cultural life of the various peoples of the West.

The French genius, agile in getting the point across, lucid in thought, brilliant in expression, is ideally suited for discussing these problems on a level connecting them, via numerous historical cross-references, with the universal philosophy of the human mind.

Furthermore, one of the *Projet's* stated aims was to interfere in other countries' domestic politics and promote class struggle. It was to be feared that, once installed in power, the socialists would use state resources and France's international influence to achieve this goal.

When discussing the situation in France, the societies that signed this message were very aware that many problems festering more or less openly in their countries could be aggravated and even lead to a crisis due to the global impact of what would be happening in France.<sup>2299</sup>

The message warned about the incompatibility between the perennial principles of Christian civilization and the self-management reform the Socialist Party promised to implement in France in the 1981 elections. That gradual but all-encompassing reform would abolish the right to own real estate and eliminate private enterprises and schools; it would invade families, turn children against their parents, and ultimately control even people's leisure time, the interior furnishings of private homes and apartments, and every French citizen.<sup>2300</sup>

## **2. Socialists Show Their True Colors, Providing a Unique Opportunity**

How were the TFPs qualified to discuss a problem which, at first sight, appeared to concern only the French and should have been left to the French TFP to comment on?<sup>2301</sup>

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<sup>2299</sup> "The Double Game of French Socialism: Gradual in Strategy, Radical in Goal - What Does Self-Managing Socialism Mean for Communism: A Barrier? Or a Bridgehead?" <http://www.tfp.org/tfp-home/statements/what-does-self-managing-socialism-mean-for-communism-a-barrier-or-a-bridgehead.html>

<sup>2300</sup> "In France, the Fist Crushes the Rose," *Catolicismo* No. 376, April 1982.

<sup>2301</sup> "Self-Management, Raised Finger, and Gossip," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/11/81.

By the grace of Our Lady, I had been fighting the good fight on the side of the Counter-revolution for fifty years<sup>2302</sup> and had never seen socialists present their plans as clearly and accurately as in the French Socialist Party's documents.<sup>2303</sup> I had never heard revolutionaries express so clearly and crudely everything they should refrain from saying to avoid giving their game away. Nor had I seen a document in which they laid out their plans as explicitly as in the set of documents that served as the basis for our *Message*.

Our cry of alert would have made no sense without this documentation.<sup>2304</sup>

For reasons unknown to me, the French Socialist Party was now explicitly, precisely, coherently, and with extraordinary forcefulness, in successive lectures, manifestos, and documents, expressing everything the socialists deliberately kept back or took care to express only in vague and ambiguous terms.

The French socialists recognized and proclaimed the radical communist and trans-communist background of the self-management movement as their own.

For the first time in my life, I saw socialism entirely unmasked by its followers, with the great advantage that this unmasking was not due to some book by an obscure intellectual from which the party could quickly distance itself, claiming he did not represent their thinking. It was stated in public and official resolutions of the Socialist Party, which had won the elections.

That meant I had a unique opportunity to tear the mask of international socialism.

Thus, I set out earnestly to denounce socialism, convinced that my readers could see that the various approaches to socialism always shared the same doctrine, goals and modes of action despite their seeming differences. So, whatever you could say about one would always apply to all others.

We saw all this as an invitation to launch a great coup, which we did.<sup>2305</sup>

### **3. A Great Surprise: Six Pages, 52 Countries, 33.5 Million Copies**

I started writing the *Message* sometime after Mitterrand was elected president in May 1981.

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<sup>2302</sup> CSN 11/21/81.

<sup>2303</sup> Interview with American TFP supporters, 6/1/82.

<sup>2304</sup> CSN 11/21/81.

<sup>2305</sup> Interview with American TFP supporters, 6/1/82.

One of my aims was to nip the “self-management” movement in the bud. The self-management myth had spread, and the thing to do was to expose it while it was relatively small.<sup>2306</sup>

That job could not be done overnight. It was an extremely difficult document to write, and since I was busy with plenty of other things, it took me three or four months to finish.

Sometimes I would work on part of the document on a trip to some town in the interior, sometimes in São Paulo as usual. When in São Paulo, I worked on it almost every day.<sup>2307</sup>

When ready, the *Message* was published on December 9, 1981, simultaneously in the *Washington Post* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Later, it was printed in 45 major daily papers in nineteen countries of Europe, the Americas, and Oceania.

Summaries were later published in many countries worldwide.

The *Message* was published in fourteen languages with a total circulation of 33.5 million copies in 155 publications in 69 countries, with feedback received from 114 nations.<sup>2308</sup>

This great strike was launched by the existing TFPs, which numbered 13 at the time. They jointly addressed global public opinion by publishing the contents of a small book on six newspaper pages.

I am unaware of anything ever done quite as journalistically audacious and simultaneously in the major newspapers of the world’s leading countries.<sup>2309</sup>

Until then, self-managing socialism had not been questioned on an international stage as to its ultimate philosophical foundations.

The *Message* of the thirteen TFPs undeniably broke the general silence. By highlighting the French Socialist program’s incompatibility with the traditional doctrine of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church and seriously questioning the self-managing system, the *Message* contributed to interrupting its “honeymoon” with the public when it was gaining a favorable reputation.

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In Brazil, the *Message* was published a month later because the crisis in Poland in late 1981 strongly contributed to diverting world attention from the French Socialist Party’s electoral success.<sup>2310</sup>

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<sup>2306</sup> CM 4/28/85.

<sup>2307</sup> Interview with *Isto É* magazine (recording), 12/10/81.

<sup>2308</sup> “Self-Management, Raised Finger, and Gossip,” cit.

<sup>2309</sup> Interview with American TFP supporters, 6/1/82 and *A Man, a Life Work, An Epic Saga*, cit.

<sup>2310</sup> *BCCs... Much Talked About But Little Known—the TFP Describes Them As They Are*, Vera Cruz, S. Paulo, 1982. This crisis of 1981 risked triggering a third world war, because of Western reaction to a Soviet threat to intervene in Poland under the pretext of a growing number of strikes and union demands in late 1980.

#### 4. With Exceptions, Much of the Media Displayed Irritation

Before this publication, one might have expected that the Brazilian media would display an attitude of friendly expectation. That would have been the natural reaction to see a compatriot acting as a spokesman for many entities in many different countries in a worldwide publicity campaign.

Instead, we faced a completely different reaction. Rather than asking for information on the Message's content or its underlying premises, we were mostly attacked by a snarling pack of journalists who appeared to have been touched on the raw by our campaign.

They issued reports loaded with innuendo, completely ignored its actual subject matter and strove to drag the discussion into the realm of gossip.<sup>2311</sup> As soon as the news about the TFPs' campaign emerged, their cry was: "Where did they get the money?"

No one ever tried to find out where the Brazilian Communist Party's money came from or who paid the incomparably greater amounts required for Mitterrand's campaign in France, which enabled him to win the elections.

To the reporters who asked me about it, I replied that there were thirteen TFPs, each completely autonomous in its administrative, legal and economic affairs. Each was responsible for its own finances. To know where the money came from, they would have to ask the TFPs of each individual country.

I could only speak on behalf of the Brazilian TFP; the resources to spread the *Message* came from our organization's members and friends. No entity provides third parties with a list of its donors' names. If a competent Brazilian government agency entitled to demand such information had asked us for our donors' names, the Brazilian TFP would have responded without hesitation. However, that agency could not disclose the data to the public by its statutory obligation of secrecy.

I confronted these journalists: The Message of the TFPs dealt with a highly important subject—the situation of France, the Church's eldest daughter and one of the earth's most distinguished nations. From this nation, an ideology was spreading all over the world, which, for a number of reasons, had all the conditions to thrive.

The socialist victory in France put the entire Western world at risk. Did the media have no questions about this point? Were they not alarmed by this prospect? Not even a bit worried? According to the media, the world's greatest

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That drew so much attention that in those circumstances, any efforts to advertise the *Message* would have been futile. After the crisis, and after the atmosphere of overexcitement caused by it had ceased, the *Message* was published in the *Folha de S. Paulo* on January 8, 1982.

<sup>2311</sup> "Self-Management, Raised Finger, and Gossip," cit.



problem was to know where the TFPs had obtained the money for publishing their Message.

The fact that they raised the money question before discussing the document's merits showed that it irritated them. Why did they not refute it? Why did they refuse to discuss its merits?<sup>2312</sup>

There were exceptions to this reaction in some media, such as a *Folha* reporter who interviewed me and asked serious questions about the document's merits. But apart from this reporter, very few did so.

## 5. Published Throughout the World, Banned in France

When publishing the Message as a paid ad, the TFPs encountered no obstacles in any country. Newspapers opened up everywhere without any problems.<sup>2313</sup>

In France, however, the entire press pulled up the drawbridge, bristling like a porcupine prodded with the sharp end of a stick.<sup>2314</sup>

Except for socialist or communist papers, the TFPs offered the *Message* to six major French dailies, each with a circulation of over one hundred thousand copies.

Two of these newspapers formally committed to publishing the *Message*. This commitment was so firm that, given the text's imminent publication, an advertising agency received on December 11 the full price agreed by the parties for its services.

However, on January 6, 1982, the agency called the TFPs to inform them that the two dailies had just announced they would not publish the *Message*. No reason was given.

## 6. The French Government and the Left's Furious but Elusive Reactions

In the meantime, the *Message* was making its way around the world.<sup>2315</sup>

On December 12, 1981 (three days after its publication), the *International Herald Tribune* thus described the French socialist government's reaction to the analysis:

In Paris, authorized government sources said they were not prepared to react to this publication but were studying it. 'There is absolutely no panic, and we are much more interested in finding out who or what is behind this publication,' said ... a spokesman

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<sup>2312</sup> Telephone message, December 1981.

<sup>2313</sup> "In France, the Fist Crushes the Rose," cit.

<sup>2314</sup> CSN 1/16/82.

<sup>2315</sup> "In France, the Fist Crushes the Rose," cit.

for the Elysée [Palace], adding that there might be some reaction at a later date.

Of course, that reaction never came.<sup>2316</sup>

I had read the correspondence from Paris sent to the *Folha* by Mr. J. B. Natali the day before.

In the circles Mr. Natali heard from at the *Quai d'Orsay* (Foreign Ministry) and the PS (Socialist Party), reactions were intense. Surprisingly intense.

At the Quai d'Orsay, a spokesman said "TFP's criticism of the French government is unfair and excessive." But he added, "France will not lift even a finger against them because it respects freedom of expression."<sup>2317</sup>

Mr. Philippe Parrentir of the Socialist Party went even further: "The gentlemen of the TFP are raving lunatics."

A Latin American source of the Prime Minister's Foreign Relations service said, "For the French, an organization with this acronym (TFP) evokes most revolting associations because it reminds them of Petain's 'Work, Family, Fatherland.'"

Mr. Natali also addressed the price of the campaign, the great "mystery" kept by my clever and courageous friend Caio Xavier da Silveira, a Brazilian TFP director in Paris, concerning other cities where the *Message* was to be published, etc. Of course, all these were side issues intended to stir up controversy while diverting attention from the essential point, analyzing the *Message's* theses and arguments.<sup>2318</sup>

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<sup>2316</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2317</sup> The facts denied the Mitterrand government's much-vaunted "respect" for the freedom of expression, as shown by the French newspapers' overwhelming refusal to publish the *Message*. The French government machinery obviously exerted massive pressure to prevent the TFP analysis from circulating in France.

<sup>2318</sup> "About the Message of the TFPs," Letters from the Readers Section, *Folha de S. Paulo*, 12/15/81. Other noteworthy reactions are recorded in the book *A Man, a Life Work, an Epic Saga*. A summary of these reactions may give an idea of their nature:

"The leftist press is in a fury about the 'six pages of anti-Mitterrand ramblings' (*Le Canard Enchaîné*, Paris, December 16, 1981), attacking the 'indigestible stew cooked up by the Brazilian professor' (*Le Matin*, Paris, December 11, 1981), as well as the 'publicity for dictatorship' from this movement of 'enlightened fundamentalists' (*Libération*, Paris, December 19, 1981), and more insults in a similar vein.

"In a fit of wrath, the French Communist Party daily *L'Humanité* (December 11, 1981) asked, 'Who has permitted an obscure association, more or less Brazilian, to spend billions to spread idiocies designed to create a repugnant image of the government of the French Republic?... It is important to refrain from dramatizing this noisy international campaign.' Sources of the government and the Socialist Party say their line of conduct has been, on the one hand, to avoid systematically analyzing the doctrinal core of the message. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs member went so far as to say that 'in this kind of situation... it is always more advisable to say nothing' (*Jeune Afrique*, Paris, March 3, 1982).

"The Prime Minister, Pierre Mauroy, during a debate in the National Assembly, referring indirectly to the *Message*, said that "whenever the right wants to give itself a new image, it digs into the

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I was adamantly unwilling to help the debate descend to that level, so I wrote an article for the *Folha de S. Paulo*, presenting the essential theses in the TFPs Message.<sup>2319</sup>

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One day, I heard that the director of the Vatican Press Office had contacted a representative of the TFP office in the Eternal City, saying the Message made a lasting impression in Rome and asking for a copy.<sup>2320</sup>

### 7. Exorcizing Socialism as a Fruit of the French Revolution

French self-managed socialism was proclaimed to be entirely consistent with the trilogy of the 1789 Revolution: *Liberty – Equality - Fraternity*. According to this ideology, abolishing bosses and higher management in commercial enterprises was the logical consequence of establishing a republic. It referred to a company boss as a little king who remained within the company and to the king as the great boss the democratic republic had eliminated.

With this in mind, the French Socialist Party traced a genealogy of revolutions between the French Revolution and the final victory of self-managing socialism: 1848, 1871 and the Sorbonne in 1968.<sup>2321</sup>

The *Message* said that by proclaiming self-managing socialism as the continuation of the French Revolution, its followers denounced their mother, the Revolution.

They also revealed their plan with such convincing arguments that it sufficed to quote the words of self-managing socialists, as in an exorcism, to denounce the revolutionary monster to the world: “Socialism is the offspring of the French Revolution!”

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arsenal of anti-egalitarian and anti-Christian doctrines [sic], which produced the results we all know throughout the first half of this century. It would be a serious [mistake] if, as a result of mere hostility to the government, Democrats were to let themselves be deceived in this way by false new ideas” (*Le Monde*, Paris, 18 December 1981).

“In Buenos Aires, in a statement published in *La Nación* (January 20, 1982), the French Embassy accused the TFP of having ‘insulted’ the French government program and the ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity’ motto, “inscribed” on their country’s flag. (Where? There is no such inscription!). The Argentine TFP, in a statement in *La Nación* (January 24, 1982), asked the Embassy to specify where such ‘insults’ were to be found in the Message. Unsurprisingly, the Embassy did not reply.

<sup>2319</sup> “Self-Management, Raised Finger, and Gossip,” cit.

<sup>2320</sup> CSN 1/16/82.

<sup>2321</sup> “Self-Management, Raised Finger, and Gossip,” cit.

Indeed, something of the French Revolution translates Protestant errors in the spiritual sphere into the temporal sphere (cf. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, cit.).

And since people in our time are far more easily discomfited by what happens in the temporal sphere than in the spiritual sphere, an attack against the French Revolution would be far more damaging to the Revolution's general dynamism than any attack on Protestantism, which had long since faded and become meaningless as a revolutionary tool. This was the Achilles heel where the Revolution had to be attacked.

That is what the *Message* explained.

In short, the *Message* expressed the TFP's essential mentality, the Catholic spirit denouncing the Revolution, and reached the whole world.<sup>2322</sup>

### 8. *Laborem Exercens*, an Endorsement of Self-Managing Socialism?

The *Message* had just been finished when, on September 14, Pope John Paul II published the encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, which the mainstream media welcomed with extensive and favorable publicity.

The encyclical undoubtedly contained new teachings, although, for the most part, they were not analyzed and developed to their ultimate doctrinal and practical consequences.

As a result, the publicity about the document often created the impression that, according to John Paul II, the socialist regime advocated by the French Socialist Party found strong support in *Laborem Exercens*.<sup>2323</sup>

Was it to be understood as a Catholic version of French self-managing socialism?

This question was obviously of great importance, particularly from the Catholic perspective—that of the TFPs and the *Message* they published.<sup>2324</sup>

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<sup>2322</sup> SD 7/30/82.

<sup>2323</sup> "The Double Game of French Socialism: Gradual in Strategy, Radical in Goal - What Does Self-Managing Socialism Mean for Communism: A Barrier? Or a Bridgehead?" cit.

<sup>2324</sup> Footnote 29 of the *Message* addresses this question head-on. It summarizes the Church's traditional doctrine on the right to own property, to appropriate something that has no owner (*res nullius*), to receive remuneration for one's work, or to acquire inheritance by hereditary succession.

It quotes papal texts on this subject, such as Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno*, and Pius XII's radio message of September 14, 1952, on the occasion of the *Katholikentag* in Vienna.

It then explains that the State can own and administer property for reasons of common interest without exceeding the limits of its specific function and under special circumstances. However, the State must always leave the vast majority of assets in the hands of private individuals. That is the natural order of things.

In contrast, the French Socialist Party's *Projet* hypertrophied the collective ownership of social groups by turning each into a totalitarian mini-state vis-à-vis its members. The *Projet* calls self-managing property "private" even though it is largely imposed by the State and regulated at its discretion.

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The Message highlighted the doctrinal imperialism that marked the Socialist Party's and its government's foreign policy. It showed that expanding self-managing socialism internationally was an essential target of Mr. Mitterrand's diplomacy.<sup>2325</sup>

The French President had taken early steps in this direction by expressing support to the Nicaraguan government and El Salvador's guerrillas.<sup>2326</sup>

## 9. The Message Breaks Self-Management's 'Aura' with a Chain of Consequences

It is indisputable that French "self-managing" socialism was simultaneously the spearhead of the Revolution and a myth aimed at imposing a deceptive "third solution" between capitalism and communism.<sup>2327</sup>

Socialist self-management was the primary international goal, and the French Socialist Party promised to employ all the government's powers and leverage France's wealth, prestige and global influence.<sup>2328</sup>

In other words, the latest predator emerged from the communist den and the most deceptive, vile, cunning and glittering attempt at conquest ever launched by communist propaganda.

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The publicity around the encyclical *Laborem Exercens* appeared to suggest that John Paul II confirmed that private (non-state-owned) property should no longer be in the hands of individuals as an imperative of the natural order of things and that it was legitimate and even preferable that any property rights be exercised by groups of people rather than individual owners to better serve the social purpose of property. This was the essence of property's "socialization."

Accepting this interpretation of John Paul II's encyclical would inevitably lead to the conclusion that socialization starkly contrasted the principles of the traditional papal Magisterium and the encyclical intended to support the socialist regime advocated by the French Socialist Party.

It would have been painful for zealous Catholics to carry on their shoulders the responsibility of making such statements about John Paul II's encyclical since they would have incalculable consequences within the religious and socio-economic sphere.

Indeed, admitting such a contradiction between the said pontifical document and the traditional documents of the Supreme Magisterium of the Church would give rise to theological, moral and canonical consequences far beyond what could be imagined.

The French Socialist Party claimed a logical connection between the self-management reform of commercial companies, which they advocated, and reforms of the economy, education, the family, and man himself. French socialists regarded these multiple reforms as different aspects of a single comprehensive reform, and they were right: "*Abyssus abyssum invocat*" – "*Deep calls unto deep*" – (Ps. 41:8.).

Therefore, we could not see how a Roman Pontiff could open the floodgates to the self-management advocated by French socialists by implicitly or explicitly supporting that comprehensive reform.

<sup>2325</sup> "Self-Management, Raised Finger, and Gossip," cit.

<sup>2326</sup> CSN 1/16/82.

<sup>2327</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2328</sup> "The Double Game of French Socialism: Gradual in Strategy, Radical in Goal - What Does Self-Managing Socialism Mean for Communism: A Barrier? Or a Bridgehead?" cit.

Then came the campaign to spread the *Message*.<sup>2329</sup>

Without camouflage, communist imperialism would be unable to advance around the world.

Responding to this strong warning, French public opinion realized that self-managing socialism was nothing but camouflage and rejected it at the provincial elections of March 1982.

In turn, rejection of the self-managing socialism charade in the country where it emerged served as a warning to all those around the world who let themselves be seduced and contaminated by it after the socialist-communist election victory of 1981.

This contamination was spreading smoothly and unchecked. The first document published internationally against it - the *Message* of the TFPs - appeared as star tenors and primadonnas of the left still sang arias praising self-management everywhere.

In reply to the *Message*, they muted their voices somewhat. More subtle than Mitterrand and his team, they realized that sectors of the public disagreed with them. With the wake-up call and its failure in France, the “self-management” movement worldwide ground to a halt.<sup>2330</sup>

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<sup>2329</sup> SD 7/30/82.

<sup>2330</sup> “Trick, Grimace or Death Throw,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/15/82. Strongly countered by the effects of the *Message*, the self-management movement could not prevent a process of decay. Eleven years later (1992), the Socialist Minister of Housing, Marie-Noëlle Lienemann, stated: “The Socialist Party is dead. We must create a new structure, a new party” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, October 22, 1992). These statements amounted to a death certificate for the self-management dream of French Socialists, a demise confirmed by replacing the radical 1981 program with the nondescript *New Horizons* program adopted by the French Socialist Party Congress on December 15, 1991. This document read: “It is no longer a question, as was demanded by the old-fashioned doctrine of self-management [sic!] of eliminating entrepreneurs to replace them with leaders appointed by the State or elected by grassroots... Employees representatives should not replace owners in company management” (cf. Michel Charzat, *Un nouvel horizon*, pp. 94, 96 and 97). It was self-managing socialism declaring its death in the voices of its own leaders and supporters.

Fast forward to 2014: Manuel Valls, the Socialist Prime Minister of the Hollande government, advocates changing the party’s name to remove the word “socialist” (cf. Clovis Rossi, in *Folha de S. Paulo*, April 3, 2014). It is important to remember that, due to the loss of importance of the French Communist Party, which became a small party with very little support among the electorate, the Socialist Party had become the great hope of the French left.

On a later occasion, Manuel Valls went even further, lamenting the terminal state of the French left, of which the Socialist Party was the leading representative. In a statement made at the meeting of the National Council of the Socialist Party on June 14, 2014, he said, on the subject of the preferences expressed by the voters, that we could be entering “an era in which the left may also disappear ... yes, the left may die ... We feel we have come to the end of something, perhaps even the end of a historical era for our party ... The left has never been as weak as it is now” (cf. *Journal du Dimanche*, June 14, 2014, *La Croix*, June 23, 2014).

The blow dealt to “self-managing” socialism by Dr. Plinio’s *Message*, at a time when the Socialist Party was at the height of its political prestige, played a key role in the overthrow of socialist influence and the left in general.

## Chapter IV

# Basic Christian Communities: Much Talked About but Little Known — the TFP Describes Them as They Are (1982)

### 1. Basic Christian Communities: CNBB's 'Long Arm' to Socialize Brazil

While the self-management myth slowly lost ground globally, we saw in Brazil a developing situation where the CNBB increasingly established itself as the only force able to bring about basic reforms in the temporal sphere.<sup>2331</sup>

I was convinced it was the only force able to lead Brazil toward extreme socialization, if not communism. By ecclesiastical initiative, CNBB's program would place Brazil a small step away from denying the natural order created by God.

This overthrow of the natural order implied a denial of the supernatural order and all religion.<sup>2332</sup>

However, it would have been too out of character for the CNBB to promote that overthrow directly, so it started promoting organizations that were not entirely religious but civic associations with a secularist flair. The latter flourished in nearly all sacristies, with propagandists among the clergy and in male and female religious orders.

These organizations were the so-called BCCs, the Basic Christian Communities. They were CNBB's great weapon and most efficient smokescreen to mask its actual goals.<sup>2333</sup>

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<sup>2331</sup> The term "basic reforms" was coined in the Jango era to refer primarily to the Marxist-inspired agrarian, urban, and business reforms that João Goulart had wanted to impose on Brazil.

<sup>2332</sup> The natural order created by God is the foundation of society and civilization rightly understood, and is moreover closely linked to the practice of the true Religion, and therefore to the salvation of souls. For this reason, Our Lord summed it up and gave us the Ten Commandments, which, among other things, include two that protect private property - the 7<sup>th</sup> (*you shall not steal*), and the 10<sup>th</sup> (*you shall not covet your neighbor's goods*) - against which the BCCs were exhorting people to rebel. The Apostle St. Paul makes it clear that the pagans themselves have the natural law inscribed in their hearts, that their conscience reminds them of it, and that their actions will be judged in accordance with it (cf. Romans 2:14-16).

<sup>2333</sup> SD 8/27/82.

## 2. A Disguised Communist Party with Religious Substructure

The BCCs were a tool for achieving among the lower classes what the *Cursillos* were achieving with the bourgeoisie. They usually addressed themselves to workers, forming small groups of families.<sup>2334</sup>

All this was probably aimed at introducing in Brazil a self-managing socialist regime more or less like Mitterrand's.<sup>2335</sup> In several locations, they even introduced so-called "self-managing farms."<sup>2336</sup>

The BCCs were a communist party in disguise but were not affected by repression thanks to their good camouflage.<sup>2337</sup>

BCC leaders, militants or recruits drew the same socioeconomic conclusions from Religion (reinterpreted by liberation theology) as the Communist Party and the Socialist Party drew from irreligion.

However, the fact that the BCCs rested their case for revolution on a religious foundation meant they enjoyed unique characteristics and advantages the atheist revolution did not possess. The religious motivation driving BCCs' subversion gave them a chance of success, at least in the long run, something Lenin had not had.<sup>2338</sup>

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<sup>2334</sup> SD 2/29/80.

<sup>2335</sup> "Preposterous Suspicion and Rash Judgment," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/15/82.

<sup>2336</sup> Interview with *IstoÉ* magazine (recording), 12/10/81.

<sup>2337</sup> Dispatch on BCCs 3/14/80.

<sup>2338</sup> A highly significant article by Valentina Andrónova, the Kremlin expert responsible for monitoring the performance of the Latin American Catholic Left, emphasized this religious motivation. Although on the opposite side of TFP's political spectrum, the author showed an understanding of the Basic Christian Communities that differed little from Dr. Plinio's. Her article was titled "Basic Christian Communities: A New Form of Social Protest Amongst the Faithful" (*America Latina* magazine, Editorial Progreso, Moscow, April 1985, cited in *Catolicismo* No. 421, January 1986). She said:

"The renewal of the Catholic Church, initiated by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), is taking on radical forms in Latin America. ... In the context of changes in Latin American Catholicism, the appearance of the Basic Christian Communities (BCCs) is the most significant phenomenon" (p. 4).

"The BCCs bring their religious concepts to the revolutionary movement... They have a new religiosity, rich in democratic and revolutionary content" (p. 16).

"These communities express a desire for wider participation of the laity in the activities of the bishops, better representation in pastoral councils and parishes, and more emphasis on equality between the laity, members of religious orders, and priests. They also demand joint actions directed at the liberation of the poor instead of a 'justification of those opposed to the interests of the oppressed class'" (p. 8).

"They join forces to build roads and schools or water supply systems. Together, they seek to defend their land against landowners' claims or struggle for land reform, demanding better working conditions, fair pay, and transportation to and from work. They are developing a sense of collectivism and mutual help. The old religion, based on submission and obedience, is being relegated to the background. The faithful are replacing it with a religion linked to their ... struggle for liberation" (p. 8).

"The progressive religious who have chosen to work with the Basic Christian Communities are going even further by drawing from the ideas of [Paul] Freire the most important aim: the need to develop the political consciousness of the faithful" (p. 6).



### 3. BCCs' Electoral Power: 'Infallibility' Even for Sacristans

The media once presented the BCCs as an emerging segment of the electorate with considerable power.<sup>2339</sup>

That was because Catholics in large numbers erroneously felt bound by the political opinions of their priests.

These Catholics believed that anything the pope said must be infallible because he was infallible. Consequently, they reasoned that a bishop who interprets the pope's opinion must also be infallible. If so, the same applies to the priest, who interprets the bishop's opinion. So, the priest must also be infallible.

This attitude was so deeply entrenched that once, in a pretty heated discussion I had with a man on this subject, I was told more or less this: "Dr. Plinio, do you want to know something? I even think like the sacristan at my church. Because the sacristan interprets the thought of the priest, so if I think like the sacristan, I will be thinking like the pope." Of course, that was to carry naivety and lack of sense to an extreme, but that's how far that man went.

Based on this distorted view of fidelity to the Church, the CNBB persuaded voters to vote for the "basic reforms."

How did they do that? They used the BCCs, through which CNBB and liberation theology clerics could act without overexposing themselves.<sup>2340</sup>

### 4. How the Idea of a Book Exposing the BCCs Was Born

Given the above, the only way to interrupt this development was to expose these Basic Christian Communities.

Would that suffice? No. We had to show their power, how they connected to the leftist ecclesiastical structure, and what that structure created them for.

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"The new interpretation of the Bible has given impetus to the development of social consciousness among believers, to take measures aimed at creating a society of brothers and sisters, that is to say, a classless society, as they understand it" (p. 10).

"In the course of studying the capitalist system, many ideologues of the Basic Christian Communities movement concluded that Marxist thought helped them to understand it better. ... This is how we must understand the statement of the Brazilian theologian L. Boff that 'the members of the Christian Basic Communities have begun to take possession of Marxism to use it as a weapon in self-defense in their fight to break free from the capitalist system'" (p. 10).

"The National Bishops' Conference [CNBB] is resolutely following a path of renewal" (p. 15).

"The biggest shift to the left is taking place in Basic Communities in Brazil and Central America" (p. 10).

"In the territories liberated by the guerrillas [of El Salvador and Nicaragua], the BCCs are acting as a completely new church that openly declares its solidarity with the fighters" (p. 13).

<sup>2339</sup> *The BCCs, Much Talked About but Little Known—the TFP Describes Them as They Are*, cit.

<sup>2340</sup> Lecture to Caravans 8/26/82.

It would also be necessary to indicate those who could have done something about it but chose to do nothing – not only among the clergy but also the bourgeoisie and intellectual classes; in short, all those still able to act in one way or another.

They needed to be reminded of the grave danger inherent in their inertia and its dangerous consequences. In Brazil, things were happening as though there was a fourth power or branch in addition to the Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary. In many circumstances, that ‘fourth power’ outweighed the three branches, and that power was the press.

In turn, this fourth power was entirely at the service of another parallel power more significant than all others. It mapped out programs for the government and society, intervened everywhere with a decisive voice, and never bothered to hide that it was the fifth power: The CNBB.

There was no better way to expose that situation than launching a book.

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What circumstances gave rise to the idea of writing this book? It was written after a long and silent preparation period based on seemingly unrelated TFP studies.

Two TFP members, the brothers Gustavo Antonio Solimeo and Luiz Sérgio Solimeo, who had no close or immediate link to these concerns of mine and had not been asked to do so, began studying the basic communities on their initiative.

For years, they collected documentation and occasionally reported on their studies to me.

I listened and saw their arguments were intelligent, well-reasoned, well-presented, and lucid. They all pointed toward a particular conclusion but initially paid no special attention to their work.

They worked tirelessly for five years, and I knew they were assembling a monumental documentation.

When they reached a certain point, they proposed writing a book. I emphatically agreed and said many of our members should revise the text and that the book should consider various political circumstances, objectives, and targets even before it was handed to me.

When reading the study, I noticed a magnificent and providential connection between this work and the questions I was preoccupied with.<sup>2341</sup>

## **5. Distribution Campaign Covers 1,510 Cities**

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<sup>2341</sup> SD 8/27/82.

That is how Gustavo Antonio Solimeo, Luiz Sérgio Solimeo and I wrote *The BCCs – Much Talked About but Little Known—the TFP Describes Them as They Are*.<sup>2342</sup>

In Part One, I showed how the BCCs are the instrument of the Catholic left to sow discontent in the population (especially among manual workers), stir up agitation and force public authorities to implement the trilogy: agrarian, urban and business reforms.

Part Two informed the Brazilian public about the BCCs, their doctrine, organization, and methods for recruiting new members and deploying them to change society.

For this purpose, the two brothers had collected the data right from the horse's mouth, so to speak: BCCs' writings describing and defining themselves to their members and the public.

The book supplemented that information with news items from papers and magazines entirely unsuspected of distorting facts to make the BCCs appear unfavorable.

Since August 1982, TFP members and volunteers distributed the book on caravans that visited 1,510 cities throughout Brazil.<sup>2343</sup>

## **6. Liberation Theology Becomes Unpopular, A Hard Blow for the BCCs**

As a result of our denunciation, the BCCs underwent a process of erosion<sup>2344</sup> that eventually made them look like a punctured ball from which the air slowly escaped.<sup>2345</sup>

People who see beyond the surface do not doubt that the book considerably made the (already challenging) expansion of the BCCs much more difficult, particularly in some environments.

Moreover, every organization that encounters difficulties in its expansion efforts always faces an internal crisis due to feelings of discouragement among its members. Such discouragement provides fertile soil for doubt, which leads to desertion.

As a result, the liberation theology current was shaken, and its survival in Brazil was seriously threatened.<sup>2346</sup>

Many people realized that, once again, the TFP attacked what no one else dared to attack. It said what no one else dared to. It also stopped the advance of a

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<sup>2342</sup> The book went through six editions, a total of 72,000 copies, in addition to the 180,000 copies of a popular version that condensed the accusations in the form of a comic strip.

<sup>2343</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2344</sup> Symposium 7/4/84.

<sup>2345</sup> ENSDP, May 1985.

<sup>2346</sup> RR 3/31/84.

movement that would have continued to ravage Brazil’s most substantial and precious essence, which makes it what it is – its Roman Catholic and Apostolic character and traditions.<sup>2347</sup>

One could hardly exaggerate the book’s decisive influence on the BCCs, immunizing large population sectors against this movement. The book played with the BCCs the same role as Dom Mayer’s pastoral letter on *Cursillos’* deviations and *In Defense with Catholic Action*: a pin that punctured a rubber balloon.<sup>2348</sup>

The left set up the BCCs as their flagship, and we knocked a hole into their ship’s bottom.<sup>2349</sup>

### 7. Backlash: A Forged Issue of *O São Paulo*

Given our exposé’s success, we were unsurprised as the inevitable counter-attack ensued.

It came as “breaking news” in the press of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro about an alleged TFP involvement in printing a fake issue of the official archdiocesan weekly, *O São Paulo*.

We had nothing to do with this affair, and the accusation was highly implausible. When questioned by the press about the matter, even His Eminence Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns had the good sense to declare: “I do not want to blame anyone without proof. The TFP has always courageously presented its documents openly, signed with their names, which is why I have always respected this organization” (*Folha de S. Paulo*, August 25, 1982).

After this declaration, the artificially contrived “scandal” seemed to fizzle out – there was no more to say.

### 8. The Former President of the Justice and Peace Commission and a Rash Conclusion

Like a wasp, malevolence knows better how to fly than to walk.<sup>2350</sup>

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<sup>2347</sup> SD 8/27/82.

<sup>2348</sup> RR 5/5/84. After that, the Catholic left tried to revive the BCCs, conducting regular meetings and holding out artificial incentives, but nothing proved effective. The balloon was punctured. The most recent meeting was held in Juazeiro do Norte (from January 7 to 11, 2014), accompanied by great media ballyhoo. They talked about the BCCs’ resurrection. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the CNBB announced exultantly on its website: “For the first time in its history, an interchurch meeting of the Basic Christian Communities (BCCs) has received a message from a pope. On December 17, Pope Francis sent a letter to the participants of the 13<sup>th</sup> Interchurch Meeting of the BCCs, which starts tonight in Juazeiro do Norte.” After the meeting, it appears that the resurrected returned to the tomb. There was no more talk of the BCCs. *Catolicismo* analyzed this subject in depth in its April 2014 issue and @ <http://ipco.org.br/ipco/noticias/um-festival-de-marxismo-o-congresso-das-cebs#.VEWp55UtDDc> (site of the Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira Institute).

<sup>2349</sup> Symposium 7/4/84.

<sup>2350</sup> “TFP Launches New Book: The Wasps of Malevolence Fly About,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/3/82.

Imagine my amazement at reading, in two issues of the *Folha*, the wild statements of Mr. José Carlos Dias (the former chairman of the Justice and Peace Commission of the São Paulo Archdiocese), who claimed to have discovered clues that could well lead to show that the forgeries of *O São Paulo* and other texts emanating from the Catholic left could have come from the TFP!<sup>2351</sup>

You had to be completely oblivious of the significance and natural weight within the sphere of ideas, currents of thought and action that cause a country to go this or that way, of an exposé, document or book to imagine that an organization that had long been a high-profile and very active and vocal opponent of the Catholic left could have hoped to profit in any way by attacking its adversary with a few drops of dirty water, namely, a falsified issue of a small newspaper and a few forged leaflets.

For anyone with a lucid and serene idea of the book's cultural significance and the fundamental importance of culture within the nation's "thinking" classes, such a hypothesis would have been too absurd to consider.

Mr. José Carlos Dias did not understand it that way and contributed to showing the absurdity of his allegations by eagerly following police investigations at *Artpress*, the printing house belonging to TFP member Mr. Fausto Borsato, where the book on the BCCs had been printed.

The newspapers reported that the police had found that *Artpress* had no machines capable of printing genuine or forged copies of *O São Paulo*. However, Mr. José Carlos Dias still was not ready to give up.

He and Bishop Luciano Mendes went – accompanied by the press - to present that same forged issue of *O São Paulo* to the Minister of Justice, Dr. Abi Ackel, and via the latter, to the country's President, General João Batista Figueiredo.<sup>2352</sup>

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I was not interested in Mr. José Carlos Dias. I cared about the public whose minds he sought to poison against the TFP precisely when it launched its scathing exposé on the Basic Christian Communities.

So, I wrote an article for *Folha de S. Paulo* refuting these charges.

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<sup>2351</sup> These reckless statements of the former President of the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Archdiocese of São Paulo were published in the *Folha de S. Paulo* on September 8 and 9, 1982.

<sup>2352</sup> A few days later, newspapers reported that the investigations eventually led to the discovery of the printing house in Belo Horizonte, where the forged issue of *O São Paulo* had been printed. In a statement to the *Folha* (on September 18, 1982), the Chief of Police, Dr. Carlos Antonio Sequeira, asserted that no proof of any wrongdoing on the part of the TFP had been found, definitely closed the case and ended the evil speculations. Those who had spread the preposterous and insulting slander against us were publicly discredited in the most humiliating way.

In the article “A Preposterous Suspicion and a Rash Judgment” (September 15, 1982), I asked whether Mr. José Carlos Dias was aware of the sin of rash judgment.

As I also pointed out to him, this sin is hugely aggravated in a case where rash judgment is published twice in the newspaper with the largest circulation in São Paulo, the city with the largest population in Brazil.

As president of the TFP National Council, I had to clarify this.<sup>2353</sup>

## Chapter V

# The Falklands War

## (1982)

### 1. Russia’s Long Arm: Soviet Naval Presence Near the Falkland Islands

Along with the BCCs' agitation, the Falklands War was another South American event I was concerned about.<sup>2354</sup>

Since this matter was strictly Argentine-English, we had no reason to intervene.

However, at some point, it became clear that Communist Russia had a stake in this conflict and supported one side. Russia had an agenda and wanted to take advantage of this conflict. We did not want Russia to profit from this situation, so I felt compelled to take a stand.<sup>2355</sup>

The presence of a Russian naval force in the South Atlantic—so far from its Arctic waters—and precisely at this critical time threatened Argentina, England, and the entire subcontinent of South America.

Argentina would likely ask the Soviet naval force for help against the English.<sup>2356</sup> If that happened, the Soviets would inevitably impose their

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<sup>2353</sup> “A Preposterous Suspicion and a Rash Judgment,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 9/15/82.

<sup>2354</sup> This war started on April 2, 1982, when Argentina, in a surprise military operation, invaded the Falklands archipelago and expelled the British garrison. England responded by mobilizing the Royal Navy and starting a war in the South Seas.

<sup>2355</sup> SD 4/6/82.

<sup>2356</sup> Dr. Plinio was particularly worried by news items like this one, published in the dailies *El Día* of Montevideo and *El Universal* of Caracas on April 6, 1982: “British military superiority may force Argentina to ask for help from the USSR or accept such help, offered through the Russian embassy, as

conditions, such as a Russian condominium with Argentina in the Falklands and the Argentine left's participation in the government.<sup>2357</sup>

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This symbolic Russian naval presence awakened hopes that Moscow and its satellites would provide at least diplomatic and economic support for Argentina. Accordingly, the people's consensus immediately saw a connection between the Russian and Chinese ambassadors' successive visits to the Argentine Foreign Ministry and the ostentatious rapprochement between General Galtieri's (until then militantly anticommunist) government with Argentine leftists as a direct consequence of the islands' occupation.<sup>2358</sup>

Anyone would say that General Galtieri would be the last person to accept such support, as he pressed ahead with anticommunist repression since he was sworn in.

Yet he was suddenly paying courtesy visits and appearing arm in arm with the Communist ambassadors of Russia and its satellite nations as the government in Beijing showered him with flattery and praise. He opened the gates for a return of exiled *Montoneros* terrorists and started cooperating with Argentina's Peronists and all kinds of leftists.<sup>2359</sup>

These small groups of extreme leftists, until then persecuted and contained, began to show up in meetings at Casa Rosada and in high-profile missions abroad.<sup>2360</sup>

All this confirmed my conviction that the drama whipped up around the Falkland Islands was nothing but a smokescreen designed to facilitate the entry of Russian Communist troops on the continent.<sup>2361</sup>

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Soviet submarines wait outside Argentine waters, showing how quickly this support could be made available."

<sup>2357</sup> Interview with *Letras em Marcha* magazine, No. 127, May 1982.

<sup>2358</sup> "Brazil, Argentina and England Face a Common Enemy: Soviet Power," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/7/82.

<sup>2359</sup> "Hypotheses, Hypotheses..." *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/22/82.

<sup>2360</sup> "Just for Essequibo?" *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/1/82. Many years later, an article published in *O Estado de S. Paulo* on April 1, 2012, by its Buenos Aires correspondent, Ariel Palacios, revealed that the Argentine military junta had planned to sink British ships in Gibraltar without claiming responsibility for the attack. This plan, known as "Operation Algeciras" (Algeciras is a Spanish city near Gibraltar), was to be carried out by a group of former *Montoneros* guerrillas and members of the Argentine military who traveled to Spain for this purpose. The explosives were sent to Madrid by diplomatic pouch, packed into a car and driven to that city in southern Spain by the Argentine group. However, the Spanish police suspected these persons, found the explosives and arrested them, so the mission failed.

<sup>2361</sup> Dispatch with *Argentines* 2/3/92. Eleven years later, Fidel Castro confirmed that also Cuba had offered troops to the Argentine government. In an interview with the Buenos Aires newspaper *Ambito Financiero* (July 26, 1993), he said "that his country offered to send troops to support Argentina during the 1982 Falklands War and suggested that all countries wishing to help should form a battalion, a 'coalition of Latin Americans'. "We encouraged them not to surrender but to form a Latin American coalition to continue the war," he explained (*Catolicismo*, No. 520, April 1994).

## 2. The Rights of Our Lord Jesus Christ Supersede National Rights

If Russian troops landed in Argentina on the pretext of collaborating in its defense, who would force them to leave?

Was Argentina prepared to pay such an immense political price to enforce its rights over the Falklands? As a Catholic, Brazilian, and South American, I could only answer that the game would not be worth the candle.<sup>2362</sup>

The TFP wanted the Russians expelled from the South American scene. That was what we were fighting for.

We had no right to ignore the fact that battleships of that damned granddaughter of all Revolutions, the communist sect that seized power in Russia, were stationed so close to us. That was the central argument of the statement we issued with the Argentine TFP, and the same idea was behind all we did throughout these events.

Over national rights, we aimed to enforce Our Lord Jesus Christ's right to be the King of the whole world and to see that God's enemies were defeated. There could be no discussion on this point.<sup>2363</sup>

## 3. The Argentine TFP's Courageous and Lucid Statement

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President Gaddafi - who led and supported global terrorism - provided substantial assistance on that occasion by secretly sending Argentina weapons worth more than 70 million pounds, including 120 SAM-7 Soviet missiles, as reported by *The Sunday Times* (May 13, 1984), which had heard it from the Libyan ambassador in Buenos Aires.

That ambassador said, "Colonel Gaddafi has offered unconditional and unlimited help to Argentina." He added, "We were preparing to supply weapons to Argentina for as long as the conflict lasted" (cited from the said newspaper).

In its November 12, 2006 issue, the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* published secret documents released by the Brazilian government concerning the Falklands War. These documents reveal that "the Brazilian government monitored with concern the Soviet military aid provided to Argentina in 1982." They speak of a supply of arms and enriched uranium to Argentina and refer to the "anxiety of Brazilian authorities with over Argentina's rapprochement with countries governed by communists or politically close to the Soviet Union, particularly regarding weapons supply, availability of air bases and enriched uranium deliveries."

The São Paulo paper also reported that the Russians were trying to disguise the weapons' Soviet origin by delivering them via other countries such as Libya (cf. *Catolicismo*, No. 523, July 2007).

During an interview by Igor Gielow, a *Folha de S. Paulo* reporter, KGB's second in command, General Nikolai Sergeievitch Leonov, while attempting to camouflage the overall extent of Soviet participation in supporting Latin America's communist revolutionary movements, said: "We were ready to go very far, much farther than people think" (cf. *FolhaOnline*, January 13, 2008).

<sup>2362</sup> Interview with *Letras em Marcha* magazine No. 127, May 1982.

<sup>2363</sup> SD 4/28/82.



During a conversation with leaders of the Argentine TFP, it was agreed they would issue a statement<sup>2364</sup> on TFP's position concerning Buenos Aires' and London's diplomatic dispute on sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.<sup>2365</sup>

The Argentine TFP did so in a document published prominently in the daily *La Nación* on April 13 of that year.<sup>2366</sup>

This document had a significant impact on Argentina. It explained very clearly the game being played<sup>2367</sup> and left no doubt that if Argentina allied with Russia or accepted military support, it would lose much more than it would gain.<sup>2368</sup> It would risk its independence on the mainland to recapture a few islands.

The Argentine TFP affirmed Argentina's sovereignty over the Falklands but stressed that its worst enemy was not their occupier but Russia, which could occupy the whole country.<sup>2369</sup> If Russia intervened on the Argentine side, the United States would almost certainly intervene on the English side, triggering an involvement of all great alliances.

In short, the Falkland Islands would have unleashed World War III, and Argentina would have become part of the Soviet bloc.<sup>2370</sup>

#### 4. A Rash of Local Conflicts Risks South America's "Vietnamization"

To anyone reading the newspapers, it is evident that the growing deterioration of Anglo-Argentine relations could force the Brazilian government to adopt positions that would bring it closer to actual involvement.<sup>2371</sup>

Soviet Russia was promoting simultaneous wars to bring chaos into the world's largest block of Catholic countries.<sup>2372</sup>

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<sup>2364</sup> SD 4/14/82.

<sup>2365</sup> "Hypotheses, Hypotheses..." cit.

<sup>2366</sup> The Argentine manifesto was published in leading Buenos Aires newspapers under the title "The Independence of Catholic Argentina Vis-à-Vis Effective Sovereignty Over an Island Territory." It was also published in Washington, New York, London, Bogota, Quito, Guayaquil, Caracas and Santiago. Here is a list of these publications: Buenos Aires: *La Nación*, 4/13/82; *Clarín*, 4/15/82. United States: *The Washington Post*, 4/30/82; *The New York Times*, 4/30/82; *The Wanderer*, 5/6/82; *Human Events*, 5/8/83. Colombia: *El Tiempo*, Bogota, 4/20/82 & *Diario de la Costa*, Cartagena, 4/24/82. Ecuador: *El Comercio*, Quito, 4/21/82 & *Expreso*, Guayaquil, 4/25/82. Chile: *El Mercurio*, Santiago, 4/15/82. It was published and broadcast by the BBC of London. In Spain, the Sociedad Cultural Covadonga distributed the manifesto in the streets (cf. *Covadonga Informa*, No. 55-56, March-April 1982).

<sup>2367</sup> SD 4/14/82.

<sup>2368</sup> "Russians Can Profit from Tension in the Falklands," *Letras em Marcha* magazine, No. 127, May 1982.

<sup>2369</sup> SD 4/14/82.

<sup>2370</sup> SD 4/14/82.

<sup>2371</sup> "Brazil, Argentina and England Face a Common Enemy: Soviet Power," cit.

<sup>2372</sup> "Notarial Warranty," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 7/24/82.

That, in turn, would put us at serious risk of rekindling terrorism, guerrilla warfare, agitation and commotion everywhere on the South American continent where there were Communists.<sup>2373</sup>

To crown it all, I received a call from someone at our Washington office telling me he talked to American VIPs who believed the United States would support England and a military strike could no longer be avoided.

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Our brothers from Venezuela provided more information, describing a situation about which I knew nothing. They told me that British Guyana was independent but a part of the Commonwealth and that Venezuela was claiming part of its territory.

The President of Venezuela at the time, Herrera Campins, declared himself flatly for Argentina and against England and implied he would invade British Guiana as soon as possible.

On the other hand, Colombia had a territorial issue with Venezuela about a prosperous oil belt. Colombia had always considered itself its owner and claimed that Venezuela occupied it illegally. Colombia declared itself against Argentina and sided with Great Britain.

All this meant that if the British lost the Falklands, Venezuela might seek to attack Guyana, but Colombia could attack Venezuela.

The British were aware of Venezuela's claims against Guyana and knew they would face another conflict in the north if they gave up their islands in the South Seas. And this likely would not be all, as the Spanish claimed Gibraltar.

For the British, the Falklands were the key to Pandora's box, and once it had been opened, all these attacks were likely to arise. They needed to insist on the United States' support.

There were numerous territorial claims between the Hispanic American nations; Ecuador claimed land occupied by Peru, Bolivia had an issue with Chile, and Argentina and Chile locked horns over the Beagle Islands.

All these conflicts could flare up at any time.<sup>2374</sup>

A rash of wars could have spread throughout South America, bringing economic crises and social revolutions.<sup>2375</sup>

Ultimately, the possibility of a "Vietnamisation" of South America loomed. This made understanding the global conflict developing in the Argentine seas easier. We were witnessing world politics shifting its center toward South America.

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<sup>2373</sup> "Hypotheses, Hypotheses..." cit.

<sup>2374</sup> SD 4/28/82.

<sup>2375</sup> "Hypotheses, Hypotheses..." cit.

## 5. Telex to President Figueiredo

I also saw that with so many borders to secure on all sides, Brazil could hardly stay on the sidelines of this conflict.

Even if it remained diplomatically on the sidelines, the Brazilian left would start rooting for the Communists in the other countries, while their opponents would side with the anticommunists. Brazil would be divided.

It was clear to me that a word from the TFP, spoken at the right time and in the right way, could have an enormous impact on our future.<sup>2376</sup>

I sent President Figueiredo a letter listing and explaining all these reasons.

Shortly after the Argentine statement was published, I sent a telex to him and the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Saraiva Guerreiro, asking them to consider the Argentine TFP's concerns about Russia's involvement in the conflict when determining the political stance Brazil would adopt.<sup>2377</sup>

In my letter, I pointed out that painful experiences had shown that those who wanted to resist aggression by the Soviet superpower would have to resort to the American superpower. That would mean the beginning of Brazil and Spanish America's "*Vietnamisation*."<sup>2378</sup>

## 6. Publication of the Letter and Street Campaign

The letter to President Figueiredo was published in the *Folha* and thirteen other newspapers in the main state capitals.<sup>2379</sup>

And so, TFP bells started to ring out.<sup>2380</sup>

I visited several stations of this campaign in São Paulo, which permitted me to observe people's reactions to our statement. My impression was that it was a spectacular success.

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<sup>2376</sup> SD 4/28/82.

<sup>2377</sup> SD 4/14/82.

<sup>2378</sup> "Brazil, Argentina and England Face a Common Enemy: Soviet Power," cit.

<sup>2379</sup> The letter was published in the *Folha de S. Paulo* on May 7, 1982. A few days later (on the 11<sup>th</sup>), President Figueiredo traveled to the United States to meet with President Reagan and Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

According to a secret document of the National Security Council, to which the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* was granted access years later, Haig and Figueiredo spoke openly about the risk of the Soviet Union taking advantage of the conflict to increase its influence in Argentina. In one of these meetings, President Figueiredo mentioned the risk that an escalation of the conflict could turn Argentina into "Latin America's Vietnam" (cf. article by Marcelo de Moraes, from Brasília, in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, April 3, 2012).

<sup>2380</sup> SD 4/28/82.

Another sign was that the daily *Folha de S. Paulo*'s issue with our manifesto sold out by lunchtime in all news kiosks, which meant the publication impressed many.<sup>2381</sup>

## 7. Conclusions from a Providential Campaign

Amid the tension about the Falklands, what affected me most as a Catholic, a Brazilian, and a man of tradition was not the dispute between Britain and Argentina but the sorry spectacle of the West's weakness in the face of Soviet imperialism.

The mere presence of a Russian naval force in the South Atlantic at that critical moment threatened the great and beloved South American nation of Argentina and the illustrious and highly developed European and global power, Great Britain.

In the medium term, this presence could have set on fire all of South America, including my own country, Brazil, and driven the U.S. and Russian superpowers to war.

The West was reduced to this state of weakness because of the calamitous Carter administration and the *détente* policy with Moscow implemented by the USA and the Vatican.

While the White House and Vatican *détente* policy aimed at easing tensions, the Soviets were not "taking it easy."

A unilateral thaw could only result in the collapse of the incautious, whose vigilance slackened, bringing the Russian naval force near the Falklands.

For this reason, my sympathies were not with Great Britain or Argentina but with both Great Britain and Argentina against Soviet Russia.

Was it a paradox? Not in the least.

Asking Argentina to renounce its traditional claims was impossible.

On the other hand, no matter what you thought of the merits of the British Commonwealth's claims to this and other possessions, no one could have asked the British government to renounce those claims at the time.

Likewise, it would not have been reasonable to ask Argentina, Venezuela, or Spain to renounce their traditional claims.

However, as a Soviet naval force was in the area, posing a grave risk to Argentina's sovereignty over its mainland, the possibility of a Soviet military occupation could not be ignored.<sup>2382</sup>

Russia would naturally have provided troops to land in Argentina and would have had no trouble taking the Falkland Islands, as it could count on the

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<sup>2381</sup> SD 5/12/82.

<sup>2382</sup> "Absolutely Immediately," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 4/29/82.

logistical support of the Argentine armed forces. However, once in, the Russians would never have left.

They would impose a quasi-communist government on Argentina and place South America in a situation infinitely worse than the one it was facing.<sup>2383</sup>

If enlightened by its local TFP's lucid and well-reasoned communique, Argentine public opinion had not courageously spoken out against collaboration with communists, the small communist "termite mound" already there would have swollen out of control in a bid to turn the entire nation into a giant ant colony.<sup>2384</sup>

Therefore, the communique aimed at halting that process<sup>2385</sup> and torpedoing the possibility of Russian aid.<sup>2386</sup>

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Whether or not that was stopped by the voice of the Argentine TFP or hindered by publications and propaganda of the Brazilian and other TFPs, no one could deny—to say the least—that we severely impaired the game plan.<sup>2387</sup>

Russia emerged from the episode looking like a pickpocket caught with his hand in the victim's pocket—intervening in a South American nation through internal and external pressure led by its ideological expansionism.

That is how communist "termite mounds" were prevented from dangerously growing across South America.<sup>2388</sup>

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<sup>2383</sup> Quick word 12/2/82.

<sup>2384</sup> "Just for Essequibo?" cit.

<sup>2385</sup> Quick word 12/2/82.

<sup>2386</sup> SD 6/23/82. In the said interview with *Folha Online*, top KGB officer General Nikolai Sergeievitch Leonov stated: "They, the Argentines, needed surface-to-air, air-to-sea and sea-to-sea missiles but did not dare to buy Soviet weapons, so we tried to provide them with satellite images of the British expeditionary force moving across the Atlantic, but I think they distrusted our data, and so the contact was lost." He added, "there was an ideological factor, they were an anticommunist dictatorship and so they could not introduce Soviet weapons in the war theater."

The *Folha* reporter commented, "Indeed, during the war, the British located Soviet boats and submarines near the Falklands waters, and the insinuation that such support, which had nothing to do with the secret negotiations going on in Buenos Aires, might be provided was enough to send groups such as the Argentinian branch of 'Tradition, Family and Property' out into the streets criticizing in times of war the government – which had been popular up to that point" (cf. *Folha Online*, January 13, 2008, cit.).

<sup>2387</sup> SD 4/16/82.

<sup>2388</sup> "Just for Essequibo?" cit.

## Chapter VI

# New Republic: Fighting The Land Reform “Typhoon” (1985)

### 1. New Republic, Old Land Reform

The military regime fell on March 15, 1985. The political “*opening-up*” process was about to confer power on the President-elect, Tancredo Neves. His death meant the highest office fell to his running mate, Vice-President José Sarney.<sup>2389</sup>

Shortly after, the agro-reformist storm erupted and spread throughout the country.<sup>2390</sup>

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As early as May, President Sarney submitted the First National Plan for Agrarian Reform, known as the PNRA, based on the Land Statute.

No one doubted that we would intervene. Our position was more than clearly defined in this question. We did not oppose the government since we had nothing against it. But to the extent that the government supported a socialist and confiscatory agrarian reform, we had to express our radical disagreement. Moreover, the government knew this only too well.<sup>2391</sup>

The CNBB publicly supported the PNRA, and newspapers reported a close collaboration between President Sarney and the CNBB.<sup>2392</sup>

The reformist pact between the government and the CNBB sealed the appointment to the newly created Ministry of Agrarian Reform and Development (MIRAD), Mr. Nelson Ribeiro, a figure presumably well-known to agro-reformist circles close to the CPT and the BCCs but perfectly unknown to the general public.

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<sup>2389</sup> Sarney took office on March 15, 1985.

<sup>2390</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2391</sup> Tea 4/5/85.

<sup>2392</sup> Interview on the program *Mensagem ao Presidente*, TV Capital (Brasilia), 9/10/85.

This man did not lack capability, agility, and vigor. Feverishly eager to implement the Land Statute and the PNRA as soon as possible, he started to fight against the existing agrarian structure with all the means at his disposal.

He embarked on a series of projects that shocked the rural class and public opinion to such an extent that on July 2, 1985, upon passing a decree declaring the entire area of Londrina, the prosperous agricultural capital of Paraná, a priority region for agrarian reform purposes, President Sarney felt a political need to revoke this delirious decree immediately and even considered it necessary to fly to Londrina with a high-profile entourage (including no less than four ministers, one of whom was Mr. Nelson Ribeiro himself), to recite his government's "*mea culpa*" before a bewildered and alarmed farming community.

## 2. A Book Denouncing the Confiscatory and Socialist PNRA

Once again, general bewilderment spread through the country, especially among many farmers who did not know where to turn.<sup>2393</sup>

The dire circumstances in which the country found itself called for an intervention. So, together with Carlos Patricio del Campo, who holds a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of California at Berkeley, I wrote *Private Property and Free Enterprise in the Land Reform Typhoon*,<sup>2394</sup> a book providing a detailed analysis of PNRA and exposing its socialist and confiscatory nature similar to the Land Statute.<sup>2395</sup>

The book's arguments showed that an eventual application of land reform as envisaged in the Land Statute and the National Plan for Agrarian Reform would be a significant step toward implementing socialism in Brazil.

The new book also demonstrated how misguided such an application would be given the natural link between land reformers and certain liberation theology tenets and, thus, with the religious crisis then ravaging Brazil. The Boff affair had only just come to light. When the Holy See took measures against Friar Boff, some Brazilian Bishops signed an official document declaring they disagreed.<sup>2396</sup>

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<sup>2393</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2394</sup> *Warriors of the Virgin: The Reply of Authenticity – TFP without Secrets*, cit.

<sup>2395</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2396</sup> "Destabilization Tending to Chaos in the Spiritual and Temporal Spheres," *Catolicismo* No. 417, September 1985. On March 11, 1985, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a "Notification" approved by Pope John Paul II concerning the book *Church, Charisma and Power* by the then Friar Leonardo Boff. The Notification stated that "the options analyzed here by Friar Leonardo Boff are such as to endanger the sound doctrine of the faith" (cf. the Vatican website). The same year, he was sentenced to one year of "obsequious silence," a measure 17 Brazilian archbishops and bishops explicitly opposed. Later, Boff left the priesthood and formalized his union with a divorced woman, a mother of six.

The book was almost ready, though not yet published when something happened that favored its publication to a remarkable degree.

### 3. A TFP Director's Momentous Intervention

The publication of the PNRA triggered a barrage of criticism from prominent leaders of the farmers' associations that lasted about a fortnight.

Subsequently, however, they calmed down and, for the most part, demanded that the government put aside or mitigate the PNRA to adjust it to the Land Statute. They argued that the latter should be applied because the agrarian reform it envisaged was considered just and reasonable.

That was the position of employers' associations' leaders. However, most landowners disagreed with it and made that clear at a conference in Brasilia on June 27 and 28, attended by about 4,000 farmers and cattle ranchers.

A timely intervention by the engineer Plinio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira changed the course of the debates and allowed the farmers' latent discontent to emerge concerning both PNRA and the Land Statute.<sup>2397</sup>

I am convinced that if the rural leaders' position had prevailed, the landowners would soon have felt the State's greedy hands in their pockets. It would have been too late for the rural class to try to hold their leaders liable because everything would already have gone down the drain.<sup>2398</sup>

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At the time, TFP members and volunteers distributed a flyer to the participants announcing the upcoming release of *Private Property and Free*

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<sup>2397</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit. The National Confederation of Agriculture convened the conference on June 27 and 28, 1985. The approximately 4,000 farmers present were assured that their rights threatened by the PNRA would be defended. However, the speeches touched only lightly on these points and the session went on in a moribund and defeatist atmosphere. Finally, the panel began to read out the final document, which, while ostensibly rejecting the PNRA, absurdly pleaded to implement the Land Statute, of which the content and aims were substantially the same as the PNRA's.

At that moment, Dr. Plinio Xavier took the microphone and said, "I request to speak!" He strongly expressed his objections to the document and stated that the farmers were not there to approve the Land Statute but to fight both against it and the PNRA. The audience caught fire! They burst into cheers and enthusiastic applause, drowning out the voices of panel members, seemingly paralyzed with amazement facing that unexpected reaction.

At that point, the farmers' latent dissatisfaction boiled over. Many speakers took the floor, categorically endorsing Dr. Plinio Xavier da Silveira's statements and strongly rejecting land reform in the PNRA and the Land Statute. They strongly criticized the position taken by the CNBB, the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) and the BCCs, and the weak and concessive attitudes of some landowners.

The next day, at odds with the feelings of the vast majority of landowners present, the panel presented another document that no longer praised the Land Statute but omitted any criticism of it.

However, the reaction aroused by Dr. Plinio Xavier da Silveira's intervention signaled to the government the deep unpopularity of the agrarian reform program the New Republic and CNBB were trying to implement with all the means at their disposal.

<sup>2398</sup> Tea ENSDP 8/12/85.



*Enterprise in the Land Reform Typhoon*, the new book that the TFP was about to publish.

#### 4. The Book's Important Points

Both sides were firmly entrenched in their positions, and a debate was in full swing; the situation was very favorable to the publication of our book.<sup>2399</sup>

The PNRA often referred to principles of justice to justify its position—a position that, in unison with millions of Brazilians, the TFP did not hesitate to equate with land confiscation. The PNRA invoked the same principles to denounce the existing land distribution among large, medium, and small proprietors as radically unacceptable.

However, millions of Brazilians were persuaded that that form of land distribution was not unfair as long as private property—whatever its size—properly fulfilled its social function.

In Brazil, there was fundamental and widespread disagreement on the concept of justice—or rather, on its practical applications as advocated by liberation theologians.

Liberation theology supporters base the core of their pro-land reform argumentation on a radically egalitarian concept of justice.

This egalitarian concept opposes the bimillennial Christian understanding of justice shared by millions of traditional Catholics who oppose land reform.

By raising the agrarian question precisely then, the government could not prevent people from seeing a connection between the land reform debate and the ongoing theological and philosophical debate in Catholic circles.

By getting involved in a matter of justice, the secular government would place itself at the center of a burning religious and philosophical controversy.

A possible religious crisis was looming on the horizon.

The TFP alerted the government to the basic fact that average, sensible and authentic Brazilians would have none of the Land Statute. The latter was a mere remnant, in a political *opening*, of an act characteristic of the military government enacted hastily and under pressure with the consent of an insecure and hardly influential legislative assembly.

A political *opening* that imposed on 130 million Brazilians a far-reaching land reform that was unwanted by their vast majority but passed with all the force of law by a strong government without giving them enough time to become informed, form an opinion, and debate would be no *opening*.<sup>2400</sup>

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<sup>2399</sup> The book went through two editions for a total of 16,000 copies, in addition to 34,000 copies of a special edition of *Catholicismo* with excerpts of the work. It was disseminated in street campaigns in the country's main cities and, as of August 23, by 52 tandems that visited 694 cities in 19 states.

<sup>2400</sup> *Private Property and Free Enterprise in the Land Reform Typhoon*, cit., Part I, Chapter 1.

## **5. Land Reformers Are Forced to Change Their Tactics**

The government's land reform efforts faced significant challenges thanks to the reaction of landowners and rural workers, leading to a strategic shift to recapture its lost popularity.

Landowners' and agricultural workers' resistance likely played a crucial role in this change. The government's attempt to regain popularity in rural areas and the country suggests that its proposed reforms caused widespread distrust and concerns about their effectiveness and Minister Nelson Ribeiro's socialist leanings.

## **6. The New Tactic: Hordes of Invaders, Led by Churchmen**

According to the image of Brazil presented by the combined fourth and fifth powers [i.e., the media and the CNBB], the towns and rural areas in our vast territory were increasingly immersed in misery, “the rich getting richer and the poor poorer,” a description inspired entirely by the principles of Marxist criticism.

People were told that a general uprising was imminent due to this alleged injustice.

This uprising would bring widespread bloodshed, victimizing mainly property owners, who were fewer in number than the workers and would be unable to resist the brute force of a huge mass of manual workers.

An example presented as a “basket case” was the invasion of Annoni Farm in the Rio Grande do Sul in October 1985. The invaders based their claims on arguments rooted in liberation theology, which assured them plenty of support from a large part of the CNBB.

Everybody recommended that farmers adopt a concession policy, “give some so as not to lose it all.”

In other words, the farmers were told to give in slowly to keep their progressively dwindling assets for a little longer. In this way, they would gradually appease the hunger of the beast that wrapped its greedy tentacles around the world at the end of this century.

In a conflict, if one side keeps advancing and the other keeps retreating, there will inevitably come a day when the former will have won everything, and the latter will have lost everything.

In other words, the proletariat would destroy owners, and Brazil would have a classless socioeconomic structure, precisely the goal Communists have always pursued.

Land reform agitators, led by numerous clergymen, religious leaders, and BCCs, had been gathering hordes of potential invaders with the manifest intention of implementing land reform as a *fait accompli* outside the law.<sup>2401</sup>

They sought to justify their invasions with arguments dressed up to look like Catholic doctrine.<sup>2402</sup>

As if planned by a central command, land invasions usually took place in areas affected areas by the agitation of leftist Catholics closely linked to the parish priest or local bishop.

In most cases, supported by the priest or bishop, the invaders would uninhibitedly invade someone's property after negotiations (read: intimidation and threats!) with its owners.

"Negotiations" would then continue - openly led by the priest or bishop - and the landowner would either leave to save his life and that of his family or capitulate and accept immediate expropriation at a price far below the actual value of his property.

It was by no means an exceptional occurrence for an owner to be killed by "poor" invaders, so his family had no choice but to flee as quickly as possible without compensation.<sup>2403</sup>

In more remote parts of the country, cries of "catch the farmer!" were beginning to be heard.<sup>2404</sup>

In these circumstances, churchmen should play a decisive role by intervening and creating a problem of conscience for the offenders, who were committing a major sin by appropriating other people's property. God's seventh and tenth Commandments guarantee private property: "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."

However, the facts indicate that the interventions of clergy—including bishops—did not appeal to the attackers' consciences but to those of their victims. They attempted to convince landowners that justice, the spirit of the Gospel—in a word, Our Lord Jesus Christ—was on the side of the aggressors; attackers had justice on their side, and owners did not have the rights they thought they had.<sup>2405</sup>

Thus, land invasions and occupations were growing apace under CNBB's enthusiastic applause, congratulations from most of the media, and

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<sup>2401</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2402</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2403</sup> "Clearly, Strongly, and Soon," *Catolicismo* No. 404, August 1984.

<sup>2404</sup> *BCCs... Much Talked About but Little Known—the TFP Describes Them As They Are*, cit.

<sup>2405</sup> "Catholic Left, Awareness-Raising, Revolution—TFP Warning, Farmer Drowsiness," *Catolicismo* No. 406-407, October-November 1984.

slightly embarrassed but visibly complacent smiles from the executive branch.<sup>2406</sup>

## 7. Legal Opinions on the Legitimacy of Self-Defense against Invaders

One thing that caught my attention was that landowners repeatedly reacted to these invasions with indecision and in a remarkably inefficient manner because they were unsure of their rights to the land and did not even know whether they were entitled to react personally against the invaders.<sup>2407</sup>

I remember talking with Dr. Plinio Xavier about the fact that dispossessed owners did not dare to defend their farms because they feared that such defiance might trigger a vendetta that could land them in prison.

Their confusion probably came from this question: “Can we be sure that criminal law does not contain a trap somewhere that means we may go to jail if we react to invasions?”

That is why they did not react.<sup>2408</sup>

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What did the TFP propose to do about this situation?

Most farmers were unaware that the law entitled them to defend themselves against the dispossession of their properties without doing anything illegal.

The first step I wanted to take was to inform the owners about it; the second was to make sure the government was aware that they knew; and the third was to ensure that the agitators behind the unrest also knew it.

I wanted to inform all of Brazil—which did not see clearly in this matter, either—to prevent the CNBB, the left-wing media and other leftist institutions from exploiting that widespread ignorance.

The way to do this would be to request expert opinions from renowned jurists showing that a farmer whose property is invaded or squatted is entitled to defend himself, even at gunpoint, if necessary, if he receives no help from the government.

Ideally, these opinions would be published in the press, radio, and TV and spread by international news agencies. The TFP would strive to ensure widespread dissemination.<sup>2409</sup>

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<sup>2406</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2407</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>2408</sup> RR 10/18/86.

<sup>2409</sup> Dispatch 10/5/85.

The TFP then contacted several farmers,<sup>2410</sup> one of whom was Dr. Osmar Peres Caldeira, a lawyer and farmer resident in Montes Claros (Minas Gerais).<sup>2411</sup>

The farmers agreed to fund the publication of expert opinions by two eminent Brazilian jurists on this specific question: Once a column of pseudo-hungry so-called workers approaches a farm gate and tries to settle there, what rights does the law give the owner to react against those hordes?<sup>2412</sup>

Those legal experts had more than enough knowledge and experience to give reliable answers to the farmers' questions. They were Professor Silvio Rodrigues of the Law School of the University of São Paulo and Professor Orlando Gomes of the Federal University of Bahia.

Their opinions, genuine masterpieces from a legal standpoint for their arguments' clarity and strength and their solid and unequivocal conclusions, were written and submitted in São Paulo and Salvador in October and November 1985, respectively.

They showed that according to the Civil Code (Article 502), a rightful owner, if not helped by police, is entitled to defend himself and his land against the seizure of his property by invaders and pro-land-reform occupants and is entitled to do so at gunpoint when needed.<sup>2413</sup>

From January 1986, the TFP distributed these opinions as widely as possible, publishing them in 87 newspapers in 76 cities in 21 states.<sup>2414</sup>

The publication of these opinions, accompanied by lectures and meetings for farmers and manual farmworkers organized and held by TFP members and volunteers in 181 locations, had a far-reaching impact on the country.

They revived the landowners' determination to resist according to the law.<sup>2415</sup> There were more and more cases where owners unwilling to give up their property were left to fend for themselves by federal and state officials, so they started to prepare armed resistance with their own resources.<sup>2416</sup>

## 8. Leftist Hullabaloo against the Opinions

One might have expected the publication of these opinions would be received with general applause. That would have been the usual attitude of good

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<sup>2410</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>2411</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2412</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>2413</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2414</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2415</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2416</sup> "Clearly, Strongly and Soon," cit.

Brazilians toward landowners who, placed in a highly distressing situation, were eager to defend their rights but wanted to do so strictly by legal means.

However, much of the media took pride in doing the exact opposite.

Shining an accusing light on farmers who acted according to the advice of the opinions, they started to claim that the TFP campaign promoted violence in the wilds of the Brazilian countryside.

This claim was as absurd as it would have been to allege that security guards posted in bank buildings to protect people and property were a focus of violence in the cities.

There is unjust violence practiced by those who infringe upon rights conferred by the laws of God and man. And there is just violence, exercised as a right and, in some cases, even a duty by those defending their own rights or helping their neighbor to do so in case of attack.

While indiscriminately condemning all kinds of violence when reporting on farmers prepared to defend their rights, these media lavished words of sympathy and praise for invaders trying to dispossess landowners with threats and even violence.

This contradiction can only be explained by the French communist Proudhon's maxim, which echoes throughout communist literature from Marx to this day: "Property is theft!"

However, public opinion is not duped so easily. No one took those allegations seriously (except for the Catholic Left, the PCB-Brazilian Communist Party, and PC do B (Communist Party of Brazil)). As soon as the opinions were published, it was easy to see that any farmer who acted according to them would be assured of the whole nation's understanding.

Hordes of agitators were thus prevented from abrogating essential provisions of the Civil Code and the Penal Code. Had these hordes been granted the power to repeal the law and replace it with another establishing the opposite, Brazil would have plunged into the worst kind of dictatorship—that of a criminal mob manipulated behind the scenes by mysterious revolutionaries. That happened in all great political and social upheavals, of which the French Revolution of 1789 and the Communist Revolution of 1917 are two sinister examples.

As always, the TFP carried out this large-scale campaign in strict compliance with human and divine laws. Numerous police chiefs, mayors and other municipal authorities issued certificates confirming the exemplary conduct of TFP members, volunteers and friends. When added to certificates from former campaigns, the TFP collected a total of 4,317 such certificates.

## **9. The Number of Land Invasions Decreases; CNBB**

### **Moderates its Tone**

With telltale simultaneity, the number of land invasions and occupations began to decline to the point where it appeared they had ceased altogether.

Save for a few rare and noble exceptions, that decline made our fiery pro-land reform bishops realize the people did not share their ideas.

The number of high-sounding pro-land reform statements ceased, and the CNBB appeared to lose interest almost entirely in what had seemed to be its primary and most pressing concern until a short time before.

Was this because the imminent November 15 elections inspired the CNBB to focus on guiding voters concerning the Constituent Assembly?<sup>2417</sup>

## **Chapter VII**

# **A Draft Constitution Distresses the Country (1987)**

### **1. A Smoke and Mirrors Attack on Catholic Brazil**

Shortly after the invasions ended, I read that Brazilians would soon be called upon to choose a Constituent National Assembly that would function concurrently with the National Congress (House and Senate).<sup>2418</sup>

When the election period arrived, a political campaign started in a deplorable style,<sup>2419</sup> with most politicians routinely advertising by showing nothing but their faces.

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<sup>2417</sup> *Agrarian Reform Takes Misery to Countryside and City*, cit.

<sup>2418</sup> *The Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*, cit.

<sup>2419</sup> Interview with *Catolicismo* No. 467, November 1989.

You would see a man's face with a mustache, smiling, or some other face with a *Wagnerian* look promising Brazil a great future. And so on.

There were faces, faces, and faces; names, names, and names ... and nothing else. They did not refer to any principles, describe any aims or set out any program.<sup>2420</sup>

I remember seeing, in the election campaign for the Constituent Assembly, one of those propaganda posters with the massive face of a man and just the words: "So and so is a federal."<sup>2421</sup> Nothing else. His face was the only argument for why people should vote for him.<sup>2422</sup>

In most cases, the popular mandate to draft the new Constitution was granted to Brazilian citizens whose positions on major national problems the electorate knew nothing about.<sup>2423</sup> This seriously contributed to that election's lack of authenticity.<sup>2424</sup>

The resulting estrangement between the people and the candidates was so great that an unheard-of number of votes was found to be blank or invalid on polling day.<sup>2425</sup> No one in Brazil had any enthusiasm for the political class.<sup>2426</sup>

This lack of congenial representation was compounded by the Constituent Assembly's tumultuous and abnormal proceedings, which included endless empty posturing and sleights of hand.

The plenary was less conservative than the electorate, and the thematic committees were more leftist than the plenary. The Systematisation Committee (which coordinated the work prepared by the thematic committees) showed the highest concentration of leftists in the Constituent Assembly.

An active, bold and articulate leftist minority threatened to drag the country into a direction not desired by the majority of the population,<sup>2427</sup> in a chaotic atmosphere marked by insults, slaps and disputes from insufficient procedural deadlines.

Those who know me know I am neither a "moaner" nor a pessimist. But every sector of national life had a reason to cringe in anticipation of the reforms threatening everything, from the Judiciary Branch's security and invulnerability, which should be intangible, to the family's integrity and very existence, as it could cease being a reality to become a literary fiction in bad taste.<sup>2428</sup>

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<sup>2420</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

<sup>2421</sup> Interview with *Catolicismo* No. 467, November 1989.

<sup>2422</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

<sup>2423</sup> Statements to *Catolicismo* No. 443, November 1987.

<sup>2424</sup> *The Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*, cit.

<sup>2425</sup> Statements to *Catolicismo* No. 443, November 1987.

<sup>2426</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

<sup>2427</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2428</sup> "The Council, the Lighthouse and the Sailors (I)," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 6/30/87.



## 2. Urgent Need to Intervene: *Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*

It was imperative to provide a study on the representativeness of the elected Constituent Assembly and the Draft Constitution it was working on.

The result of this study was the book *Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*, which I finished in October 1987,<sup>2429</sup> when the work of the Constituent Assembly reached its climax.<sup>2430</sup>

After exhaustively collecting and analyzing the available data, the study dealt with the representativeness of the Constituent Assembly and the Draft Constitution being prepared, as well as the looming outcome of a gap between the new Constitution's text and the way of thinking of the majority of the nation.<sup>2431</sup>

## 3. Some Basic Proposals

In the book, I show that the draft constitution was a significant step toward fully implementing socialism in Brazil, especially by accelerating family breakdown and weakening the institution of private property.<sup>2432</sup> I included severe warnings and criticism, not against the political regime but against how we live it because, save for rare exceptions, the political class among us is non-ideological.<sup>2433</sup>

How do we resolve the complex and thorny situation of constitutional inauthenticity thus created?

The Constituent Assembly would have to agree on a constitution that provides for the country's political organization according to general lines, quickly obtaining the required consensus of the entire population. The constitution should leave responsibility for socio-economic questions to another Assembly to be elected and given special constituent powers over such questions. That would prevent the country from being led into a maze of fatal complications undermining public order, development, and perhaps even sovereignty.

In a spirit of harmony and cooperation, the TFP addressed the members of the Constituent Assembly with this friendly appeal and proposal to spare our country that catastrophe par excellence.

The fact that it went unheeded made a split between officialdom and the living nation inevitable. The consequence would be one of those dramatic

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<sup>2429</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2430</sup> "Notice to the Indolent," *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/8/89.

<sup>2431</sup> *The Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*, cit.

<sup>2432</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2433</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

historical situations in which a nation's population no longer identifies with the state, which becomes an empty shell devoid of authentically national content.

Leftist groups ran rings around the conservative majority, managing to persuade them to accept their views. They included provisions in the Constitution that imposed land and urban reforms while paving the way for corporate reform—the former two with the Executive Branch's official support and the latter with clear sympathies in high-ranking political and media circles.

The book raised concerns concerning many other key provisions, such as the destruction of legitimate marriage and family, hindering human reproduction, the free exercise of the medical profession, and the organization of education.<sup>2434</sup>

#### **4. One of the Most Difficult Books I Have Ever Written**

This work required considerable effort; it was one of the most challenging books I have ever written.<sup>2435</sup>

The difficulty was finding a way to present things that would make it a game-changer.

For starters, democracy is a political concept, but the members of the Constituent Assembly chose to understand it as a social attitude. For them, democracy meant, for example, taking a stand against racial discrimination, against this, that or the other.

I studied constitutional law, one of the few areas of law I found interesting.

When I studied this branch of the law, I knew that, according to the best jurists, these social issues should not be part of a constitution. A constitution only serves to set up a country's political structure. All other matters should be dealt with by ordinary legislation.

That is why I felt the need to discuss the concepts of democracy and representativeness in the book.

I repeat: I have never written a book that required so much hard work. Its readers will not realize this, thinking all these ideas were neatly arranged in my head and all I had to do was think them out and write them down. However, this was not the case.<sup>2436</sup>

#### **5. A Campaign Warning the Country from North to South**

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<sup>2434</sup> *The Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*, cit., Part IV, Chap. I.

<sup>2435</sup> CA 11/3/87.

<sup>2436</sup> CSN 10/31/87.

For five months, TFP members and volunteers worked hard to distribute the book in more than 240 cities in 18 states, selling the 73,000 copies printed.

A record average of 1,083 copies sold daily over the nineteen days the campaign focused on the São Paulo metropolitan area.

Finally, a particular reaction among the more conservative elements within the Constituent Assembly emerged,<sup>2437</sup> but they lacked the momentum and determination to reverse the process. Brazil was given a constitution that would create all kinds of difficulties for its governability.<sup>2438</sup>

Brazil had embarked willy-nilly on a new phase in its history in which an ever-accelerating movement toward the left had become compulsory.

The Christian institution of the family was deeply damaged, as were the institutions of private property and free enterprise in many essential features.<sup>2439</sup>

Yesterday's encouraging 'opening up' led us to the dire straits we are experiencing today.

## Chapter VIII

# TFP Takes a Stand on The Collor v. Lula Dispute (1989)

### 1. Shockingly Leftist Candidates

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<sup>2437</sup> Congressmen in the Constituent Assembly formed a block, saying they were unhappy with the deliberations' direction. They became known as "Centrão" [Big Central Block]. A speech on the floor by Congressman Bezerra de Melo (PMDB-CE) on December 3, 1987, is enlightening: "We do not agree with the direction taken by the Systematization Committee of the National Constituent Assembly. This is why we formed *Centrão*, whose mission within the Parliament is to save the new constitution from the serious threats to which it is being subjected" (cf. *Procurando o Centrão: Direita e Esquerda na Assembleia Nacional Constituinte 1987-88* [Looking for the Big Center: Right and Left in the Constituent National Assembly 1987-88], post-graduate thesis by Rafael Freitas, Samuel Moura and Daniel Medeiros, 2009).

<sup>2438</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

<sup>2439</sup> *Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*, cit.

In the next presidential election, the first three candidates who presented themselves were notoriously and shockingly leftist.<sup>2440</sup>

That explains why countless Brazilians were worried or grimly apprehensive at the prospect of the candidates being chosen from among the political party leaders by purely partisan political teams, all under the aegis of the left.<sup>2441</sup>

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The regional president of the UDR (Democratic Rural Union) of Paraíba launched Mr. Ronaldo Caiado's candidature (cf. *Folha de S. Paulo*, May 11, 1988).<sup>2442</sup> For most, if not all, of the national media, he was long seen as the “favorite” champion likely to win the presidency's “Grand Prix.”

Several candidates subsequently lost a lot of ground. Mr. Ronaldo Caiado lost the most. According to the opinion polls, he was among the least likely to succeed.

Teams of TFP volunteers roaming the country's interior confirmed this setback through their contacts in the rural areas that might have been expected to show him the most support.

The myth and aura of invincibility, youth, joy, and triumph formed around him were quickly defeated by reality.

The TFP is sure that its numerous alerts (no reply from Mr. Caiado) concerning the suicidal policy of “giving in some in order not to lose it all” adopted by UDR's then-president contributed significantly to debunk this myth that could have driven the rural population, perhaps irreversibly, into an abyss of poverty and misery, albeit with a self-congratulatory air of victory.<sup>2443</sup>

## 2. A Bewildered Electorate Turns to the TFP

During the political imbroglio, many people desired to know the TFP's opinion. They asked us for advice on who would be the most desirable or least undesirable candidate.

Sometimes, the question was more loaded: What acceptable candidate did the TFP have to offer? If it did not have one, what solution did it propose to rescue the country from the quicksands in which it seemed to be foundering?

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<sup>2440</sup> Among other candidates who initially presented themselves were Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Leonel Brizola, and Mario Covas. Another was Ronaldo Caiado. Fernando Collor's candidacy only came later.

<sup>2441</sup> “Notice to the Indolent,” cit.

<sup>2442</sup> “The Socialist and Confiscatory Agrarian Reform: a War Lost by Landowners, Farm Workers, the Nation's Agriculture...and Brazil,” *Catolicismo* No. 450, June 1988.

<sup>2443</sup> “What the TFP Thinks of the Current Electoral Scenario,” *Catolicismo* No. 463, July 1989. Dr. Plinio analyzed Mr. Ronaldo Caiado's performance in his work, *The Draft Constitution Distresses the Country*.

What solution would the TFP come up with? Should a candidate be sought in the highest ranks of leading professional associations? The TFP would never make such a proposal. The leaders of professional associations who spoke during the debates of the Constituent Assembly mostly favored left-wing proposals or supported the ruinous policy of “giving in some in order not to lose it all.” They either gave in to the left to a considerable degree, not to lose everything or kept utterly silent.<sup>2444</sup>

### 3. Collor's Surprising Media-Favored Candidacy

In this climate, a new figure emerged: Fernando Collor de Mello,<sup>2445</sup> who presented himself as a racing champion who decided to enter the electoral race.

A grandson of Lindolfo Collor (a very prominent gaucho politician during the Getúlio Vargas era), he had family ties to the wealthy elite and was a capitalist of considerable fortune. His name began to awaken in some sectors of Brazilian society, the hope that he would provide a somewhat center-right solution to resolve the chaotic situation in which the country was submerged.

An “aura” similar to the one recently favoring Caiado began developing around him. The media portrayed him as a person radiating optimism, with many past successes and great hopes for the future, someone who personified a promising victory.

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It was neither my intention nor the TFP's to criticize those who saw Collor's presence among the most promising presidential candidates as a hope for some relief from leftist pressure.

But I figured we had to be cautious and argued that we should carefully monitor his statements to understand precisely what we would be voting for.

I saw Collor as the preferable candidate to all the others. However, placing him as a talismanic candidate with the absolute and blind trust some media suggested seemed excessive.

Their utopian optimism could mark the atmosphere in the new administration's early period and prematurely benefit a new president elected on a wave of trust that he might deserve... or perhaps not.

My comments were not anti-Collor but pro-Brazil and invited people to be vigilant and attentive. They did not cost Collor any votes. I sought to mitigate a certain fanaticism that could quickly become excessive.<sup>2446</sup>

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<sup>2444</sup> “Notice to the Indolent,” cit.

<sup>2445</sup> Fernando Affonso Collor de Mello was President of Brazil from 1990 to 1992.

<sup>2446</sup> “What the TFP Thinks of the Current Electoral Scenario,” cit.

#### 4. TFP Takes a Stand, Debate Turns Ideological

After the first round of elections, Fernando Collor had a considerable advantage (about 12%) over the second-placed candidate, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva.

Who should one vote for in the runoff, which would have far-reaching consequences for the country?

Many people—not only TFP members, volunteers and supporters but also friends from all over Brazil—asked me this question, and I could not leave it unanswered.

This became even more pressing after Lula, questioned by a *Folha de S. Paulo* reporter (November 18, 1989) on whether he had the support of exponents of liberation theology, replied there was nothing new about that—everyone knew a progressive sector of the Church supported his campaign.

Lula said Collor should rely on the Church's right-wing sector while he would rely on the left.

These statements abundantly justified taking a stand on the Collor and Lula candidacies and against liberation theology and the BCCs.

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I intended to give TFP's opinion strictly as fraternal advice from lay Catholics to other lay Catholics concerning the second round of the presidential election. So, I drafted a manifesto.

In it, I reminded people that while the TFP always defended the principle of private property and the private enterprise system, the BCCs adhered to an avowedly Marxist socialist system.

I stressed that Lula, as a politician, had always had marked leanings toward the left and became increasingly radicalized throughout the campaign. This was made evident by the fact that the BCCs had taken on a more prominent role in the ranks of "Lulism" and the PT [Workers' Party]. The public saw a radical leftist tendency in the BCCs.

Given all this, I recommended that all voters who agreed with the TFP's opinions refrain from voting for Lula, and the alternative was to vote for Collor.

I made it clear that the TFP's goal was not to offer votes to anyone and that it viewed the Collor candidacy only as a contingency to be accepted almost automatically by centrist or rightist voters since this was the inevitable conclusion from our advice not to vote for Lula.

After this statement, the conflict became increasingly ideological, with Lula on one side and Collor on the other. Once again, an anticommunist attitude began to appear among the Brazilian public.<sup>2447</sup>

##### 5. *Folha* Is Sued; Dr. Plinio Is Threatened with Lawsuit

After publishing this manifesto, I read in the press that the Attorney General in Brasilia had filed a criminal complaint against the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* in the person of its director, Otávio Frias de Oliveira, because the newspaper had published a statement favoring Collor and against Lula.

The reason was that the electoral law considered it a crime punishable by a custodial sentence of one to five years for a director of an entity other than a political party to pronounce themselves for a particular candidate during the election period.

I soon realized they wanted to sue me as well. If they managed to indict Frias, they would initiate criminal proceedings against me.

He published, and I wrote; both unwittingly committed the same “crime.”<sup>2448</sup>

To my great surprise, about a year later,<sup>2449</sup> the criminal court acquitted Mr. Frias. I received a very kind letter informing me of his acquittal and stating that the law prohibiting such publications during electoral campaigns no longer applied under the new Constitution.<sup>2450</sup>

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<sup>2447</sup> RR 11/25/89. This manifesto was published in the Foreign Affairs Section of *Folha de S. Paulo* on November 29, 1989, p. A-7, under the title “Given Brazil’s Dramatic Situation, the TFP Takes a Stand on the Collor de Mello and Lula Candidacies, Liberation Theology and BCCs.”

<sup>2448</sup> CA 5/22/91.

<sup>2449</sup> CM 2/20/94.

<sup>2450</sup> Little Dispatch 6/7/94.

# Part XII

## Books and Campaigns of Great Repercussion in the Nineties

### Chapter I

## Communism and Anticommunism On the Threshold of the Millennium's Last Decade: Why Wait 70 Years to Acknowledge Failure? (1990)

### 1. Let Those Responsible for Oppression and Misery Explain Themselves

Shortly after the elections, in early 1990, the TFP published another study of mine titled “Communism and Anticommunism on the Threshold of the Millennium's Last Decade.”<sup>2451</sup>

Why did we launch this manifesto and distribute it so widely?

The sense of justice inherent in all upright and high-minded people cried out for adequately punishing the great crimes perpetrated by international communism worldwide.<sup>2452</sup>

This manifesto was meant to show good people to what extent the bad are bad and clarify how false leaders are accomplices of the bad.<sup>2453</sup>

After 70 years, this vast and tragic experiment—communism—was found to be a failure.<sup>2454</sup>

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<sup>2451</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>2452</sup> Letter to President Vytautas Landsbergis 9/5/91.

<sup>2453</sup> SD 2/21/90.

<sup>2454</sup> Interview with CX 16 Rádio Carve, Uruguay (recording) 4/3/90.



Within the Soviet structure, the Communist Party officially took precedence over the State. The party did not serve the State but was served by it.<sup>2455</sup>

How could communist chieftains justify what they did by imposing that ordeal on all those people without realizing they were committing a crime?

Why would they wish to extend that tragic regime of police oppression and hunger to all countries by spreading propaganda through Moscow-funded communist parties?<sup>2456</sup>

For all those years, safely ensconced in the ranks of the Communist Party, eating, drinking and sleeping, they did nothing to benefit their populations in any meaningful way. Instead, they had their subordinates arrest, torture and kill people, plunging entire countries into misery and suppressing all attempts at restoring private property and free enterprise.

Were they working to bring their people a better tomorrow? Not at all! They committed countless crimes for which they should be held liable.<sup>2457</sup>

## 2. Questioning Liberation Theologians

I also addressed this question to those in the Church who supported communism, such as the ex-Friar Leonardo Boff and Frei Betto, who wrote books praising Cuba's situation and Fidel Castro and liberation theology exponents in Brazil. I asked them to explain the situation in Russia mainly because Fidel Castro, whom they praised so enthusiastically, was firmly on the side of those seeking to maintain a situation that caused so much misery in Russia.

What kind of liberation were they promoting as theologians? Whom exactly were they hoping to free by plunging the whole world into misery?<sup>2458</sup>

They were, in fact, a kind of clan to which everyone else was accountable. How could it have taken people seventy years to realize it?<sup>2459</sup>

As the fall of the Iron Curtain revealed, the facts I pointed out were topical and evident to all. It was necessary to make people aware of them.<sup>2460</sup>

## 3. A "Nuremberg Trial" for Communists Would Have Disturbing Findings

Another question I raised in this manifesto was: Communist chiefs from various countries and communist parties visited Russia and witnessed its

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<sup>2455</sup> RR 3/10/90.

<sup>2456</sup> Interview with CX 16 Rádio Carve, Uruguay (recording), 4/3/90.

<sup>2457</sup> RR 3/10/90.

<sup>2458</sup> Interview with Spain's TVE (recording), 2/3/90.

<sup>2459</sup> RR 3/10/90.

<sup>2460</sup> Interview with CX 16 Rádio Carve, Uruguay (recording), 4/3/90.

apparent poverty and the population's massive and festering discontent with the regime.<sup>2461</sup> Did they not see this?

For decades, those leaders constantly connected with Moscow in various ways and visited on many occasions, regarded as cronies and friends. And they said nothing?

If Communist leaders in Free World countries had seen the tragic failure of communism, why did they want it in their countries? Why did they conspire to impose this regime of misery, slavery and shame on their people?

They spared neither money nor effort to attract elites from all walks of life to their arduous campaign to establish communism, starting with the spiritual elite—the clergy. Then, they targeted social elites, the upper and middle bourgeoisie, cultural elites in universities and media, civil and military elites, trade unions and professional and trade organizations, and finally tried to reach young people and even children as soon as they entered school.<sup>2462</sup>

They saw all this and did not give up their communist aims while perfectly aware of their harmful effects.

That was the great unanswered question.<sup>2463</sup> Raising it was tantamount to saying, “You did this! Come here and justify yourselves.”

It was the outline of a possible “Nuremberg trial,” which I knew would never be held, but someone had to say this for the historical record.<sup>2464</sup>

If a Nuremberg-like trial were held to verify these facts, highly unexpected and disturbing findings would ensue.<sup>2465</sup>

#### **4. A US State Department Official Tries to Rebut Our Manifesto**

A significant reaction to this manifesto was a letter to the American TFP by Mr. J. F. Steft, deputy director of Russian and communist affairs at the US State Department.

Written on President Bush's (father) behalf, this letter offered arguments against theses in our manifesto, focusing mainly on the part where I demanded that the persons, institutions, political parties, government figures, governments and international civil and religious organizations of the West that contributed to maintaining the communist regime be held to account for their actions.

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<sup>2461</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana, 6/21/90.

<sup>2462</sup> “Communism and Anticomunism on the Threshold of the Millennium's Last Decade,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 2/14/90.

<sup>2463</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiiana 6/21/90.

<sup>2464</sup> RR 3/24/90.

<sup>2465</sup> RR 4/7/90. The idea of holding a Nuremberg-like trial against Communists from all over the world was proposed about a year later by the President of Lithuania, Vytautas Landsbergis, to whom Dr. Plinio sent a telegram expressing the intense delight of TFPs and kindred organizations worldwide when they learned of his gesture (Letter to President Vytautas Landsbergis, September 5, 1991).

The US State Department's arguments were expressed very politely, showing a high regard for my work. The American TFP replied in an equally high-minded and polite tone, but this correspondence went no further.<sup>2466</sup>

## Chapter II

# Campaign for the Liberation of Lithuania The Communist Empire in Eastern Europe Collapses (1990/1991)

### 1. Glasnost and Perestroika Reveal the Failure of Communism

The spectacular fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, and the Iron Curtain, with the previous and subsequent political upheavals in Eastern European countries, was a key political event that brought about an explosive change in the global political game, more sudden and profound than anything I had ever witnessed.<sup>2467</sup>

As soon as the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain were razed to the ground, it was only a matter of time before Germans began fraternal negotiations to reconcile the two parts of their country and establish a common philosophy, approach, and action trend.

And so, slowly but surely, anticommunist safeguards built up in Europe would be undone.

There was more. I did not believe that Western Europe would give up the plan of a pan-European federation. I was afraid that the situation would be exploited to set up the famous “Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic” plan,

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<sup>2466</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana 6/21/90.

<sup>2467</sup> “Relevance of the Message of Fatima 75 Years Later,” *Diário las Américas*, Miami, 5/14/92.

which would include Russia and all those peoples she had crushed, martyred and massacred, each with a vote in a Federal Council of Europe.

They would build a super-government in which all European nations would be weighed down so heavily and tied together so inextricably that the result would be either war or convergence.<sup>2468</sup>

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Nevertheless, Gorbachev's promise of perestroika in Russia produced perhaps one of the greatest geopolitical earthquakes in history, both inside and outside that country.<sup>2469</sup>

Of course, I was thrilled to see the loss of communism's international prestige due to this policy.

The fall of the Iron Curtain fully opened the East to everyone who wanted to visit. Visitors found there a situation so entirely irreconcilable with human dignity as to justify in every respect Cardinal Ratzinger's words about communist regimes: "This shame of our time cannot be ignored: while claiming to bring them freedom, these regimes keep whole nations in conditions of servitude unworthy of mankind."<sup>2470</sup>

The inter-TFPs delegation that delivered a message to President Vytautas Landsbergis pledging the full support of the five million signatories to the petition for Lithuanian independence (more on this issue later) returned with truly appalling reports and information.

Glasnost (transparency) disclosed to the world the abject failure of the communist regime's efforts to provide for the needs of the poor. It showed that this system could not help those in need and had reduced everyone under it to extreme poverty.<sup>2471</sup>

With *perestroika* (restructuring), the nations hitherto kept under the iron gauntlet of Soviet communism without the slightest hope of being freed suddenly shook off that terrible yoke and took their destiny in hand. Germany, so brutally torn apart, was reunified.

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<sup>2468</sup> RR 11/11/89. In this context, *convergence* refers to the fusion of all European or all nations worldwide into an amalgamation of political and social systems. In other words, convergence toward adopting a single semi-communist and semi-capitalist regime would result in communism as the positive pole and capitalism as the negative pole. According to their plan, this convergence would be the final step toward the communist conquest of the world.

<sup>2469</sup> "Relevance of the Message of Fatima 75 Years Later," cit.

<sup>2470</sup> Cf. "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'" Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, August 6, 1984, No. XI:10)  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19840806\\_theology-liberation\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html).

<sup>2471</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

Who would not have viewed such encouraging changes with renewed hope?<sup>2472</sup>

## 2. Gorbachev, an Ingenious Trickster

I confess that I always considered Gorbachev—admired and later mourned by so many after his fall—as a trickster, although an ingenious one.

To obtain money from the West, disarm, and lull those who believed in him into a false sense of security, he created the mirage of a Russia from which the communist threat had been semi-exorcised. His influence was, therefore, tragically harmful.<sup>2473</sup>

For me, Gorbachev represented ambiguity potentially fraught with ominous surprises.

A reporter once asked me: “So Gorbachev is not reliable?” I said: No, not at all. He is entirely unreliable.

He depended on the generous and reckless handouts that Western capitalism bestowed upon him to prevent Russia from dissolving into chaos and utter misery.

He made promises of liberalization to obtain money, and any pledge under such circumstances should be treated with caution.

He played this game with President Reagan and President Bush (senior) and later did the same with West Germany’s Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

I asked myself what Gorbachev was doing to restore private property or establish free trade in Russia—nothing! No one could say what he was doing. All we knew was that he asked for, received and pocketed money.<sup>2474</sup>

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<sup>2472</sup> “Relevance of the Message of Fatima 75 Years Later,” cit.

<sup>2473</sup> Statements on the fall of Gorbachev, 8/20/91.

<sup>2474</sup> Some people might object that, after all, the Iron Curtain was torn down, and Russia is no longer communist or spreading its errors. This point of view is simplified, not to say simplistic, but let us assume that it is at least partly justified. Cuba, China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Laos are still communist, but this is not really significant. Communism has not been destroyed but underwent a metamorphosis, and Russia’s errors are spreading throughout the West, where they are bearing fruit through egalitarianism, immorality, practical atheism, exaggerated concern for the environment, attempts at self-management, etc. In Part Three of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (1976 edition), Dr. Plinio lists the errors of communism that changed their appearance as they expanded and led us into a kind of tribal communism:

“The overthrow of the traditions of dress in the West, increasingly eroded by nudism, obviously tends toward the appearance and consolidation of habits that will most tolerate the leather belt worn by certain tribes... The rapid disappearance of the rules of courtesy can only end up in the absolute simplicity (to use only this qualifier) of tribal manners.

“The growing dislike for anything that is reasoned, structured and systematized can only lead, in its last paroxysms, to the perpetual and fanciful vagabondage of jungle life, alternating likewise with the instinctive and almost mechanical performance of some activities absolutely indispensable to life.

“The aversion to intellectual effort, notably to abstraction, theorization, and doctrinal thought, can only induce, ultimately, a hypertrophy of the senses and the imagination, resulting in the ‘civilization of the image’ about which Paul VI felt duty-bound to warn mankind. Also symptomatic are

He asked for money to restart trade, restore private property, and open up a free market, and received fabulous sums but did nothing.

How could he possibly be trusted?<sup>2475</sup>

Yet he was portrayed as the central pillar on which the world's stability depended! During the crisis with Yeltsin in 1991, the slightest criticism of Gorbachev was enough to cause panic in the foreign ministries of the major powers and throughout the global media. The general feeling was that if he were overthrown, the world would plunge into nuclear war.<sup>2476</sup>

### 3. Expectancy and Vigilance

What was the TFP's position on these changes in the East? Did it support or oppose them?

We were prepared to support these changes as long as they aimed to restore an order recognizing private property and a free market.

However, if these two factors or pillars of the human order were not re-established, the TFP would not support these changes.

We suspected that Gorbachev, as a communist (he continued to declare himself a communist even after the rapprochement with the United States), intended to implement Article 1 of the Soviet Constitution. This article states that the purpose of a communist system's state capitalism is to pave the way for self-management.

He was aiming for self-managing communism, even more reprehensible, in my view, than state capitalism.<sup>2477</sup> All communist theorists and top leaders, from Marx and Engels to Gorbachev, always presented self-managing communism as the most extreme and uncompromising—in other words, quintessential—version of communism.<sup>2478</sup>

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It was against this background that Lithuania began to demand independence. Faced with the *red or dead* alternative, although a small nation, Lithuania chose to risk persecution and death rather than prolong the vile and intolerable captivity in which it had been languishing for fifty years.<sup>2479</sup>

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the ever more frequent idyllic eulogies of a cultural revolution that will generate a postindustrial society, still ill-defined but whose first specimen would be – some say is – Chinese communism.”

In a postscript in 1992, Dr. Plinio says the new revolution that followed the fall of the Soviet empire, “although having a political dimension, identifies itself as a cultural revolution. In other words, it broadly encompasses all aspects of human existence” <https://www.tfp.org/books/rcr.pdf>

<sup>2475</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

<sup>2476</sup> Statements on Gorbachev's Return to Power, 8/21/91.

<sup>2477</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

<sup>2478</sup> “Relevance of the Message of Fatima 75 Years Later,” cit.

<sup>2479</sup> Interview with Rádio São Miguel of Uruguaiana, 6/21/90.

This nation had been the victim of a severe violation of its rights.

The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, signed just before the Second World War, was a cynical treaty between the Russian Communist government and the German Nazi government. In exchange for many advantages this treaty granted them, the Germans agreed that Russia invaded the three Baltic countries - Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia – and turned the entire region into Russian provinces. As a result, these countries fell under the Soviet yoke.

Encouraged by Gorbachev's liberalizing policies and trusting that Western countries would support it, Lithuania, followed by Latvia and Estonia, began asking for independence, which it proclaimed on March 11, 1990.

As a nation with its own language, history, and culture, Lithuania's desire to be free in its territory was natural—it was its natural right.

To its great disappointment, Gorbachev, the self-proclaimed ally of all the oppressed, showed that he would not hesitate to suppress any uprising in Lithuania. Afraid of displeasing Gorbachev, the whole West looked idly on.<sup>2480</sup>

Gorbachev acted just as he pleased. The President of the United States and the earth's great powers said nothing to support Lithuania, which remained in complete isolation.<sup>2481</sup>

For example, the Brazilian government went so far as to talk in Norway about the “harmful effect” the independence of the Baltic republics would have since it would disturb Gorbachev, who was considered indispensable for world peace.<sup>2482</sup>

#### 4. For an Independent Lithuania, History's Largest Petition

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<sup>2480</sup> In June 1990, Gorbachev ordered an economic blockade against that long-suffering country in reprisal for its unilateral declaration of independence. He blocked its ports and transit routes by land, cut off its oil and gas supplies, and demanded that the Lithuanian Parliament “freeze” the declaration of independence for two years to lift the blockade.

In July 1990, after tense negotiations, the Lithuanian Parliament was forced to accept the “freezing” of the country's independence for 100 days to give a Russian-Lithuanian joint committee time to discuss the terms of definitive independence. But even before negotiations started, Moscow “suggested” that Lithuania should remain federated within the USSR.

Meanwhile, in November 1990, Gorbachev did something that highlighted his brutality and the indifference and cowardice with which senior European dignitaries abandoned Lithuania. At Gorbachev's request, Lithuanians were expelled from the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe meeting in Paris after participating in the session as observers for three hours! (“The delegations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania...despite having been invited as ‘distinguished guests’ of the French government...were expelled, reportedly at the insistence of the Soviet Union” <http://www.nat.o.int/acad/fellow/99-01/Vitkus.pdf>). That produced great discouragement in Lithuania; the general impression was that any attempt at fighting would be useless, as no one in the West would lift a finger to support them in any way (cf. *Catholicism*, No. 601, January 2001).

<sup>2481</sup> Interview with TV Manchete (recording), 6/18/90.

<sup>2482</sup> Statement to *Folha de S. Paulo*, 6/6/91.

Gorbachev's position on Lithuania was contradictory. Any contradiction in the conduct of a man in such a position of responsibility likely created suspicion and had to be unmasked.<sup>2483</sup>

Accordingly, the Brazilian TFP sought out the Lithuanian expat community here to inform them that it would launch a campaign for the liberation of their country and planned to extend the campaign throughout our vast territory, as it subsequently did.

I used my influence with the 20 kindred and autonomous TFPs to propose that they extend this campaign to their respective countries worldwide. They responded and started their preparations immediately.<sup>2484</sup>

We mounted a colossal international campaign covering 26 nations to send President Vytautas Landsbergis a message pledging our full support to the cause of Lithuanian independence.<sup>2485</sup>

That triggered an equally colossal wave of sympathy.<sup>2486</sup>

Eleven members of various TFPs, led by TFP's Paris office director and my dear friend Dr. Caio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, took microfilms of this petition to Vilnius.

The petition was officially presented to President Landsbergis on December 4, 1990, in his office at the Parliament Palace.<sup>2487</sup>

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On December 6, in Moscow, the delegation was photographed in the middle of Red Square, unfurling a TFP standard with all members wearing TFPs' characteristic red cape.

On December 11, the delegation visited the Kremlin to present a collective letter addressed to Mikhail Gorbachev and signed by the presidents of all TFPs, formally requesting him, in reply to this unequivocal stand taken by the Free World, to remove all obstacles preventing Lithuania from achieving complete independence.<sup>2488</sup>

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<sup>2483</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

<sup>2484</sup> Little Dispatch 7/3/91 and "Taking Stock of a Historic Campaign," *Catolicismo* No. 482, February 1991.

<sup>2485</sup> Interview with *Correio Brasiliense* (recording), 1/23/91.

<sup>2486</sup> Little Dispatch 3/7/91. In a 130-day campaign initiated on May 31, 1990, the TFPs and TFP offices in 26 countries gathered 5,218,520 signatures; the world-renowned Guinness Book of Records for the year 1993 stated that this was the petition with the largest number of signatures ever collected worldwide.

<sup>2487</sup> Dr. Plinio's preface to the work by Fr. Pranas Gaida, *Theophilus Matulionis, Bishop, Prisoner and Martyr of Communism*, November 1991.

<sup>2488</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit. On the same day the letter was delivered came the reaction of Vladimir Kriutchov, head of the KGB, the dreaded Soviet secret police. He said on television that Moscow would not tolerate "any interference in the internal affairs of the USSR ... by those organizations and small groups in foreign countries which had ... been waging for decades, and were continuing to wage a secret war against the Soviet State." It sounded like a threat. The statement was published by *Le Figaro*, Paris, on December 13, 1990.



Upon returning to Brazil, the delegation expressed delight with the welcome from the Lithuanian government and the Cardinal Archbishop of Kaunas, Most Rev. Vincentas Sladkevicius. Lithuanians living in Brazil were cordially informed about all this.<sup>2489</sup>

### 5. Repression in Lithuania: Gorbachev Drops His Mask

At that point, Gorbachev initiated his brutal repression of Lithuanians' attempts to declare independence.<sup>2490</sup>

Frustrating the vain hopes his perestroika policy had awakened in the West, Gorbachev violated the sovereignty of a nation just reborn. He ordered people's reactions in Lithuania crushed on the pretext that its young men refused to serve in the Soviet Army.

Communist tanks started firing at completely defenseless people supported only by their spiritual weapons, the Catholic Faith and a staunch determination to ensure their independence.

Singing hymns of faith and patriotism, unarmed Lithuanian crowds stood as living barriers against Soviet tanks, to the great astonishment of the Soviet aggressors and the whole world. They refused to retreat even as the first victims were savagely crushed under tank tracks.

How did Moscow react?

Realizing that continuing that genocidal attack would raise a storm of righteous indignation against Gorbachev throughout the Free World, the Kremlin "disowned" the attack, blamed it on the commander of the communist forces based in Lithuania and withdrew the paratroopers it had just sent in.

No sooner had measures "disowning" the Soviet brutalities in Vilnius (with obvious PR benefits for Mr. Gorbachev in the West) been announced than the news came that one of their scapegoats – Colonel Boris Pugo, the "guilty" Interior Minister whom a KGB statement accused of having been one of the leading instigators of the brutal attack – had been promoted to the rank of general.

In other words, the whole exercise was no more than a pro forma "sacrifice" of a pawn. The Soviets merely added duplicity to their violence.<sup>2491</sup>

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<sup>2489</sup> Dispatch, 3/7/91.

<sup>2490</sup> This repression started on the night of January 13, 1991, a month after the delivery of the TFP petition. Gorbachev finally dropped his smiling mask and revealed an ugly, harsh, unforgiving countenance.

<sup>2491</sup> Letter to Pope John Paul II on Lithuania 3/15/91. International reactions to Soviet brutality using tanks and machine guns against unarmed young people reached a paroxysm of indignation. At last, Gorbachev was obliged to yield to the pressures of Western powers and accept Lithuania's independence as a fait accompli. Russian soldiers, however, remained on Lithuanian soil, which they only left three years later (cf. *Catholicism* No. 601, January 2001).

On January 14, 1991, we organized a demonstration in downtown São Paulo with participants marching in unbroken lines to protest the cruel Russian attacks on defenseless civilians motivated only by their faith and patriotism.

On March 15, 1992, I wrote a letter to John Paul II and all the heads of state of the Free World on behalf of all TFPs calling for the resumption of diplomatic relations with Lithuania.<sup>2492</sup>

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On September 5, 1991, a few days after Brazil recognized the Lithuanian nation's gloriously won independence, I sent President Vytautas Landsbergis a letter as President of the Brazilian TFP congratulating him on Lithuania's complete and decisive victory over the sinister Soviet *moloch*.

I was thrilled to see that fifteen TFPs and representative offices in five other countries collaborated so enthusiastically with the campaign for the independence of Lithuania, known as the "Land of Mary."

This joint effort occurred when all Western governments had abandoned the cause of this brave nation under the cold and indifferent eyes of the Free World's hugely influential media.<sup>2493</sup>

## Chapter III

# On the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Discoveries, a Crucial Choice: Christian Civilization? Or Tribal Communism? (1992)

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<sup>2492</sup> Dispatch, 3/7/91.

<sup>2493</sup> Preface to the work, *Theophilus Matulionis, Bishop, Prisoner and Martyr of Communism*, cit. The Lithuanian authorities declared to our visiting delegation that everything that happened there was made possible to a great extent by our campaign's encouragement at that difficult time. They were discouraged, and we brought them new hope. Lithuania's independence played a crucial role in undoing the Soviet bloc. *The New York Times* editorial of August 29, 1991, stated: "In a real sense, the Baltics were the catalysts for the Soviet upheaval. Lithuania was the first Soviet republic to proclaim its independence in March 1991, emboldening others."

## 1. What My Contemporaries Thought about Indians and Progress

Before discussing our demonstration downtown São Paulo on the Fifth Centenary of Discovery celebrated in 1992, I would like to discuss a particular aspect of our history.

In my early childhood, when I heard about Indians, the images left in my mind were ambivalent.

On the one hand, people referred to them as a race that deserved sympathy as they were the first occupants of Brazilian soil. We should see them as our oldest compatriots with a sense of national solidarity, particular respect and goodwill.

On the other hand, however, when examining the lives of Indians in their primitive state, wandering through our countryside and forests, and taking into account their customs and morals, the system by which they obtained supplies needed to live—more by inaction than by work as they were averse to methodical activity—most opinions were roundly unfavorable.

This image contrasted with another, unconditionally laudatory, that certain manufacturers of opinion assiduously spread about modern progress. Progress was the predominant myth of the Hollywood era, which began during my childhood. For decades, it was consistently presented to the Western world, especially Europe and North America, in a most favorable and optimistic light as generating continuous growth and development that would comprehensively improve people's lives.

Some even prophesied that the progress of medicine before the end of the century or during the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be such as to make it possible to restore “health” - no less! - to people who had died and would, therefore, be “resurrected.”

As a result, especially in the US, millionaires and others who led easy and enjoyable lives left legacies for specific expenses in case of their eventual “resurrection.” These legacies included specific provisions on how their bodies would be held in cold storage by companies established for that purpose (since the 1960s) so they would be in good shape when coming back to life.

This extreme example shows the lengths to which the euphoric endorsement of progress and the optimistic desire to live forever, as Hollywood portrayed, could carry some people.

Many people shared this enthusiasm for progress and wholeheartedly believed in the dream of unlimited scientific progress and technological advances.

From this point of view, the primitive state of Indigenous tribes here and in Africa, Asia and Oceania represented the bottom of the progress scale when compared with the situation of people living according to *Hollywood*, who were seen as the other end of the scale.

For several decades, from time to time, there was talk of massacres, murder and cannibalism perpetrated by indigenous tribes, dangers associated with their nomadic lifestyle, and how risky it would be to meet them in the jungle.

## **2. A Period of Silence, Followed by a Complete Turnaround**

Nevertheless, at some point, the public lost interest in the Indians, and over time, one heard less and less about them.

The issue reemerged after an interval in which it remained buried in silence and oblivion. However, indigenous peoples were presented with a radically different image this time. The same ideological currents working to destroy Christian civilization that had seized the right moment to use the neo-pagan myth of Hollywood now started dismantling that same myth and the civilization based on it to leap forward on the revolutionary path toward neo-tribal anarchy.

For this new goal, they had to present the living conditions of primitive peoples in the most favorable way possible.

I was a witness to this whole process. It began with references to one author, who averred that it was an exaggeration to say that all Indians were cannibals. Then came another claiming there never was cannibalism among them, who possessed extraordinary qualities. Eulogies on their art, culture, and civilization became increasingly frequent and bordered on the hyperbolic.

One can speak of Indigenous art and civilization in the case of peoples like the Incas and the Aztecs, who had well-structured and organized empires and whose art and culture deserve consideration.

Above all, after their conversion to the true faith, Indians throughout America showed talents that enabled them to produce good and even extraordinary work. Thanks to baptism, civilization and contact with the Church and the civil societies of Portugal and Spain, their latent natural abilities were converted into patent qualities.

However, from a historiographical point of view, it is highly questionable to speak of pre-Columbian Indian art in connection with indigenous peoples other than the Aztecs, the Incas, and a few other exceptions.

The new wave of interest in indigenous issues, promoted by the left, led to the virtual glorification of indigenous tribes and their ancient way of life.

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For example, the ECO'92 summit was a curious and very systematic and telling manifestation of this glorification, which the movement to oppose the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of America exploited almost hysterically.<sup>2494</sup>

### **3. Main Arguments of Opponents of Celebrating America's Discovery and Evangelization**

To the surprise of many, not everyone considered the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of America's discovery as an occasion for celebration.

In certain publications of the Catholic left, the conquerors, traditionally considered heroes, were now portrayed as villains. Instead of extolling their courage and civilizing influence, these publications highlighted their cruelty. Liberation theology supporters depicted the selfless and meritorious missionaries who converted the Indians to the Catholic faith as participants in a nefarious enterprise.

I believed liberation theologians' errors in interpreting history were rooted in their errors in interpreting theology. In other words, their historical errors resulted from their theological errors.

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Liberation theologians' views of human nature and the direction that history should follow are entirely different from those of true Catholics.

For a faithful Catholic, man must make continual progress, but this progress must consist in conquering the Earth and cultivating it to serve humanity. In turn, people must serve God's will so He may reign over all creation.

If a man genuinely tries to live virtuously, he will find the proper balance to prevent nature's destruction. He will even improve and perfect it for his benefit.

The doctrine of liberation theologians, similar to exaggerated environmentalism spread worldwide, posits that man should serve nature. Instead of conquering and taming nature for his benefit, man should live to preserve nature in its pristine state.

According to this doctrine, man should regard himself as the guardian of nature, keep his interference with it limited to a bare minimum, and live as modestly as possible on no more than what nature can give. Ideally, man should remain in a truly primitive, wild state.

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<sup>2494</sup> Preface to the book, *The Fifth Centennial Facing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Inter-TFPs Commission for Hispanic-American Studies, Artpress, São Paulo, 1993.

The only conclusion to be drawn from this eco-theological concept is that man's ideal state is to live as a primitive child of nature. In contrast, Catholic doctrine tells us that man's ideal state is to be civilized.

Unsurprisingly, liberation theologians consider the Indians have been harmed by attempts to civilize them.

From there, it was only a step for eco-theologians to conclude that America should not have been discovered and did not profit by being discovered by Europeans, who committed the grave error of trying to mold that "wonderful" New World to their civilization, a genuinely absurd idea.

For these liberation theology followers and the apostles of this "ecology," the work of discoverers and settlers was nothing but malicious destruction.<sup>2495</sup>

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Once again, the Spanish Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga was the most vocal exponent of this new interpretation. In his view, the coming of white missionaries harmed the Indians. He went so far as to say that the white God did not suit red-skinned people.

I thought the white-skinned God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, suited all men.

#### **4. The Role of Heroic Discoverers and Evangelizers in the History of Brazil**

Unlike liberation theology adherents, I saw the Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of America as the anniversary of an event of transcendental importance for the history of the world.

Its importance was so transcendental that any attempt to list all its consequences would be doomed to failure.

Let me focus on its effects on Spain's history. In 1492, Spain had just consolidated its unity by expelling the last Moors from Granada and entered a new era that saw it rise as one of the leading nations in the history of the West.

Spain had turned to fighting against the Moors in the East after successfully fighting the Moors in the West and earning a remarkable victory at Lepanto, which ended Muslim attempts at expansion.<sup>2496</sup>

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<sup>2495</sup> Interview with *Catolicismo* No. 503, November 1992.

<sup>2496</sup> Today, we are witnessing the ominous resurgence of Muslim power represented at its most extreme by the Islamic State organization. Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira predicted this resurgence in *Legionário* in the 1940s and *Catolicismo* in the early 1950s.

In "The Lebanese Question," an article printed in the December 5, 1943 issue of *Legionário*, he said: "The Muslim danger is immense. The West seems to be closing its eyes to it, as it is half-closing them to the yellow peril. ... These days, anything can be done with men, weapons and money, and there is no lack of money and men in the Muslim world.

"Acquiring weapons will not be difficult ... and, thus, an immense power will arise across the East, active, bellicose, conscious of its traditions, the enemy of the West, as well-armed as the West itself,

On the other hand, great naval discoveries were not limited to the discovery of America, which led the Spaniards to territories as far away as the Philippines.

Spain also decisively supported the Counter-Reformation, a religious and cultural movement in the term's broadest sense. The latter raised barriers to the Reformation, which sounded like a real revolution.

The resources received from the New World made all this possible, greatly benefiting Christian civilization and humanity. For example, José de Anchieta, the great Jesuit missionary born in the Canary Islands and thus a Spanish citizen, was the greatest apostle of the Indians in Brazil. He deservedly became world-famous and was beatified by John Paul II during one of his visits to Brazil.<sup>2497</sup>

### 5. The TFP-sponsored “Walk of Fidelity”

When all those voices were raised to convince people that the discovery had been a disaster for the native populations of America and the history of the world, the Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property could not remain silent and protested these allegations that flatly contradicted historical fact.

In a solemn act attended by representatives of various countries from the Americas and Europe, we affirmed our enthusiastic endorsement of the missionary work done by the Catholic Church in Brazil and throughout the Americas over five centuries. At the same time, we expressed the conviction that the future of America can only be the future of Christian civilization.

This demonstration deserves to be called the “Walk of Fidelity.”<sup>2498</sup>

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which over time may become as influential as the yellow world, but which finds itself in an incomparably better geographic and economic situation!”

For more details concerning this question, see the excellent work by Juan Gonzalo Larrain Campbell, *Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira: Predictions and Denunciations in Defense of the Church and Christian Civilization* (Artpress, São Paulo, 2001), which cites this significant testimony of a Jesuit priest, João B. Libânio, a leading exponent of liberation theology: “In 1940, Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira (founder of TFP - Brazilian Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property) gave the Jesuits a talk imbued with an entirely messianic idea [sic!], saying that Christianity’s big problem was Islam. Fifty years ago, this was a prophetic announcement, or maybe history moved in that direction for other reasons. However, the fact is that what he foresaw has come true.”

<sup>2497</sup> Interview with Spain’s TVE (recording), 2/3/90. As mentioned earlier, he was canonized by the current pontiff. He was a Jesuit characteristic of the sixteenth century, the golden century of the Society of Jesus in the best and fullest sense of the word.

<sup>2498</sup> Taking advantage of many people coming to São Paulo for the Eighth Meeting of Supporters and Friends, the TFP organized what became known as the Walk of Fidelity (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 494, February 1992). This parade was held on the afternoon of Friday, January 3. It was a tribute by the TFPs from the Americas to the popes, monarchs, discoverers and missionaries who advanced the efforts at evangelization and civilization.

The demonstration of fidelity began at Pátio do Colégio [College Square], the first nucleus of São Paulo. It was a tiny village inhabited by Portuguese and Indians whom missionaries had just introduced to the light of the Gospel.

Following this road map symbolically, we left Pátio do Colégio and marched down various streets of São Paulo's old center, past buildings from different eras of the state's history that symbolized all the centuries São Paulo has survived to this day. It was a march of fidelity to tradition.

## **6. Footsteps That Reverberate in Heaven**

I am convinced that people's footsteps on earth reverberate in heaven. So, when we planned that demonstration, I was sure everything we did would resonate in heaven and be inscribed in the Book of Life.

With this certainty, we initiated the 8th Meeting of TFP Supporters on January 3, 1992.

During the parade, I was happy to see visitors from the north of our continent, from the banks of the Hudson River that flows through New York. I saw people from remote regions of the Amazon, so characteristically Brazilian, so far removed from us geographically but so close to our hearts. I saw people from Rio de la Plata's banks and from across the Andes. I saw Spaniards coming from the banks of the Manzanares River, which flows through historic and legendary Madrid, to join our celebrations.

Yes, the Book of Life will record that at the dawn of this year, 1992, as progressives eye future achievements of their renewal program, which brings nothing but deterioration, other steps echo firmly on the ground as we proclaim, "We, too, will advance! We, too, will march forward!"<sup>2499</sup>

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<sup>2499</sup> Speech during the Walk of Fidelity, *Catolicismo* No. 494, February 1992.



## Chapter IV

# Against the Maastricht Treaty: Christian Europe? Or Secular and Revolutionary Europe? (1992)

### 1. Large National Blocs Pave the Way for a Worldwide Bureaucratic Dictatorship

The TFP is not very sympathetic<sup>2500</sup> to a strong current of opinion that favors unifying large blocks of nations.<sup>2501</sup> History has shown that forming such blocks and extinguishing nation-states paves the way for a universal bureaucratic dictatorship. I am against such developments.<sup>2502</sup>

Sooner or later, the same motivation that drives people to unite in a single supranational block will lead to forming a single international, global nation.

The result would be the abolition of all homelands and nations, which seems unnatural and undesirable.

That is why I opposed the kind of union envisaged by the Maastricht Treaty for France and other European nations, just as I opposed similar attempts to unify the countries of South America.

If every continent were converted into a single block, we would have arrived at the formation of a world government.<sup>2503</sup>

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They took the first step in this direction in the 1950s. Representatives of West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg met in Rome and signed a first constituent treaty for a “Europe of the Six” in which early outlines, mutual concessions and tentative allusions to a future European Union began to appear.<sup>2504</sup>

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<sup>2500</sup> Interview with the daily *Zero Hora*, Porto Alegre (recording), 1/21/93.

<sup>2501</sup> Press release to French Radio stations, November 1992.

<sup>2502</sup> Interview with *Zero Hora* (recording), 1/21/93.

<sup>2503</sup> Press release to French Radio stations, November 1992.

<sup>2504</sup> RR 9/12/92. These were the famous Treaties of Rome. The first established the European Economic Community (EEC), and the second, the European Atomic Energy Community, better known as Euratom. Both were signed on March 25, 1957, and came into force on January 1, 1958.

## 2. The Maastricht Treaty's Importance for Establishing a Universal Republic

More recently, they signed a treaty establishing the "Europe of the Twelve" in Maastricht.<sup>2505</sup>

This Treaty was introduced surreptitiously because, except for Britain, which refused to join the Eurozone, representatives of all the "Europe of the Twelve" governments realized that it was extremely risky to consult public opinion in their respective countries about its contents. They knew their best chance to push it through quickly was to rely on members of their national parliaments who supported the Treaty.

At some point, the European nations would wake up to find they had lost the best part of their sovereignty under that Treaty.<sup>2506</sup>

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However, Denmark decided to hold a referendum, as the Danish Constitution required.

The Danish authorities decided to publish Europe's new structure as envisaged by the Maastricht Treaty, allowing the Danish to read these explanations before voting.

When they did so, they realized the text was virtually unintelligible (I shall come back to this point later). Secondly, it made clear that this Treaty was effectively a yoke being placed around the necks of all European nations.

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<sup>2505</sup> The European Union was effectively created by that Treaty, signed on February 7, 1992, by twelve member countries: the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg and Greece - hence the denomination "Europe of the Twelve." A series of other treaties followed; today, the European Union consists of 28 Member States.

<sup>2506</sup> Full of inaccuracies and complexities in its confusing wording, the Treaty's provisions interfered with national sovereignty in essential points. As a result, member states virtually ceased to exist, to a great extent, as free and sovereign nations. The Treaty subjected them to an impersonal, anonymous, tyrannical super-government based in Brussels. The Treaty would deprive France and other European nations of the right to use their military potential as they saw fit and, in the future, to have an independent foreign policy. It would also force them to submit their accounts and budgets to the European Union's super-government.

This rigid political structure resulting from the eventual application of the Maastricht Treaty could easily turn into a *nomenklatura* of technocrats, such as those that governed the extinct USSR. The French and other Treaty signatories would be subject to the same process of massification that ruined the nations of the former Soviet Union.

Statements by the delegate minister for European affairs, Elizabeth Guigou, showed how surreptitious attempts pushed this Treaty through: "For a long time we built Europe on the sly, in secret."

Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission's highest executive body, acknowledged: "The European integration process did not start with a clear statement of how powers were ultimately to be allocated." The Socialist Jean-Pierre Chevènement stated, "Far from building the Europe of the peoples, we will build Europe without the people. The highest officials who make up the Commission of the European Communities will pass laws and regulations without bothering to obtain democratic consent" (cf. "The TFP Says No To Maastricht," *Catholicism* No. 503, November 1992).

When the time came to vote, and they were asked whether they wanted to continue independent, the answer was: “We want to continue independent; we want no part of this Treaty.” In other words, it was a defeat for Maastricht.<sup>2507</sup>

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Given this result in Denmark, Maastricht opponents in many other countries began demanding a referendum on the same question. That caused a panic in the corridors of power.

Since they did not want the Europe of the Twelve to be recognizable as a dictatorship, they had to pretend it was approved according to strictly democratic processes.

That need was most noticeable in France,<sup>2508</sup> so the Mitterrand government decided to organize a referendum on September 20, 1992, which threatened the Maastricht Treaty’s entire house of cards.

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When it became clear that this referendum would be held, the French TFP could not remain silent. It had to make a statement.

But what should they say? There was only one possibility: the Maastricht Treaty had to be exposed for what it was. It needed to be analyzed, article by article, to show how its provisions would liquidate France's independence. And then the French should be asked, “This is the Treaty. Is this what you want?”<sup>2509</sup>

### 3. French TFP Calls, I Suggest They Intervene

During a telephone conference with leaders of the French TFP, I told them that, judging from a distance, they would do well to join the debate. In this way, even if Maastricht Treaty opponents failed to obtain a majority and the pro-Maastricht side won by a narrow margin, subsequent attempts to enforce the Maastricht Treaty would be made more difficult, and its proponents would find themselves in an embarrassing situation.

A narrow victory for the pro-Maastricht side would ultimately constitute a defeat. Forcing one-half, or a little less than one-half, of a nation's people to accept what roughly amounted to renouncing sovereignty was a radical measure with an extremely uncertain outcome.

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<sup>2507</sup> In the 1992 referendum, the Treaty was rejected by 50.7% of the voters. This defeat prompted the European leadership to cobble the Edinburgh Agreement, which granted Denmark exemptions on the Treaty of Maastricht. That alone made it possible to hold a second referendum the following year (1993), which enabled the Treaty’s acceptance and Denmark’s entry into the European Union.

<sup>2508</sup> On April 9, 1992, France’s Constitutional Council signaled that ratifying the Maastricht Treaty would be impossible without revising the Constitution. To break the deadlock, the French Parliament held a joint session on June 23, 1992, introducing constitutional changes to permit such ratification.

<sup>2509</sup> RR 9/12/92.

I thus told them one should not consider this issue in terms of numbers but of numbers analyzed from a political point of view,<sup>2510</sup> and make every effort to persuade the French to vote ‘no.’ Every slight difference would help.<sup>2511</sup>

Moreover, it would be sad if the TFP did not attempt to stop this treaty.<sup>2512</sup> We had to do something if only to be able to say, later: “We did warn you!”<sup>2513</sup>

#### 4. The Fate of Europe and the World Hinge on the French Referendum

Another weighty consideration was that, given France's role in Europe and the world, a heavily pro-Maastricht outcome of the French referendum would mean the victory of the Maastricht Treaty in Europe. If the referendum went against it, the Maastricht Treaty would be defeated in Europe.

Consequently, hanging in the balance was no more and no less than the fate of Europe—the most cultured part of the world, with its most profound and meaningful traditions, where Christian civilization developed and flourished like nowhere else, its soil soaked with blessings of the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. All of this was at stake at that moment.

If the “no” side won, the plan for the unification of Europe, and thus for a global super-government, would have to be shelved for a long time.<sup>2514</sup> Even the mainstream media acknowledged it: the world's fate was at stake in this French referendum.<sup>2515</sup>

Therefore, the French TFP had the important task of trying to galvanize as many of the Treaty's opponents into action as possible.<sup>2516</sup>

#### 5. A Confusing and Almost Unreadable Treaty; French TFP Goes on Campaign

It turns out that the text of the Treaty was the stupidest, most crazy, anarchic and confusing thing imaginable.<sup>2517</sup> Several eminent Frenchmen declared the Treaty unintelligible, and some of its supporters acknowledged this.

So, we offered our French friends a draft, which they naturally translated into French and extensively modified as they saw fit – as I had strongly encouraged them to do.<sup>2518</sup>

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<sup>2510</sup> Phone call with French TFP 8/26/92.

<sup>2511</sup> Dispatch France 7/17/92.

<sup>2512</sup> Dispatch France 7/28/92.

<sup>2513</sup> Dispatch France 7/22/92.

<sup>2514</sup> RR 8/29/92.

<sup>2515</sup> Dinner EANS 9/15/92.

<sup>2516</sup> Lunch 8/26/92.

<sup>2517</sup> CSN 8/1/92.

<sup>2518</sup> RR 9/12/92.

I had to make a great intellectual effort to sort out and understand the pieces jumbled together—the French use the word *enfouir* (bury) in the Maastricht Treaty.<sup>2519</sup> I found this draft’s preparation unbelievably tiring.<sup>2520</sup>

The whole thing was an infernal mess. Trying to pick passages with more or less defined contours from this unreadable concoction to shape them into a clear manifesto was a Herculean task.

I am happy to report that many TFP members contributed significantly to preparing this manifesto by reading and summarizing much material.

After that, French TFP members worked on the draft, gave it the required finishing touches and produced a final version<sup>2521</sup> published in *Le Quotidien de Paris*.<sup>2522</sup>

## 6. The Bishops: Neutral, then Pro-Maastricht after the Manifesto

The day after the manifesto was published, the French Bishops—who had previously issued a statement expressing neutrality and claiming that the referendum was strictly a temporal matter—hastily published their own manifesto in favor of the Maastricht Treaty. In other words, they tried to influence specific sectors of the Catholic public they feared might be swayed and pass to the other side.<sup>2523</sup>

In this way, the French Catholic hierarchy helped to mislead many right-minded Catholics. Many who eventually voted pro-Maastricht would not have done so had the hierarchy not been persuaded to vote “yes.”<sup>2524</sup>

## 7. Yellow Light: The Government Wins “Avec un petit oui”

Surveys on voter intentions initially showed a strong bias toward the pro-Maastricht side. Then, the anti-Maastricht side gradually gained ground and eventually drew even.

As the day of the referendum approached, it was clear that one, two, or three percent of the vote could make the difference between yes and no.<sup>2525</sup>

The French media flooded the country with pro-Maastricht propaganda.

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<sup>2519</sup> RR 8/29/92.

<sup>2520</sup> RR 9/12/92.

<sup>2521</sup> Dinner EANS 9/15/92.

<sup>2522</sup> This happened on August 25, 1992, twenty-six days before the referendum. The French TFP then started a vigorous campaign in the streets of Paris and several other cities to distribute the manifesto, which was also sent out by mass mailing.

<sup>2523</sup> RR 9/12/92.

<sup>2524</sup> Lunch, 9/20/92.

<sup>2525</sup> RR 9/12/92.

Finally, on September 20, the pro-Maastricht side won by a tiny margin of 2.1%.

A 2.1 percent majority was a razor-thin<sup>2526</sup> Pyrrhic victory.<sup>2527</sup> Countless newspapers and commentators in France said it was a small victory barely likely to make much of an impact.<sup>2528</sup>

Public opinion would reject any attempt to present such an insignificant majority as an earnest endorsement of the Maastricht Treaty.

In other words, this result was a great embarrassment to the Mitterrand government.<sup>2529</sup>

If the government knew in advance that 48.9% of the French did not want this result, it had no right to surrender French sovereignty to foreigners based on such a meager majority.

Moreover, the French political class had entirely failed to interpret the mood among the population. The House vote favoring the Maastricht Treaty did not even remotely reflect the nation's point of view. No faction, democratically speaking, would have been able to force the others to accept the surrender of national sovereignty based on such a tiny majority.<sup>2530</sup>

One Minister said, "For the government, it was not a red light, but it was not a green light, either: it was a yellow light." He hit the nail on the head with typical French astuteness and realism. The referendum result was an invitation to stop, not to advance any further, and to avoid any injudicious moves because the situation was extremely delicate.

Given the media pressure to say "yes," many who had some idea of propaganda's impact on people's spirits asked: Did they really win?<sup>2531</sup>

The pro-Maastricht side won a meager victory while we, the anti-Maastricht camp, sustained a glorious defeat.

The fact is that with this campaign, the French TFP's influence and prestige increased considerably.<sup>2532</sup>

For a long time, the plan to unify Europe and ultimately establish a global super-government was halted in its tracks.<sup>2533</sup>

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<sup>2526</sup> RR 9/21/92.

<sup>2527</sup> Lunch, 9/20/92. The "yes" won 13,165,475 (51.04%) of the vote, and the "no" 12,626,700 (48.96%). The participation of 69.7% of the voters (26,696,626 out of an electorate of 38,299,794) was considered particularly high for a referendum in France (cf. <http://www.interieur.gouv.fr>).

<sup>2528</sup> "The government wins '*avec un petit oui et un puissant non*' [with a small yes and a powerful no], commented RPR Senator Jean Valleix (cf. Sénat - Première session extraordinaire 1993-1994 - [http://www.senat.fr/rap/1993-1994/i1993\\_1994\\_0222\\_01.pdf](http://www.senat.fr/rap/1993-1994/i1993_1994_0222_01.pdf)).

<sup>2529</sup> RR 9/21/92.

<sup>2530</sup> Lunch, 9/20/92.

<sup>2531</sup> RR 9/21/92.

<sup>2532</sup> Lunch, 9/20/92.

<sup>2533</sup> RR 8/29/92.

The Spanish TFP ran a brilliant campaign against the Maastricht Treaty in Spain. So did their colleagues in Portugal.<sup>2534</sup>

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After and because of Maastricht, new alliances and treaties were formed and focused on Brussels, which gradually became Europe's bureaucratic capital.<sup>2535</sup>

After being established, European Parliamentarians passed "mandatory" legislation while they were only entitled to make recommendations. Gradually, as suspected, the Parliament sought to make its legislation accepted and implemented as binding by all EU members.<sup>2536</sup>

## Chapter V

# Campaign against Agrarian and Urban Reforms In the Collor Government (1992)

### 1. Planned Stalinist Reforms Would Completely Change the Country's Outlook

While I worked on the manifesto against the Maastricht Treaty,<sup>2537</sup> the Brazilian government was preparing a bill for agrarian reform and another for

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<sup>2534</sup> Interview with *Zero hora* (recording), 1/21/93.

<sup>2535</sup> Brussels is the European Union's *de facto* capital, although the EU has so far not declared any location as its official capital. The European Commission and the European Council are located in Brussels. About 75% of the Parliament's work is done there, although Strasbourg is its official address.

<sup>2536</sup> RR 9/12/92.

<sup>2537</sup> Automobile ride 2/19/92.

urban reform. Both were extremely leftist and opposed private property and free enterprise, two fundamental principles of Christian civilization and pillars of the Brazilian economy and the economy of the Western world.

If these projects were approved, Brazil would face its greatest crisis since independence.<sup>2538</sup>

Under the Collor government, members of the Brazilian parliament did not hesitate to fast-track bills known as 11D / 91 and 71B / 89 on agrarian reform and bill 5788/90 on urban reform. Under the pretext of implementing the provisions of Title VII, Chapters II and III of the Constitution, these bills aimed to introduce in Brazil the two most radical reforms proposed so far by legislators who did not openly declare themselves communists.<sup>2539</sup>

If approved, these projected bills would abolish free enterprise and private property in our country and replace them almost completely with state capitalism.<sup>2540</sup>

With the sweeping abandon typical of a Stalinist dictatorship—or something similar—the bills assigned powers to state agencies the absolute and undisputed right to dispose at will of the personal property of all farmers and ranchers in the country.<sup>2541</sup>

Under urban reform, real estate was subject to expropriation to the same extent as farmlands. The rights of urban owners would be severely curtailed.

One example suffices to illustrate the scope of this law: no one would be allowed to build a house without the city verifying that it was built to be inhabited by the largest possible number of people. In other words, the owner would have no right to make his house as he pleased but would be forced to accept a home the city planned for him—another occasion for political persecution.<sup>2542</sup>

There was no question that we would do our best to prevent this.<sup>2543</sup>

## **2. 1,133,932 Brazilians Sign Petition Demanding a Referendum**

The bills for agrarian and urban reform dragged on for a long time, ignored by the public, through convoluted channels of the required parliamentary proceedings.

When the 1992 ordinary legislative period was nearly over, the congressmen were requested to prolong it extraordinarily because of the political crisis that eventually resulted in President Collor de Mello's resignation.

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<sup>2538</sup> Radio Program 8/17/92.

<sup>2539</sup> "The Narrow Road with No Outlet," *Catolicismo* No. 502, October 1992.

<sup>2540</sup> "Brazilians Want Neither Agrarian Nor Urban Reform," *Catolicismo* No. 501, September 1992.

<sup>2541</sup> "Socialist Reforms Threaten Brazil," TFP Press Service news release, December 1992.

<sup>2542</sup> Radio Program 8/17/92.

<sup>2543</sup> Dispatch France 7/28/92.



At the same time, the draft bill for agrarian reform was dusted off and suddenly and unexpectedly presented to the plenary as extremely urgent.

The whole thing was rushed through so hastily that, at the time of voting, they violated the usual rules and the rapporteur, Odelmo Leão, read a final text not submitted to the members of parliament.

Since there was no quorum for a vote, the project was approved by a symbolic vote of the party leaders.<sup>2544</sup>

The bill for urban reform was placed on the agenda.<sup>2545</sup>

The population, uninformed, did not realize what was happening. The newspapers published almost nothing about this new legislation that would fundamentally change the nation's destiny. After a mere vote by the House leadership, the matter was passed on directly to the Senate.

Alerted by our representative in Brasilia, the TFP immediately sent a telex to President Collor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Ibsen Pinheiro, and the Senate President, Mr. Mauro Benevides, pointing out those flawed proceedings and presenting an alternative proposal.

The TFP pointed out that referenda had been held to enable the people to choose between monarchy and republic, between a parliamentary and a presidential system, and that it was unreasonable not to hold a referendum on a proposal with such far-reaching consequences as agrarian reform.

Therefore, we asked the Senate and House to hold a referendum to allow Brazilians to vote on whether they wanted or not want that agrarian reform (I hoped very much that the referendum would result in a clear rejection of the bill by the Brazilian people).

In other words, we asked that the people be heard.<sup>2546</sup>

At the same time, the TFP organized a nationwide petition to pressure the government to grant that referendum. From August 11, 1992, 344 collectors, working seven hours a day, visited 98 municipalities in 15 states and—together with 135 volunteers who gave up their leisure time to help in this daunting task—succeeded in collecting 1,133,932 signatures in approximately one month.

The petition was addressed to President Fernando Collor de Mello, Senate President Dr. Mauro Benevides, and the House of Representatives President Dr. Ibsen Pinheiro. The public's exceptional welcome surprised even seasoned TFP campaigners.

We were sure we would find support among the public but had not expected it to be so enthusiastic. We collected close to 100,000 signatures on the first day of the campaign alone.<sup>2547</sup>

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<sup>2544</sup> Sup 7/12/92.

<sup>2545</sup> "Brazilians Want Neither Agrarian Nor Urban Reform," *Catolicismo* No. 501, September 1992.

<sup>2546</sup> Sup 7/12/92.

<sup>2547</sup> Interview with *Folha da Tarde* (recording), 8/18/92.

On December 1, 1992, a committee of 20 TFP members and volunteers went to the president's Planalto Palace to deliver 40 boxes with 117,973 sheets bearing the signatures. At the same time, the Senate and House of Representatives presidents were sent letters notifying them that the documents had been delivered to the Presidential Palace.<sup>2548</sup>

### **3. Campaign against Agrarian Reform under the Fernando Henrique Government. An Audience with the Minister of Agriculture (1995)**

Three years later, under Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government, the TFP organized another campaign against agrarian reform.

A select delegation of TFP's SOS Farmer Campaign members went to Brasilia on May 17, 1995, to meet with the Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform, Mr. Andrade Vieira, to express their disagreement with the land reform project.<sup>2549</sup>

In this way, over 30,000 Brazilians from all over the country, represented by the TFP, formally requested that the government present to the public a survey of land reform implementation results in the parts of the country it had been imposed since 1964 and show the public the advantages, if any, that had accrued from that implementation.

As anyone would have to admit, this was a perfectly reasonable request.

While the minister welcomed the delegation very kindly, not everything can be solved with pleasantries.

Only justice can solve injustices. This meant we would only be satisfied if we had proof that the unjust land reform program had been scrapped.

We all knew that Brazil's vast territory had huge swathes of land not yet occupied. The country is so large that there is far more land than our current population would require.

So, if people were without land, why weren't they sent to unpopulated areas, especially in northern Brazil? Why did the government, the idle owner of

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<sup>2548</sup> Statements to the Press, Press Service release of December 1992. Twenty-eight days later, on December 29, 1992, Collor resigned from office to avoid the imminent impeachment proceedings in the House and Senate, and the Vice-President, Itamar Franco, was sworn in.

<sup>2549</sup> The government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso promoted this agrarian reform. The commission included priests (among them, the former canon and later monsignor José Luis M. Villac), representatives of trade unions, farmers and rural workers, and a federal congressman, Lael Varella. During this 30-minute interview, several farmers presented their points of view, arguing passionately against the proposed reforms. That was the first reaction of the farmers against the decree issued by President Fernando Henrique in his first 90 days in office, in which he ordered the expropriation of nearly 1 million hectares. On that occasion, they presented to the Minister 30,310 petitions signed by Brazilians indignant with the land reform being implemented in the country. TFP director, Dr. Plinio Vidigal Xavier da Silveira, was the Commission's spokesman (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 534, June 1995).

those uncultivated lands, seek to lay its greedy hands upon properties belonging to others?

#### **4. What Has Agrarian Reform Produced? Settlements Turned into Rural Slums**

During a hearing granted by the Minister of Agriculture, a TFP member, Dr. Paulo Henrique Chaves, respectfully told Mr. Andrade Vieira that he was “very concerned about the failure of the [land reform] settlements.”

The Minister admitted there were “some” failures.

Dr. Chaves added, “I have visited 10 or 12 settlements, and all those I’ve visited are total failures.” The Minister kept silent.

Given the situation, it would have been the government's duty to stop all expropriations, provide the necessary evidence that the agrarian reform was not turning rural settlements into slums, open a national debate on the subject, and continue its reforms if appropriate. Anything else would run counter democratic principles.

Therefore, we politely asked the government to publish any evidence so people could see for themselves. We invited the government to show that we were wrong. Let the Minister of Agrarian Reform publish the results of implementing agrarian reform. This is what we requested.

If such information remained unpublished, was unconvincing or useless for a meaningful debate, history would record that they implemented land reform without any proof that it had the desired effect.

In other words, the reform would have been imposed on the country and enforced by an unjust law. The inevitable conclusion would be that this reform had nothing to do with progress but merely represented the victory of demagogues who imposed their views on the government at the country's expense.<sup>2550</sup>

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<sup>2550</sup> “History Will Record,” *Informativo Rural*, June-July 1995.

## Chapter VI

# Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites In the Allocutions of Pius XII To the Roman Patriciate and Nobility (1993)

An Original and Profound Book on  
The Role of Elites According to Catholic Doctrine

### 1. An Idea that Took Fifty Years to Realize

I still vividly remember reading an article in the *Osservatore Romano* in 1944 about a speech Pius XII gave the Roman Nobility about its role in society.<sup>2551</sup>

Only people who had lived through that time could understand the heavy and evil silence surrounding this document's publication. As far as I know, I was the only one who commented on it in a newspaper, the *Legionário*.<sup>2552</sup>

At the time, I conceived the idea of writing a book about the nobility based on Pius XII's teachings, as I could see various ways in which it could help our cause.<sup>2553</sup>

That same year, I wrote the book's first draft.<sup>2554</sup>

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<sup>2551</sup> CSN 2/5/94.

<sup>2552</sup> Dispatch Nobility Book 1/18/93.

<sup>2553</sup> CSN 2/5/94.

<sup>2554</sup> SD 2/22/95. This series began with a commentary in *Legionário*'s "Seven Days in Review" Section (issue No. 598, January 23, 1944) and shortly thereafter continued with the article "The Holy Father's Allocution to the Roman Nobility" (*Legionário*, No. 601, February 13, 1944). Twelve years later, *Catholicismo* published the articles "A Hymn of Love Ascends to the Throne of the Immortal Pontiff" (No. 63, March 1956); "The Mission of Traditional Elites Today" (No. 64, April 1956); "The Importance of Traditional Elites in Solving Today's Crisis" (No. 65, May 1956).

Paradoxically, the world's situation was much better than today. However, my articles produced no reaction in that slightly more idyllic world.<sup>2555</sup> A sort of lead slab seemed to be placed on the subject.<sup>2556</sup>

As a result, I left this subject alone for decades. I did not forget about it but never saw an appropriate time to publish it. I was always aware there would be little or no reaction if I did.<sup>2557</sup>

After a long time, it occurred to me that since the mentality in various countries had changed and become more favorable to the monarchical ideal, the moment might have to publish these papal documents with more detailed comments, so I decided to write this book on the Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites.<sup>2558</sup>

What were the circumstances that brought about this change of mind? I need to go into some detail here to explain the book's scope.

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On a trip to Europe in 1988, I found it much more prosperous than when I had last seen it 30 or 40 years earlier.

In the 1950s, the continent had just started recovering from the Second World War. Those still fresh and raw wounds were inflicted on Europe's tired old body, which never had enough time to heal even the scars of the First World War properly.<sup>2559</sup>

That situation resulted from a series of historical events. What were they?

## **2. "I am a Monarchist Because I am Catholic, and Catholic Because I am a Monarchist"**

Europe was still profoundly marked by the Renaissance and rationalism during the last period before the French Revolution.

Since French society set the tone for the rest of Europe, this was true of society in all European countries.

At that time, society placed a lot of emphasis on wit. A spirit of frivolity reigned, jokes and bon mots were highly prized, and the conversation sparkled with intelligent, if frequently malicious, witticisms. However, all this brilliance was superficial lacking profound thinking, and serious matters were never mentioned. For example, military glory no longer excited admiration, nor did other genuinely important subjects.

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<sup>2555</sup> CSN 8/14/93.

<sup>2556</sup> Dispatch on Nobility Book (United States) 1/18/93.

<sup>2557</sup> Phone call 4/29/93.

<sup>2558</sup> Conversation 1/20/93.

<sup>2559</sup> CM 11/13/88.

The only kind of intellectuals this society tolerated were the Encyclopedists, rationalists whose reasoning was not solidly founded on reality so that, for the most part, they produced no more than brilliant illusions in the style of Rousseau.

Or you had a witty clown like Voltaire, a very reasoning and funny ‘mind fencer’ whose syllogisms never concluded with logic but mockery, crushing his opponents with things of this sort.

The general atmosphere was optimistic. Everyone was having a party!

However, all that neglected two fundamental needs of the human spirit. One was observing unvarnished reality as it is instead of a fictitious, bright and shiny but imaginary and unreal ‘reality.’

The other was the need to abandon this dryness of spirit and heart, which allowed for nothing but fun and intellectual games with scant connection to reality to make room for feelings, goodness and venting of human suffering, the first step toward alleviation. A well-designed culture must acknowledge and respect suffering, just as it acknowledges and respects the expression of other human feelings.

All this was suppressed and ignored in pre-revolutionary French culture. The result was that, while the French aristocratic society’s rarefied and decadent atmosphere increasingly absurd exaggerations, a particular impulsive reaction emerged among other parts of the nobility. Many years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, they withdrew from Paris society, returned to their castles and lands, and, in some cases, even restored Gothic buildings formerly despised and left to crumble.

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Everyone knows about the horrors that occurred when the French Revolution broke out in 1789. The world that emerged from this revolution reacted by attaching an exaggerated importance to all the aspects neglected in pre-revolutionary society.

Once denied and suppressed, human feelings were extolled to dominate reason; observation of reality no longer aimed at a dispassionate verification of things as they actually were but focused primarily on the horrible, the prosaic, the base and vulgar, as though the human spirit were seeking to exact revenge on the pre-revolutionary period’s bright looking-glass world.

This period saw the publication of many effusively sentimental novels with tragic plots. Operas and dramas featured characters who killed themselves, and many novels depicted suicide as the most beautiful and romantic outcome.

This produced Romanticism and a marked tendency toward all kinds of tragedy.

However, along with these exaggerations, a positive tendency appeared toward appreciating the Gothic, serious study, virtue, and historical research. Sociologists like Le Play, De Bonald, De Maistre, and many others presented reality as it was.

The French Revolution triggered a massive wave of counterrevolutionary opinion throughout Europe, expressed in movements like France's Restoration, Spain's Carlism, Austria's Andreas Hofer, and others.

That is when the idea that *I am a monarchist because I am Catholic and a Catholic because I am a monarchist* took root. People became aware of the profound link between the monarchical form of government and Catholic doctrine and the idea that the Altar and Throne were natural allies against the Revolution. This idea remained firmly established among the nobility, clergy, and people.

When Charles X was overthrown in France, legitimist French nobles migrated to the countryside and began to lead a castle life, partying and visiting each other, etc., but taking on a very marked note of austerity and great piety.

Men were conscientious lords of the manor; their wives were good chatelaines who relieved the poor as members of the Vincentian Conferences. They were good, very virtuous and honest people but did not feel they had a well-defined role. That was their position.

Unfortunately, these royalists were not sufficiently aware of the metaphysical aspect that supported their position. In contrast, the Republicans adopted their position for a metaphysical reason: they wanted egalitarianism.

### **3. The "Ralliement" Policy, a Dagger into the Heart of the Monarchist Catholic Position**

In this situation, Leo XIII's so-called "*ralliement*" policy seriously affected the cause of Catholic monarchists. The pope declared there was no reason for Catholics, as such, to prefer a monarchy over any other form of government and that Catholics were free to support either the monarchy or a republic.

As far as Catholic doctrine is concerned, it is true that a Catholic is free to favor a republican, aristocratic or monarchical form of government or any combination thereof. There is nothing objectionable in this statement from a Catholic point of view.

Unfortunately, when stating this principle, Pope Leo XIII left out the metaphysical question, or rather, the political issue hiding the metaphysical question: dislike of the monarchy, instigated by the proclamation of the principle of equality, an acute problem, especially in France. Leo XIII only considered the

legitimacy of the various forms of government in theory without delving into the roots of the underlying problem.

However, egalitarianism is an erroneous metaphysical position that assumes perfection consists of equality in all things. As such, it should be condemned.

By issuing this statement about the different forms of government without making this distinction, Leo XIII eventually led the French Catholic monarchists to abandon the metaphysical counterrevolutionary position.

For those people, that was a terrible stab in the back.

Many reacted by joining the Republic and began fighting on the side of the Republican parties.

Catholic aristocrats or conservative bourgeois royalists – of which there were many - lost their metaphysical reason to be monarchists and let themselves be absorbed by the modern world, accepting the Industrial Revolution and developing an uncritical enthusiasm for cars, trains, telegraphs, etc. Leo XIII's failure to emphasize the importance of the metaphysical reason for their position made them lose sight of it.

#### **4. Maurras-Daudet's Secularist Option, a Remedy Worse than the Disease**

When Leo XIII's *ralliement* policy caused so much devastation, Charles Maurras and Léon Daudet of the *Action française* movement, who claimed to be monarchists, declared that Leo XIII was right: religion had nothing to do with monarchism.

These two urged the French to demand a secular monarchy entirely unrelated to religion. In their opinion, religion should be admired only for its capacity to express French talent and genius.

With this, they convinced some people disappointed with the *ralliement* to leave behind not only Leo XIII but God Himself (Maurras was an avowed atheist), and so, they became warped monarchists.

That was the situation of the aristocracy, the *haute bourgeoisie* and all that was healthy in France on the eve of World War I, before the great debacle.

Then came the war, and everything collapsed.

#### **5. The Situation of Non-Secularist Monarchists**

What happened to non-secularist monarchists? They felt half-stunned. They kept the faith and continued frequenting the sacraments but became lukewarm in religious matters. They were upright, fulfilled their duties, went to confession, and received communion. They were monarchists without knowing why, Catholics without knowing why, and certainly did not understand the connection between religion and the monarchy.



As a result, these noblemen and bourgeois became a segment of the population scattered all over France and no longer formed a united social group. And when they started losing their fortunes, they also lost their representation and official status. Subsequently, World War II weakened their position even further.<sup>2560</sup>

#### 6. A Recently Rejuvenated Nobility Unaware of Its Mission in Society

Considering this whole picture, I was very doubtful whether Europe could restore its balance until, at some point, the European Union's architects decided that Europe should become wealthy again to enable them to carry out a predetermined international plan.<sup>2561</sup>

When money started coming in, Europe became rich, and some of that money benefitted noble families.

During my 1988 trip, I observed apartments and houses and how people presented themselves. Everything appeared new and well-appointed. Some ladies had conservative airs, were better dressed and appeared more self-confident. Far from following fashion, these people seemed to stand up straighter and looked healthier. It was a general revival.

Despite all this, I saw that many of these aristocrats had lost track of the true nature of nobility and its mission in society.

They knew what they were but believed to be no more than a remnant of the past. They did not think they were in any way necessary to ensure the functioning of the overall social order.

#### 7. Conversing with Spanish Noblemen

During my visit, I met some noblemen in Spain, to whom I explained our ideas about the nobility. They were very touched and fell from the clouds.

All that pseudo-heroic character and prestige the French Revolution associated with the *ralliement* has greatly lost its attraction. There are no more metaphysical Republicans enthusiastically defending egalitarianism as at Leo XIII's time.

These noblemen were left to choose between communism (which the Church condemned, but conciliar popes unfortunately tried to make a compromise through *ralliement*) and a past no one is fighting against anymore.

Almost no one speaks out against nobles, hates them, or argues about them. The situation of the 1950s, when Pius XII's allocution on nobility was met with indifference, had undergone a reversal.

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<sup>2560</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 8/6/89.

<sup>2561</sup> CM 11/13/88.

All this gave me hope that launching a book about the nobility might trigger a reaction and help restore a sense of purpose to these scattered elements.<sup>2562</sup>

## 8. Between One Battle and Another, Writing on the Role of Nobility

I began writing this book with great zeal.<sup>2563</sup> I never consulted articles in *Legionário* and *Catolicismo* for inspiration, but I wrote down what had been in my mind at that time, which, thank God, I still remembered.<sup>2564</sup>

I encountered understanding, warm support, and keen interest from the same people who had formerly shown no interest.<sup>2565</sup>

I wrote this book amid a thousand activities that gradually increased in proportion to the development, with the grace of God, of all TFPs and my growing, time-consuming relationship with them.<sup>2566</sup> Therefore, it was written by a soldier during the battle, using the drum as a writing desk.<sup>2567</sup>

It did not take me very long to write it. I started it in 1989, and a pilot edition was published in December 1991.

I resumed writing in February 1992, and the book *Nobility and Analogous Traditional Elites in the Allocutions of Pius XII to the Roman Patriciate and Nobility* finally saw the light of day in Portugal in April 1993.<sup>2568</sup>

Pius XII delivered fourteen necessary addresses during his pontificate, all of which called for countries with a tradition of nobility to preserve their respective aristocracies carefully.

He also emphasized the importance of ensuring that the new elites, who make extraordinary contributions to culture and industry, are given conditions to become authentic elites akin to the nobility for their moral and cultural achievements or leadership qualities.

They should form true elites who are able to produce persons of extraordinary abilities in various fields, following the example of the nobility.

The book analyses the conditions of the contemporary world in light of Pius XII's fourteen allocutions.<sup>2569</sup>

## 9. Responsiveness to the Subject, a Sign of Providence

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<sup>2562</sup> Meeting with older members of the movement 8/6/89.

<sup>2563</sup> Phone call 4/29/93.

<sup>2564</sup> SD 8/27/94.

<sup>2565</sup> Phone call 4/29/93.

<sup>2566</sup> Dispatch 2/7/92

<sup>2567</sup> Dispatch 2/3/93.

<sup>2568</sup> Interview with *Catolicismo* No. 511, July 1993.

<sup>2569</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit.

After finishing the book, I began to read it in the TFP auditorium with comments. It would be hard to describe to anyone not present at the time the ambiance of enthusiasm - I would even say grace - in which they received these comments.<sup>2570</sup>

The same reaction echoed in public opinion. Not since the French Revolution had the monarchical and aristocratic spirit been as welcomed as it was.

It had been a subject ignored and unsuitable topic for discussion, more likely to elicit expressions of hatred than any other reaction. Now, people were applauding. There was applause even among our enemies!

It was such a reversal of cause and effect that it seemed obvious to assume that the grace of God had a hand.

Curiously, this surge happened when the lamp was about to go out. At the last minute, the last spark, about to be extinguished, received a new lease of life and blazed up again into the sun!<sup>2571</sup>

After a long winter, a new spring of interest and enthusiasm for the subject was finally appearing.<sup>2572</sup> In the autumn of my life, Our Lady gave me the grace to publish the book I carried in the recesses of my mind, shelved and dusty in its original form, for about 40 years.

Therefore, behind that book was something glorious: Forty years of what one might call a prophetic wait.<sup>2573</sup>

## **10. Dispelling Prejudices against the Nobility**

The Book of Nobility, as we have come to call it, is not an abstract work that explains only what nobility is in theory.<sup>2574</sup>

It is an ideological battle tool<sup>2575</sup> that shoots straight at the contemporary world's point of solidarity with the Revolution.<sup>2576</sup>

Its primary aim is to undo lingering prejudices against the aristocracy in people's minds.

If these prejudices were not dispelled, anything about the aristocracy would likely be met with hostility and achieve no results.

Therefore, we needed to address the hostile to convince or at least make them respect our theses and understand they are based on very sound arguments.

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<sup>2570</sup> Phone call 4/29/93.

<sup>2571</sup> CSN 8/14/93.

<sup>2572</sup> Phone call 4/29/93.

<sup>2573</sup> SD 2/22/95.

<sup>2574</sup> SD 11/3/92.

<sup>2575</sup> Dispatch Nobility Book 8/14/92.

<sup>2576</sup> Dispatch Argentina 10/28/94.

Those people would thus begin to doubt their assumptions and ask, “After all, can those favorable to the nobility be right?”

So, the book was written to gain ground – a counter-revolutionary operation.<sup>2577</sup>

### 11. Justice Is Found in Christian Inequality

Another essential aspect was that, more than anything else, the Book of Nobility represented a counter-revolution in the Church.<sup>2578</sup>

The work does not attack every implementation of democracy but only revolutionary, egalitarian democracy, the infernal myth of absolute equality, anarchic freedom, and false brotherhood. It attacks this myth where it is most dangerous, precisely within the Church, and it does it with Pius XII’s documents—the best weapons available.<sup>2579</sup>

If everything the book says is true, what the Church says about the social problem begs for a supplement explaining the role of elites. By providing this supplement, the book presents an entirely new aspect of the Church’s face.<sup>2580</sup>

Therefore, as a Catholic, I would be obliged to acknowledge everything the book says about the nobility. If people understand the condition of the nobility in this way, there can no longer be a left wing in the Church because the Church will identify with the right.<sup>2581</sup>

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The words “right” and “left” emerged from nineteenth-century Europe’s political, social, and economic vocabulary. Leftism was ideological participation in the thought and work of something still new and clearly defined in general terms: the French Revolution. Being on the left side of the political spectrum meant brutally denying a seemingly dead tradition and affirming a future that one would call inevitable.

Faced with the Revolution seemingly advancing like an avalanche, the right managed to define its identity only gradually, in a groping and contradictory manner.

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<sup>2577</sup> SD 11/3/92.

<sup>2578</sup> Dispatch Nobility Book 1/23/92.

<sup>2579</sup> Dispatch Italy 6/18/94.

<sup>2580</sup> Dispatch Nobility Book 1/23/92.

<sup>2581</sup> Dispatch 1/11/90. One must discard the false idea that the political right is identical to its caricature, Nazi fascism. Pius XI condemned the errors of both doctrines: Fascism in the encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno*, and Nazism in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*. In his book, as in all that he wrote throughout his life, Dr. Plinio always adhered entirely to Catholic social doctrine. See his condemnation of the officially socialist nature of Fascism and Nazism’s official and extremely socialistic nature (cf. “The Cane and the Orange,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 5/24/70).

If the right defined itself as anti-leftist and anti-anarchist, what would it have to be like in the full rigor of logic?

At the very essence of anarchism is the claim that every inequality is unjust. Therefore, the less inequality there is, the less injustice there must be. Anarchists love freedom precisely because authority is in itself a denial of equality.

The right-wing position states that inequality is not unjust in itself. In a universe in which God created all beings unequal, including and especially men, injustice consists in imposing an order of things contrary to the order created by God, Who made it unequal for the highest and most profound reasons (cf. Mt 25, 14-30; 1 Cor 12: 28-31.; St. Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Book III, Chap. LXXVII).

Thus, justice is found in inequality.

Note that it does not follow from this fundamental truth that greater inequality automatically means greater justice. God did not create terrifying and monstrous inequalities, but inequalities proportionate to the nature, well-being and development of every being and the general order of the universe.

That is what Christian inequality means. It is not absolute inequality as the antithesis of absolute equality. I insist: It is harmonious inequality.<sup>2582</sup>

One could make similar considerations about freedom in the universe and society.

## 12. A Bombshell against the Catholic Left

In the book, I comment on Pius XII's allocutions, which constitute an attack on progressivism that introduced democratic republicanization within the Church.

Every progressive reform that appears has an effect on the Church similar to that achieved by republican revolutions in the temporal sphere. Such reforms always send the entire monarchical apparatus to a museum and institute a way of life without beauty, symbols or adornment.<sup>2583</sup>

In these unhappy times, in which the Holy Church of God is passing through such a profound crisis, we see many Catholics constantly condemning exaggerations of social inequalities.

Obviously, there may easily be injustice where there is an exaggeration. However, the question is whether or not social inequality is legitimate. The popes teach us, with plenty of arguments quoted in the book, that it is legitimate. The book's documentation completely debunks the quasi-communist

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<sup>2582</sup> "Justice Is Found in Christian Inequality," *Jornal da Tarde*, 6/9/79.

<sup>2583</sup> Dispatch Italy 6/18/94.

interpretation of the ‘preferential option for the poor.’

The main difference between temporal society as inspired and desired by the Revolution and temporal society as desired by Our Lady and based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church is equality and inequality. The Revolution is fundamentally egalitarian, and everything fundamentally egalitarian that denies the legitimacy of hierarchy in any area is revolutionary and inspired by Satan.

As far as I know, no one but us has published the papal texts in our book. I know no one else who has done it, let alone with commentary preempting any abusive interpretation of those texts.

Thus, the Book of Nobility could be called *acies ordinata*, i.e., *an army in battle array*. It is the army of anti-egalitarian, celestial thought taught by the Church through popes, doctors, saints, and countless moralists and theologians. They all teach the doctrine of harmonious and proportionate inequality, meaning that unequal classes must live in harmony and mutual collaboration. The rich exist to help the poor, and the poor exist to serve the rich. They need each other.<sup>2584</sup>

Warm letters of support from Cardinals Silvio Oddi, Luigi Ciappi, Alfons M. Stickler and Bernardino Echeverria, as well as from world-renowned theologians such as Fr. Raimondo Spiazzi OP, Fr. Victorino Rodríguez OP and Anastasio Gutiérrez CMF testify to this book contents’ full compliance with papal teaching.

### 13. Book Launchings, Letters of Support

The work’s first Portuguese edition was prepared in Portugal by *Editora Civilização* and published in April 1993. Translated into Spanish, it was published in Spain by *Editora Fernando III El Santo* for Spain and Spanish-American nations.

In the United States, the work was published by Hamilton Press and officially launched at the prestigious Mayflower Hotel in Washington in September 1993. It was endorsed by leading figures of American public life, including Archduchess Monica of Austria and the Duke of Maqueda and Grandee of Spain, before an audience of 850 guests.

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<sup>2584</sup> SD 2/22/95.

In France, published by *Albatros*, the book was widely accepted in many sectors of public opinion.<sup>2585</sup>

In Italy, the work was published by *Editore Marzorati* and presented at the Congress of European Nobility held in Milan in October 1993, as well as during a very well-attended event at the *Circolo della Stampa* at the Serbelloni Palace in the same city.

The Rome launching was held at Princess Elvina Pallavicini's historic palace in the presence of Alfons Cardinal Stickler, Most Rev. Cândido Alvim Pereira, Archbishop Emeritus of Lourenço Marques, Archduke Martin of Austria, and princes, princesses, and many other members of the highest Italian aristocracy.

At the various events, the work was analyzed in great detail and highly praised by multiple speakers during sessions following the official presentation.

The book's publication received significant attention from the Roman press.<sup>2586</sup>

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<sup>2585</sup> The book launch occurred at the Hotel Crillon, and the entire first edition sold out in one day. The French TFP subsequently launched its own edition.

<sup>2586</sup> Italian Radio-Television broadcast scenes of the event during the news broadcast on Sunday, October 31, as well as an interview with Prince Sforza Ruspoli, one of the featured speakers, who presented the work of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira during the Convention at the Pallavicini Palace, under a large red banner with the golden lion rampant marked with the cross and the motto Tradition, Family and Property.

*Il Tempo* of November 1 referred to the presentation of "the monograph ... authored by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, one of the great thinkers of the political rightwing."

*La Repubblica's* edition of the same day reported the event was "sponsored by Rome's Lepanto Cultural Center and by a movement whose name is more effective than a political slogan: Tradition, Family and Property." According to this newspaper, the presence of Curial Cardinal Alfons Stickler and a dozen priests, along with letters of endorsement by Cardinals Silvio Oddi and Luigi Ciappi, Paul VI's papal theologian, "reflect the great importance some parts of the Roman Curia are attaching to this event."

The newspaper *Il Secolo d'Italia* of November 2, 1993, published an outstanding article by Guglielmo Marconi in which he asked, "What roles can traditional elites play in the country's moral reconstruction? ... In the search for something new, much inspiration can come from tradition. A convention held these days at the Palazzo Pallavicini in Rome, on the initiative of the Lepanto Cultural Center and the TFP (Tradition, Family and Property), invites us to reconsider the role of the nobility and traditional elites in this effort of moral and civic reconstruction. The event was organized upon the publication by Marzorati, of a new book by Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira."

The newspaper *L'Unità*, the mouthpiece of the former Italian Communist Party, dedicated two articles in its November 3 issue to the book's presentation. One, signed by Enrico Vaime, was an angry comment on the importance Italian television has given the event. He said Roman aristocracy reappeared "with a program graced by countesses, against the background of a crimson banner: Tradition, Family and Property."

The other article, by Stefano Dimichele, highlighted Princess Pallavicini's statement that "the only salvation for today's society is a return to the true values." In reply to the journalist's question: "And what would these be, Princess?" she promptly answered: "Tradition, Family and Property, of course" (cf. *Catolicismo* No. 516, December 1993).

*Il Tempo* (October 31, 1993) even presented the event as “the Estates-General of the black aristocracy,” as Italians call the part of Roman Nobility that declared its solidarity with the Holy See by refusing to recognize the forcible annexation of the Papal States to Italy.<sup>2587</sup>

## Chapter VII

# The Summit of the Americas: Our Position Facing The Continent’s Leftward Slide (1994)

### 1. Governments in the Americas Soften up their Stance Regarding Castro’s Cuba

In 1994, I heard the so-called Summit of the Americas gathering all the continent’s heads of state would be held in Miami between December 9 and 11. Cuba would be the only country left out – deservedly so.<sup>2588</sup>

I noticed that because of the *rapprochement* between the Holy See and Cuba, several South American governments started changing their attitude toward Fidel Castro despite his brazen reaction to the fall of the Berlin Wall.<sup>2589</sup>

Under the title, “Fidel Calls Himself the Last Communist,” on October 31, 1989, *O Estado de S. Paulo* quoted excerpts from a speech by the dictator:

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<sup>2587</sup> *Philosophical Self-Portrait*, cit. This part of the Roman Nobility wore black as a sign of mourning from the time of the invasion of the Papal States by Garibaldi's troops on September 20, 1870, until the signing of the Lateran Treaty on February 11, 1929, giving rise to the Concordat between Italy and the Holy See, ratified on June 7 of that same year.

<sup>2588</sup> “The Americas on the Dawn of the Third Millennium: Convictions, Apprehensions, and Hopes of the Hemispheric TFPs” <http://www.tfp.org/ftp-home/statements/the-americas-on-the-dawn-of-the-third-millennium-convictions-apprehensions-and-hopes-of-the-hemispheric-tfps.html>

<sup>2589</sup> SD 12/30/94.



In his speech, the Cuban Stalin declared he was prepared to continue defending communist orthodoxy even if ‘no one else in the world is doing so anymore.’ He added, ‘We will never deny the honorable communist title.’ Later, he said, ‘Long live stiffness in defense of revolutionary principles; no flexibility at all.’ Not content with this, he went on: ‘They’re now saying there are two types of communists: the good and the bad. I say that we are among the bad because we are incorrigible . . . we will never regress to pre-history.’ He concluded: “We must remain . . . firm and entrenched in the ideas of communism, socialism.”<sup>2590</sup>

His was a blatant attempt at saving the communist parties in various countries of Europe, America and elsewhere from a real or seeming collapse.

He also continued the persecution in Cuba just as it was before the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Despite all this, the heads of state of South America and later those of North America began manifesting personal sympathy for Fidel Castro. They implied that he was old, had changed, and would die sooner or later, so they might as well treat him nicely because then the communist regime could not expand in Cuba freely.<sup>2591</sup>

They started presenting the embargo against the island as a nasty and discriminatory measure and claiming that it would be a friendly and generous gesture to lift it. Shaking the executioner’s hand and consolidating his position in power seemed to be the new definition of generosity.<sup>2592</sup>

Under the influence of such fantasies, foreign ministries of South American nations began including Fidel Castro in their invitations whenever there was an event where all American heads of state were supposed to participate.

On these occasions, Fidel Castro always showed up with great media fanfare. The non-communist heads of state—I would not dare call them anticommunists—treated him as though he were the first in importance among them.

All this created a situation in which non-communist governments (which had a friendly attitude toward communists – a veiled way of being pro-communist) sought a rapprochement with Cuba with Fidel Castro at its head in exchange for minor concessions such as permitting tourists from the United

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<sup>2590</sup> “Questioning the Left and the Extreme Left,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 1/3/90.

<sup>2591</sup> SD 12/30/94.

<sup>2592</sup> “A Prelate Brilliant for His Absence,” *Folha de S. Paulo*, 6/17/73.

States and other countries to vacation in Cuba and allowing Cubans to set up small shops, grocery stores, and eateries.

From a certain angle, Cuba seemed—in a somewhat ambiguous manner—to be evolving toward Westernization and distancing itself from communism to some degree.

With this, the possibility of getting rid of Fidel Castro, as happened with the leaders of the communist regime in Russia, was put off indefinitely, ultimately guaranteeing the perpetuation of a Cuban regime based on lies and deceit.

On the other hand, governments in North, Central and South America were careful not to rush into a complete reconciliation with Cuba because they were afraid of losing credibility in their own countries.

In short, the government of Cuba put on a show of liberalization because it was the way to obtain the goodwill of Western countries and receive subsidies, goods, financial aid and diplomatic advantages of various kinds, strengthening the communist government.

For their part, governments in the Americas wanted opposition to Cuba to decrease gradually and pretend they advanced slowly and cautiously toward complete reconciliation to avoid a rejection of this rapprochement in their respective countries.

An old Portuguese saying goes: “Show me your friends, and I will tell you who you are.” These governments risked being told, “Show me whom you favor, and we will tell you who you are.”

Miami’s Summit of the Americas was held in this situation.<sup>2593</sup>

## **2. The Need to Expose the Game and Try to Thwart the Maneuver**

I was convinced that this transformation of Cuban communism into a pseudo-capitalism would cause untold harm to the anticommunist reaction around the world and, therefore, to Western civilization.

What could the TFP do?

I took it for granted that wealthy Cubans living in the United States would eagerly return to Cuba as soon as the curtain of police terror that Fidel Castro spread between Miami and the Cuban territory disappeared.

Cuba would be filled with wealthy, consumerist Cubans who worked hard, made money, and wanted fair compensation for enjoying a regular and healthy life that would satisfy the cravings of a balanced person.

If they found the real Cuba in its unmasked, undisguised poverty and tragic reality, they would be outraged and ultimately help to expose the communist lie.

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<sup>2593</sup> SD 12/30/94.

However, if the bluff were well prepared and the undisputed masters of deception managed to erect another Potemkin village, the situation would be different. The left would once again succeed in selling the lie that communism was not so very bad after all.

Thus, we had to draw up a manifesto exposing the whole game, naturally adapted to the Summit's program.<sup>2594</sup>

### 3. The TFPs Present a "Statement on Continental Problems"

Against this general background, I outlined a manifesto for the continent's TFPs titled "The Americas on the Dawn of the Third Millennium: Convictions, Apprehensions, and Hopes of this Hemisphere's TFPs." I was published as a statement on hemispheric problems.<sup>2595</sup>

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This document was not intended to convince politicians but to be read and discussed by the public to raise awareness of how much politicians had distanced themselves from the true interests of the population.

It also invited the Miami Summit participants to adopt urgent political, economic and informational measures to ensure an immediate normalization of the Cuban people's situation.<sup>2596</sup>

### 4. Closing with a Hymn of Hope and Faith

We ended our manifesto thus:

"The TFPs of the Americas:

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<sup>2594</sup> RR 12/10/94.

<sup>2595</sup> This "statement on continental problems" was published on December 9, 1994, in Miami's *Diario de las Americas*, the *Washington Times*, *Folha de S. Paulo*; *El Mercurio* of Santiago, Chile; and *El Universal* of Caracas. It was signed by the then-presidents of the TFPs of the three Americas, namely in Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the United States, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The full text can be found in *Catolicismo* No. 528, December 1994.

The document dealt with more than the Cuban issue. It expressed concern over the cleverly orchestrated metamorphosis many leading far-left figures underwent after the fall of the Berlin Wall. None of them ever denied or repudiated their past or their egalitarian goals. They merely changed their labels and adopted new methods to achieve their ends, which sufficed for them to secure important political positions all over the continent. It also mentioned how these figures abused political power to promote a cultural revolution that anesthetized people's healthy reactions while imposing radical measures against the basic principles of Christian civilization.

Another subject addressed in the manifesto was the potential for destruction and socioeconomic chaos in Latin America represented by terrorist groups and guerrillas with international connections, such as the FARC in Colombia, the EPP (Paraguayan People's Army) in Paraguay, the Shining Path in Peru, and others.

The manifesto also deplored the incredible pressure some international organizations and social groups of various nations of the Americas exercised to promote abortion and birth control, the homosexual movement's demands, divorce, concubinage, euthanasia, measures to eliminate the family, and related concerns.

<sup>2596</sup> SD 12/30/94.

“Affirm their deep conviction that when men resolve to cooperate with the grace of God, marvels emerge from the course of history. This is the lesson bequeathed to us by pre-medieval and medieval Europe, which emerged from decadent Latin populations and hordes of barbarian invaders and successfully created a culture and civilization that, by any standards, reached unprecedented religious, cultural and economic heights.

“Proclaim their unshakeable conviction that, beyond the moral upheavals, material difficulties and pitfalls being prepared by the enemies of the Church and Christian civilization throughout the continent, the Americas will see Christendom rise again as Our Lady promised in 1917 at Fatima when she announced: Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph!”<sup>2597</sup>

On this note of certainty and hope, we close this account.

## Epilogue

I am convinced that when a soul called by God to a particular mission pronounces its last “yes,” it will generally have fulfilled its mission on the earth and be taken by the angels.

The work has been completed; all battles have been won. The hand on the divine clock marks the hour for that soul to be taken. Its job is done, and the soul is prepared and ready to go.

Slightly adapted, St. Paul’s famous words, “I have fought the good fight and ran the entire race; give me now, oh my God, the crown of your glory,” imply that the Apostle had completed his work of evangelization, renounced everything he should have, and all that was left to do was to lay his head on the scaffold and wait for the blow.

*“Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi. In reliquo reposita est mihi corona justitiae”* (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Having said that last amen, he was ready to enter the heavenly court.<sup>2598</sup>

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<sup>2597</sup> <http://www.tfp.org/ftp-home/statements/the-americas-on-the-dawn-of-the-third-millennium-convictions-apprehensions-and-hopes-of-the-hemispheric-tfps.html>

<sup>2598</sup> RR 2/24/74.

I am conscious of having fulfilled my duty by founding and directing my glorious and beloved TFP. I kiss the TFP standard that hangs in the Reign of Mary Hall. Such is the spiritual bond that unites me with every member of the Brazilian and other TFPs, and it is impossible to single out any of them to express my affection.<sup>2599</sup>

Our Lady has allowed our movement to be dragged through the depths of desolation and defeat over decades. She permitted us to pass through many humiliations and failures to make us understand that we would have been utterly powerless without her help.

However, when she decided to bestow a richer blessing upon this movement, it grew and spread against all odds. It began to attract souls and generate enthusiasm among the young, precisely those whom one might have least expected to be touched by our message and attain results far superior to anything we could have by our efforts.

Whenever someone produces results that far surpass anything he could have achieved on his own, it is a sure sign he has obtained God's help.

If God is on his side, who could defeat him? Is there anything more insurmountable than divine help when God decides to do something through Our Lady—who is as terrible as an army in battle array, which crushes all her adversaries as she advances?

No. Nothing could hold back the Counter-Revolution, which began here as a tiny mustard seed destined to grow into giant trees and occupy a vast area.

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True, the religious environments before us – which should be the firmest bulwark against the Revolution – are plunged into unprecedented chaos. We can apply to these religious environments the words of Scripture describing Our Lord during the Passion: from the top of His sacred head to the sole of His venerable feet, nothing is healthy, nothing is unscathed, nothing escapes from utter perplexity and disarray. In our age of atheist theologians, the most irreligious causes are advocated, maintained, proclaimed, and encouraged to spread in the name of religion.

On the other hand, we see the Western world's top leadership scandalously curry favor with the Revolution while barely disguising their desire to reconcile and merge principles of communism and self-managing socialism with the so-called values of Western civilization.

This terrible trend is compounded by the inertia of those who do not see and do not want to see, intent on focusing on their everyday concerns and

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<sup>2599</sup> "Spiritual Testament," 1/10/78, *Catholicismo* No. 550, October 1996.

indifferent to the survival of the fundamental principles of Christian civilization. To some extent, the docility of the crowds and masses enables those leaders to implement their designs.

Therefore, we are witnessing a supreme sin because it is a sin the elites of this world are committing in its name. Ours is not only a time of atheist theologians but also communist rulers, socialist aristocrats and bourgeois collaborationists. This supreme sin is being committed in this time of lies and hypocrisy.

This supreme sin demands supreme punishment, which inevitably means destruction. Of course, it will not destroy humanity, but it will be similar to and more significant than the fall of the Western Roman Empire. It will destroy nations, structures, cultures, and civilizations through a kind of tremendous earthquake in which we will see the hand of God's justice showing in the events that make up the fabric of history.

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However, it is also true that the forces driving the Revolution have never been weaker in their ability to drag people along. The masses have never been more indifferent to the Revolution's noise and agitation. The same boredom and indifference toward Christian civilization also affect the Revolution, creating an enormous intellectual and spiritual void in today's world.

This void is proof of the Revolution's inherent weakness. It is proof that the Revolution's claws no longer fully penetrate souls in the contemporary world, indicating a loss of strength like a harbinger of the Revolution's ultimate breakdown in the darkness and desolation of our current situation.

To our great joy and consolation, we also see how this emptiness favors the seeds Our Lady plants in people's souls. There are people everywhere suffering from this emptiness who heed our call.

A deep-seated, tenuous, weak and sleepy fidelity to religion—but an amazing fidelity nonetheless—has persisted worldwide.

Although much of their leadership has been dechristianized, today's nations still experience religious resistance no one could have expected.

God, whose all-penetrating justice leaves no minor offense without punishment, also considers even the humblest act of virtue.

He, whose mercy on sinners is infinite, will *a fortiori* show even greater mercy on those He still sees vestiges of virtue. Something in this world still seems worth saving in God's eyes. This is one reason we must believe a new dawn is coming after the great punishment we are headed to.

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We are facing an old, broken, spent world in which the pagan nations' rottenness and corruption have joined those of the neo-pagan nations. However, as in the wedding of Cana, this world is transforming at Our Lady's request.

A Grand Return<sup>2600</sup> is dawning in all souls touched by the fire Our Lady has ignited within this movement and perhaps in similar movements. It not only turns water into wine but the best wine history has ever seen. It becomes that Reign of Mary of the Apostles of the latter times, whose greatness St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort prophetically describes in his *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*.

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Indeed, this great conversion is the subject of a formal promise by Our Lady.

Before Russia became communist, she appeared at Fatima and spoke to the shepherd children, predicting that Russia would spread its errors throughout the world as punishment unless humanity repented and returned to God.

However, the Blessed Mother also promised, "Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph." Her triumph can only be splendid, as God has reserved all His splendors for Her.

All of this – so believable, natural and perfectly in tune with the rules of justice and wisdom with which God governs this world – will happen because Our Lady promised. Her promises are as absolutely reliable, unfailing and irreversible as she herself, to whom God has entrusted the government of Heaven and Earth along with the glory of Divine Maternity.

We do not know how the Counter-Revolution will triumph, but one thing we do know from our daily experience: Our Lady's unfailing help. This experience tells us that she is great, with us, all-powerful, and no one can stop her.

Sharing this great hope and certainty, we firmly believe the punishments announced in Fatima are as irreversible as the victory of the Counter-Revolution and the Reign of Mary, rendering glory to God in His justice and punishment and ushering Mary Most Holy's personal triumph, the most wonderful in history.<sup>2601</sup>

Finis Coronat Opus

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<sup>2600</sup> The Grand Return, often invoked by Professor Plinio (he liked to use the French term, *Grand Retour*), refers to the hope of a profound spiritual restoration, a conversion of mankind, after the dramatic and overwhelming events Our Lady predicted at Fatima. This term appeared in France in 1942, when pilgrimages were held with copies of the statue of Our Lady of Boulogne, which led to a general increase in religious fervor people referred to as the *Grand Retour*, France's return to Marian devotion.

<sup>2601</sup> SEFAC Closing Session, 1/29/67.

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JAS revision ended 9/28/2019;

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