

## The Catholic Elites in Brazil and Their Attitude Toward the Jews, 1933–1939\*

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The 1930s were a decade of sweeping political, social, and economic changes in Brazil. The revolution in 1930 propelled Getúlio Vargas to the presidency;<sup>1</sup> there was a distinct political polarization; the general persecution of Communists and the left turned into repression of the same in 1935; and Vargas established an authoritarian state, the Estado Novo (“New State”), in November 1937. All these events affected the attitude of the new political and intellectual elites<sup>2</sup> toward the Jewish issue and lent the nascent anti-Jewish climate an additional dimension.<sup>3</sup>

This climate was abetted by racist ideas that had been gestating in Brazil since the late nineteenth century and that had nestled in the consciousness of senior bureaucrats and decision-makers.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, a few Brazilian Fascists - members of the Integralist Party, an important movement - helped generate the climate of anti-Jewish hostility by creating the metaphor of the Jew who threatens Brazil and equating Jews with Communists.<sup>5</sup> These factors – and

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<sup>1</sup>Boris Fausto, *A revolução de 1930* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense S. A., 1995, first edition, 1970), pp. 92–114. In this book, one of the most important works on the reasons for the 1930 revolution, Fausto argues that the revolution marked the end of the ruling hegemony of the bourgeoisie at that time. The revolution, prompted by the need to reorganize the country’s economic structure, led to the formation of a regime that arranged compromises among classes and sectors. The military, with its various agencies, became the dominant factor in Brazil’s political development.

<sup>2</sup>Sérgio Miceli, *Intelectuais e classe dirigente no Brasil (1920–1945)* (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro: DIFEL, 1979), pp. 129–197.

<sup>3</sup>Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934–1938* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Lesser, *Brazil and the “Jewish Question,” Immigration, Diplomacy, and Prejudice* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: University Enterprises, 1998), pp. 63–98. See also Alcir Lenharo, *Sacralização da Política* (Campinhas: Papyrus, 1986), pp. 107–139. Lenharo discusses the prevalent racist beliefs and notes that the higher classes subscribed particularly to the idea of whitening the Brazilian race. He also notes the contribution of Catholic intellectuals who, after attaining positions in Vargas’s governing apparatus, created a “sanctification of politics” (*sacralização da política*).

<sup>5</sup> Hélió Trindade, *Integralismo, o fascismo brasileiro na década de 30* (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro: DIFEL, 1979). This is the most important book about the Brazilian Fascist movement, the Integralists (Acao Integralista Brasileira—AIB). The book also discusses the Integralists’ view of the Jewish question, with strong emphasis on the Catholic Integralist author Gustavo Barroso, the most important personality in Brazilian Fascism. Although a devout Catholic, Barroso was not organically related to the Church establishment.

not necessarily Nazi Germany's attempts to disseminate its ideology in Brazil<sup>6</sup> – are what led to the spread of the anti-Jewish mindset in this Latin American country.

Consequently, in the course of the 1930s, Brazil reduced its immigration quotas and explicitly ordered its consuls in Europe to deny entry visas to anyone of "Semitic origin." Several Brazilian consuls in Europe and government officials at home played a crucial role in thwarting Jewish immigration.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, others sympathized with the beleaguered Jews and spared no effort in order to help them. For example, Luis Martins de Souza Dantas, the Brazilian ambassador in France, based first in Paris and later in Vichy, continued to issue entry visas during 1940–1941 in demonstrative disregard of his superiors' explicit orders.<sup>8</sup>

One of the Brazilian envoys who actively and vigorously opposed the issue of entry visas to Jews was the consul in Berlin, Ciro de Freitas Vale. A fanatic antisemite, Freitas Vale was the scion of a Catholic family and a relative of Foreign Minister Osvaldo Aranha, himself a devout Catholic and the president's right-hand man. In an exchange of letters with the foreign minister, Freitas Vale vehemently urged the latter to bar the gates of Brazil to Jews because they were *personae non grata* and harmful to Brazil; he also warned that Jews might infiltrate the country despite all the legal barriers.<sup>9</sup>

Freitas Vale also sought an endorsement for his views from the Catholic Church. In his recurrent attempts to persuade the foreign minister that Brazil was at risk of Jewish infiltration despite all the orders that had been issued, he

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<sup>6</sup>Stanley Hilton, *Swástica sobre o Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Civilização Brasileira, 1977); Stanley Hilton, *Hitler's Secret War in South America, 1939–1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup>Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, *O Anti-Semitismo na Era Vargas* (São Paulo: Editorial Brasiliense, 1988), pp. 247–345.

<sup>8</sup>Favio Koifman, "Luis Martins de Souza Dantas, o embaixador brasileiro na França durante a 2a. Guerra Mundial e sua atuação na ajuda a judeus que fugiram do nazismo," *II Encontro Brasileiro de Estudos Judaicos*, 23–25 Novembro (Rio de Janeiro: Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 1999). See also Avraham Milgram, "The Jews of Europe from the Perspective of the Brazilian Foreign Service, 1933–1941," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 94–120.

<sup>9</sup>Carneiro, *O Anti-Semitismo*, pp. 247–345. Carneiro quotes documents that illuminate the pressure that the consul in Berlin, Ciro de Freitas Vale, brought to bear on Foreign Minister Osvaldo Aranha and claims that Aranha acted to prevent Jewish immigration. Jeffrey Lesser, in contrast, includes Aranha among those who facilitated Jewish immigration despite the legal restrictions. See Lesser, *Brazil and the "Jewish Question,"* pp. 19–39, 180; see also Appendix 6, p. 197.

even cited the high authority of Bishop Bragança of the São Paulo diocese. On January 26, 1940, the consul in Berlin wrote that, while serving as the secretary-general of the Foreign Ministry, he had heard Bishop Bragança make explicit anti-Jewish remarks at a breakfast that the president had held in honor of the bishops of Brazil. Bishop Bragança complained to Freitas Vale about the Foreign Ministry, alleging that: “When we allow Jews to enter Brazil, we harm the morals of the Brazilian family. . . . Fifty years from now, today’s decision-makers will be faulted for their imprudence.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus, in his concern for Brazil’s future and, among other reasons, as an argument to persuade Foreign Minister Aranha, Freitas Vale sought to invest his antisemitic views with Church legitimacy.

Was this the prevalent trend of thought among Brazilian bishops, and was it amenable to the Primate of Brazil, Sebastião Leme, or was this an aberration? This article attempts to determine the dominant attitude of the Catholic Church in Brazil toward the Jews and posits the question as to whether the Church leaders - Catholic priests, intellectuals, and journalists who had direct links with the Church establishment - influenced the intellectual and political climate in Brazil in the 1930s and the 1940s in this regard.

Many of Vargas’s senior ministers were Catholic. Primate Sebastião Leme and his close associates also had direct access to the president. This access was facilitated by two groups: the Church elite - the clergy and a group of Catholic activists who had close connections to the Church establishment and acted in its name vis-à-vis the authorities; and Catholic ministers who were close to both the president and the primate. The Church establishment in Brazil, like that in Argentina, sought to influence decision-makers on political and social issues of utmost concern to the Church, such as education, Catholic marriage, and relations of religion and state.<sup>11</sup> Did the Church try to

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<sup>10</sup> Letter from the consul in Berlin, Ciro de Freitas Vale to Brazilian Foreign Minister Osvaldo Aranha, January 26, 1940; see Berlin, Janury 26 1940, Carta a Sua Escelencia o Senhor Ministro Osvaldo Aranha, Palacio Itamaraty, Rio de Janeiro DF. Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty (AHI), 400105/1, OA, Reservado. I thank Favio Koifman for calling my attention to this document and helping me find it in the Brazilian Foreign Ministry archives in Rio de Janeiro. See also Carneiro, *O Antisemitismo*, pp. 533–534.

<sup>11</sup> José Oscar Beozzo, “A Igreja entre a Revolução de 1930, O Estado Novo e a Redemocratização,” in Boris Fausto, ed., *Historia Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, 11 (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1984), pp. 273–341; Roberto Romano, *Igreja contra Estado* (São Paulo: Kairos, 1979); see also Margaret Todaro, *Pastors, Priests and Politicians: A Study of the*

use its power, directly or indirectly, to extend its influence to the Jewish question as well?

The term “Church elites,” through which the Church establishment operated, is used here in the context sociologist Ivan Vallier has attributed to them in his analysis of the avenues of influence by the Catholic Church in Latin America. A “Church elite” is a group identified as an integral part of the Church and includes people who are able to exercise decisive influence over the internal processes of a given system and relations between this system and its surroundings. Thus, when we speak of a Church elite, we cannot, in Vallier’s opinion, merely examine the way the archbishops and bishops shaped public opinion; we must also examine Catholic clergymen and laypersons who acquired influence and power due to their ideological attitudes, personal characteristics, personal charisma, or key positions held.<sup>12</sup> According to Vallier, the Church establishment derived its power and influence - social control, social pressure, and general control - largely from the authorities’ need for legitimacy. This – again, according to Vallier – is what gave the Church elites in Latin America the strength to exert influence. Since most bishops in Brazil did not involve themselves in the Jewish question, one should then examine the attitude of the influential Church elites that did take up the issue, i.e., Catholic priests and activists who were organically related to the Church.

This article focuses on several influential individuals and elites who represented the institutional Church and acted at its initiative or with its approval. These include the archbishop of Porto Alegre, the Dom Vital Center and the journal *A Ordem*, the Franciscans in Rio de Janeiro and the journal *Vozes de Petropolis*, and several Catholic priests and activists who authored antisemitic books and articles and were related to the Church apparatus by virtue of their positions. The latter’s writings not only failed to receive the disapproval of this apparatus but were even recommended in mainstream Catholic publications in Brazil.

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*Brazilian Catholic Church, 1916–1945*, Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1971, pp. 454–486.

<sup>12</sup> Ivan Vallier, “Religious Elites: Differentiations and Developments in Roman Catholicism,” in Seymour M. Lipset and Aldo Solari, eds., *Elites in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 180–232.

At that time members of the Brazilian Catholic Action - the Church leaders' lay extension and a prominent organ of this leadership - were widely concerned that Brazilian youth would fail to distinguish between the forbidden and permissible contents of modern ideologies, from the Church's standpoint, and would be infected by them. Accordingly, in 1938 and early 1939, the Church repeatedly noted the ideologies that it forbade. Specifically, it explained that "modern errors," such as Protestantism, liberalism, and, especially, Communism,<sup>13</sup> paganism, and "exaggerated nationalism" were forbidden by the pope.<sup>14</sup>

These explanations must have been given at the behest of high authorities, since similar guidelines for Catholic youth, who were steadily being attracted ideologically and politically to nationalism and Fascism, were issued in Argentina at the same time.

The uncompromisingly anti-pluralistic and anti-modern approach, which the Church's own jargon termed "Integralism," dominated the thinking of the Catholic intelligentsia at the time and was manifested in the books and pastoral letters that Catholic priests and bishops in Brazil published against all these phenomena.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Church officials' attitude toward the Jews in Brazil was part of a general Catholic offensive in the 1930s and 1940s against everything non-Catholic.

Following is an analysis of the non-racial antisemitism that was unique to Brazil in comparison with antisemitism in other Latin American countries, especially Argentina.

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<sup>13</sup> Carta Pastoral do episcopado brasileiro, *O Comunismo Ateu, A Ordem*, 17 (18) (October 1937).

<sup>14</sup> Dom. Mario Villas-Boas, "As lições dos Nossos Mestres," *Ação Católica*, no. 4 (December 1938), pp.115–120; "Crónica estrangeira," *Ação Católica*, no.1 (January, 1939), pp. 29–32. It stands to reason that the flow of numerous Catholic activists—including youth, students, and junior clergy—to the Fascist settings of the Brazilian Integralist movement (the AIB) explains why all political parties, including the AIB, were deactivated after Vargas established his autocratic state in late 1937. This had an influence on the Church establishment, which wanted to continue maintaining sound relations with Vargas's authoritarian regime. For discussion of the allure of the Integralist movement for Catholics and the activity of Catholics in its ranks, see Todaro, *Pastors, Priests and Politicians*, pp. 346–424.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Leonel Franca, S. J., *Catholicismo e Protestantismo* (Rio de Janeiro: n.p., 1933). See also the condemnation of Protestantism, Spiritism, and Freemasonism in a joint pastoral letter of the bishops of Belo Horizonte, "Protestantismo e Espiritismo," "Maçonaria e Rótari Club," *Pastoral Coletiva do Espiscopado da Província Eclesiástica de Belo Horizonte*, December 25, 1941, pp. 7–14.

## The Brazilian Church Establishment's Attitude Toward the Jews, 1933–1945

The Jews of Brazil took note of Archbishop Leme's status as a key figure in the Brazilian Church and considered him a person to whom they could turn whenever trouble loomed. When the Jewish relief association Associação Beneficiente Israelita wished to prod the authorities to expedite the legalization of Jewish refugees who had entered Brazil, it contacted Archbishop Leme to enlist his support.<sup>16</sup>

Primary sources shed no light on Leme's attitude toward the Jews, since, in the 1930s, he seems to have written no official document on the subject, and the Brazilian bishops hardly dealt with the matter officially.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, in early 1939, when German Archbishop Michael Faulhaber met with Leme in Rome (on the occasion of the election of the new pope) and asked him to help "non-Aryan Catholics," Leme stressed his limitations in influencing the authorities and advised him to contact President Vargas directly. Later, too, Leme seems to have avoided getting involved in this issue.<sup>18</sup>

It stands to reason, however, that Leme knew about the existence of Socorro Católico aos refugiados, the Catholic Relief Committee for Refugees - an entity established in Brazil after similar committees were formed in other countries - even though evidence of his direct involvement in its establishment is difficult to find. The committee summarized its conclusions in a report written after the Evian Conference, on August 10, 1938. The report, addressed to the president of the state, describes the persecution and grave plight of Jews and Christians in Germany and Austria and notes that the Nazis admitted to persecuting Jews but did not acknowledge that they were subjecting Christians, too, to religious persecution. The report states that

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<sup>16</sup> Associação Beneficiente Israelita to Cardinal Leme, in *Sumaré*, November 19, 1938.

<sup>17</sup> Notably, the official pastoral letters of Archbishop Leme, the collective pastoral letters signed by all Brazilian bishops, and the individual pastoral letters of many Brazilian bishops made no perceptible reference to the Jewish issue between 1933 and 1945.

<sup>18</sup> See Avraham Milgram, *Os Judeus do Vaticano* (Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1994); John Morley, *Vatican Diplomacy and the Jews during the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav, 1980), pp. 18-22; and Lesser, *Brazil and the "Jewish Question,"* pp. 161-182. See also documents of the Vatican, Berning to Pius XII, 31 March 1939, in *Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre mondiale (ADSS)*, Pierre Blet, Robert B. Graham, Angelo Martini e Burkhart Schneider, eds. (Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, vol. VI, 1972), p. 67; Faulhaber to Pius XII, *ibid.*, pp. 62-65.

“neo-pagans who side with the anti-Christ are dominant” in Germany and Austria. A war is under way between “oppressed Christianity and raging Satanism.... All countries that uphold democratic principles are debating the refugee issue today. President Roosevelt was the first to propose the establishment of an international conference to rescue the refugees.”

At Evian, Brazil was represented by the diplomat Hélio Lobo, who, like the representatives of Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay, and other countries in Latin America, willingly accepted the proposal that organized action be taken to rescue refugees who wish to settle here permanently, so that they support themselves honorably after they receive their countries’ authorization.<sup>19</sup>

The committee contacted President Vargas and asked him to permit immigration. The report ended with a passionate call for

“a display of generosity toward the persecuted brethren. Brazil should set an example for other countries and should bear in mind the duty to maintain human solidarity with persons who are suffering despite having done no wrong.”

In view of the situation that had come about in Germany and Austria, the report concluded, “it does not matter that the persecutors will look at us askance due to our acts of loving kindness. What matters is to shelter the victims of Godless Nazism!”<sup>20</sup>

A committee of Catholic relief for refugees from Germany and Austria in Brazil could hardly have been organized without the primate’s approval. Although it is not clear whether the report was written with his knowledge or approval, we know that Leme regularly sent messages and explained his positions in

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<sup>19</sup> See report sent by the Catholic Relief Committee for Refugees from Germany and Austria: *Memorandum sobre a situação dos refugiados da Alemanha e Austria eo Socorro Católico aos Refugiados*, Arquivo Delegacia de Ordem Política e Social (DOPS), Rio de Janeiro, Seção Policial, August 10, 1938, I thank the historian Henrique Salem of Rio de Janeiro for helping me find this document in the archives of the Brazilian secret police. Importantly, the Bishop of Bragança was one of those interviewed by the Brazilian fascist (“Integralist”) newspaper *Ação* in São Paulo. The priests who were interviewed were usually supporters of this movement. See, for example, Bispo de Bragança, *Ação*, no. 29, November 10, 1936, pp.1, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. The term “Godless Nazism” was a new term, because in Catholic settings the adjective “Godless” was usually coupled with “Communism.”

indirect ways, also employing associates who did his bidding. One of these associates was the Archbishop of Porto Alegre, João Becker.<sup>21</sup>

Archbishop Becker's attitude toward Hitler and developments in Germany changed in the course of the 1930s. In 1935, Becker deemed Hitler one of the significant leaders of the century - "a leader who emerged not from the aristocratic elite but from the people," like other Fascist leaders. By inference, the revolution in Germany was "positive and constructive," and "Adolf Hitler is an outstanding leader."<sup>22</sup>

In late 1938, however, Becker changed his mind, possibly in response to the public reverberations from the overt and organized Nazi violence that began with *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. In Becker's pastoral letter of September 13, 1939, which dealt with the range of problems that perturbed the world - above all, the beginning of the war - Becker made reference to the Jewish issue. This was something of a novelty in both formal and ideological terms. Becker drew a connection between anti-racism and opposition to antisemitism and urged his readers to reject the widely expressed claim that "Jews are different from and inferior to other peoples." He also rejected the racial theory categorically. As he explained it, many people, "perhaps also for those who shout so much against them," believe in the existence of "Jewish blood." The Catholic world did not consider opposition to antisemitism an integral part of opposition to racism. Becker rejected the German racial ideology on pragmatic grounds as well: "They cannot destroy all the Jews, let alone the vast number of people who are naturally related to Jews." Therefore, without denying the widely known "fact" that there is a "Jewish problem" - in this sense, he reflected the rhetoric and cultural climate of the time - Becker

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<sup>21</sup> A collective pastoral letter that called for total obedience to Vargas's regime was published over the signatures of Archbishop Leme, Archbishop Becker, and the bishops of three additional large dioceses; see Todaro, *Pastors, Priests, and Politicians*, pp. 454–486.

<sup>22</sup> *Carta Pastoral do Arcebispo de Porto Alegre*, João Becker, September 1935, pp. 138, 149–150, 155–157. Archbishop Becker also seems to be one of the few who wrote on this matter. Becker, of German origin, had immigrated with his family when he was a child to Rio Granada Do Sol in southern Brazil. He embarked on a church career and, as the Archbishop of Porto Alegre and a close associate of President Vargas, he was an intimate associate of Primate Sebastião Leme.

thought the problem should be solved through “Christian justice and loving kindness.”<sup>23</sup>

Expressing the prevalent view in Christianity in the 1930s, Becker believed that the Jews had earned Gentile contumely for rejecting Jesus and abhorring the Christian faith. Nevertheless, he believed that people should continue adhering to an anti-racist creed, since loyalty and honesty, in his opinion, were not peculiar to specific peoples only. Becker stressed the unity of humankind and deemed immoral any philosophy that asserted the existence of superior and inferior races.

Although Becker, like the others, considered the “Jewish problem” a real one, he defended the people at issue. Christianity should protect Jews for reasons of logic, he argued; it would be “a true moral betrayal if Christianity does not come to the Jews’ defense. Even though the Jews betrayed Jesus, the Christians always prayed for and sought the redemption of this ‘rebellious people’.”<sup>24</sup>

It is doubtful that one could make such statements without the primate’s consent. Leme neither restrained Becker nor took exception to his remarks.

The fact that a bishop who held a central position in the Church empathized with the suffering Jewish people was exceptional - both in mentioning the matter and in expressing a sympathetic attitude - not only in the Brazilian Church establishment but also in Latin America at large. Furthermore, instead of limiting himself to a one-time statement, Becker continued throughout the war to depict racism as anti-Christian and to mention the suffering of the Jews under the Nazi heel.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> D. João Becker, Pastoral do Obispo de Porto Alegre, *A Religião e a Pátria em face das ideologias modernas* de D. João Becker, *Arcebispo Metropolitano de Porto Alegre, ao Rvmo. clero e a os diletos fieis de sa arquidiocese*, Porto Alegre, September 1939. Looking to praise fascist Italy, Becker ignored the fact that Mussolini had passed race laws in 1938.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, D. João Becker, *A Sagrada Eucaristia, Trigésima Segunda Carta Pastoral de João Becker, Arcebispo de Porto Alegre, ao Ecmo. clero e aos diletos fieis de sua Arquidiocese*, Porto Alegre, 1944, pp. 13–19, 47–54. See also João Becker, *Cristo e o mundo atual*, Porto Alegre, 1943, p. 127, and D. João Becker, *A Igreja catolica e a pacificação mundial, Trigésima Terceira Carta Pastoral de D. João Becker, Arcebispo Metropolitano de Porto Alegre*, Porto Alegre, 1945, pp. 64–72. This study examined many pastoral letters from Brazilian bishops in the archives of the Dominican and Salesian orders. However, some letters are missing because the collections are incomplete, and, therefore, further research is needed.

Notably, Becker's attitude toward the Jews could not have been inspired by his surroundings, by neighboring countries, or by anything the pope said. Apart from a few remarks by Pius XI against antisemitism, his planned encyclical against antisemitism, *Humani Generis Unitas*, remained unpublished when he died in February 1939, and Pius XII neither published the document nor made any public reference to the matter for reasons of his own.<sup>26</sup> However, due to his German origins, Becker was aware of the attitude of the German bishops and was aware of their conferences and statements. He knew that the Catholic Church in Germany was immersed in a struggle for its principles and rights. This struggle led to the publication of the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* on March 14, 1937,<sup>27</sup> in which the pope protested against the plight of the Catholic Church in Nazi Germany and expressed an overtly anti-racist stance. Becker was one of the clergymen who repeatedly mentioned in Brazil that the pope's ban on racism meant racism was contrary to the principles of Christianity. The mention of this missive was usually accompanied by mention of another papal letter issued several days later, on March 19, 1937 - *Divini Redemptoris* ("Against Godless Communism").<sup>28</sup>

In domestic policy, Becker supported Vargas's Estado Novo dictatorship unreservedly and described Vargas as the man who had saved Brazil from certain catastrophe. Becker published his pastoral letter after the war began, shortly before the first convention of all bishops in Brazil, which President Vargas attended as a guest. This conference showed that the relationship and

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<sup>26</sup> For the full text of Pius XI's unpublished draft encyclical, *Humani Generis Unitas*, see Georges Passelecq—Bernard Suchecky, *L'Encyclique cachée de Pie XI* (Paris: Editions la Decouverte, 1995), pp. 219–310.

<sup>27</sup> Concerning Becker's pastoral letter, see D. João Becker, *A Religião e a Pátria em face das ideologias modernas de D. João Becker, Arcebispo Metropolitano de Porto Alegre, ao Rvmo. clero e a os diletos fiéis de sa arquidiocese*, Porto Alegre, 1939, pp. 31-34. It is also of interest that, in September 1939, Becker construed Hitler's policy against the Jews as a wish to "destroy all the Jews." For discussion of the encyclical and the guidelines against "racism" that were given to Catholic seminaries on April 13, 1938, see Graciela Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church in Argentina and the Problems of the Jewish People During the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (Hebrew), Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1993, pp. 102–103; and Yves Congar, O. P., *The Catholic Church and the Race Question* (Paris: UNESCO, 1961, 1953), pp. 51–52.

<sup>28</sup> For discussion of *Divini Redemptoris*, see Graciela Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church and the Jews, Argentina, 1933–1945* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2000), pp. 139–141; Pio XI, *Divini Redemptoris* (Sobre o Comunismo Ateu) (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1965, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1937); and also *O Comunismo Ateu* (Carta pastoral e mandamento do episcopado brasileiro), *A Ordem* 17 (18), October 1937.

commitment between the two sides, the state and the Church, was continuing to grow.<sup>29</sup>

In the international arena, criticism of Nazi Germany became pointed after the war began, despite Brazil's neutralist posture. To emphasize the menace of Nazism, Becker likened it to Communism - the most odious comparison possible, since Communism was perceived as the absolute enemy of the Catholic Church and a threat to Christendom at large. In Becker's opinion, "By using violence, Nazism, like Communism and as in Russia and Mexico, is attempting to extirpate Christianity." The criticism of Nazism included both the ideological facet of racism, with which there could be no acquiescence, and the totalitarianism of the regime that did not allow the church to exist autonomously. In this regime, Becker argued, based on Hitler's doctrine that espoused totalitarianism not only in the political-party sense but also as "a totalitarian perception of life in national, social, and religious terms," there is no place for Catholics.

The Brazilian Church actually drew its inspiration from the German Church. However, Becker also stressed the possibility of a bridge between Christianity and Nazism on the basis of shared values - such as Nazism's aspiration to "unity, strength, greatness, and progress of the German people" - that did not clash with Catholic Christianity.<sup>30</sup> Notably, until early 1942, Brazil was of several minds about the attitude to take toward the war. As long as the Brazilian government was associated with the United States and stayed neutral, it was generally supported - even if some Brazilians preferred to rely on the Axis powers. The neutrality of the Brazilian government, on the one hand, and the pope's views, on the other hand, became the guiding policy of Church leaders in Brazil. As long as Brazil remained neutral, the Brazilian Church did not appear to be wracked with a dilemma on this account.

The public views of the pope reverberated strongly among Church leaders in Brazil, who quoted him very regularly. Becker was attentive to every word uttered by the Holy See and made sure to disseminate the papal remarks widely. After Germany invaded the West in 1940, he called attention to three

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<sup>29</sup> Becker, *Pastoral Letter*, 1939, pp. 31-34. For discussion of the strengthening of ideological and political relations between the Catholic Church and Vargas's regime, see Lenharo, *Sacralização da Política*, pp. 169-205.

<sup>30</sup> Becker, *ibid.*, pp. 112-116, 118-124.

cables sent by the pope to the leaders of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, in which he expressed his condolences. Becker stressed the pontiff's calls for peace, expressed his opposition to the invasion, and noted that "one nation's living space must not become a graveyard for other nations, in contravention of the rules of law and justice."<sup>31</sup>

After Germany invaded Poland, Western Europe, and subsequently the Soviet Union, the Catholic Church in Brazil evinced stronger disapproval of Nazi Germany. The Catholic laity, too, organized under the rubric of "Brazilian Catholic Action" (Ação Católica Brasileira - ACB) - an entity patterned after Catholic organizations that had been established in all countries by Pius XI in the 1920s and the 1930s as the lay arm of the church establishment - displayed concern for global peace in 1940. The ACB went out of its way to stress the importance of adopting the Vatican's policy and following the example of Pope Benedict XV, who had labored to effect a compromise among the rival sides in World War I.<sup>32</sup> In his pastoral letter of September 1941, the first issued after Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Becker mentioned various ethnic groups that had emigrated to Brazil and made an effort to relate to all of them equally, for the purpose of "Brazilianizing" the nonresidents and unifying and strengthening the country.<sup>33</sup>

Becker also explored the problem of Brazilian national identity from the perspective of a Church official: What did it mean to be a Brazilian? What is genuine patriotism? What is a homeland? Becker rejected any manifestation of "false patriotism" that "[stresses] homeland blindly but neglects the principle of Christian justice and loving kindness." From Becker's standpoint, "every perfect Christian is a perfect patriot," and all such people are Brazilians irrespective of their ethnic origin, since "the Constitution makes no mention of adjectives or ethnic quality such as Portuguese, Italian, Teutonic, African, Syrian, Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Jewish, etc."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> D. João Becker, *A decadência da civilização, causas, conseqüências e remédios, Vigésima nona Carta Pastoral de D. João Becker, Arcebispo metropolitano de Porto Alegre ao Revmo. Clero e aos diletos fieis de sua arquidiocese*, Porto Alegre, September 13, 1940, pp. 15–193.

<sup>32</sup> Bento XV o Papa da Paz, *Ação Católica*, no. 11 (November 1940), pp. 328–329.

<sup>33</sup> João Becker, *A situação mundial, Diretivas religiosas e sociais*, Trigesima Carta Pastoral, Porto Alegre, 1941, pp. 1–226.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

Becker was not the only archbishop who spoke widely on current affairs. The archbishop of Belo Horizonte also emphasized the need to combat the principal errors of the time, as manifested, in his opinion, mainly in “Protestantism, Spiritism, and Freemasonry.” He said nothing about the Jews. Evidently, the Jews in Brazil were not perceived as a menace to the Catholic faith, as were the other creeds and organizations noted.

Lack of religious pluralism was one of the hallmarks of the time. The root of evil, in this bishop’s opinion, was the ignorance that enveloped the Catholic faith, which he considered the true faith - an ignorance that caused people to stray toward dangerously erroneous religions and worldviews. The Church should promote profound hatred of sin and error and, concurrently, encourage love of sinners and errants by practicing Christian love.<sup>35</sup>

The São Paulo Archdiocese was also aware of the international situation; even before Brazil entered the war, it urged peace on the basis of Christian loving kindness. In 1940–1941, many bishops expressed their anguish about and empathy with the war victims. War-related issues preoccupied the bishops of Brazil and the Brazilian Catholic Action. However, in Brazil, as in Argentina, the bishops did not stress the Jewish issue in their writings and mentioned it explicitly in one case only (that of João Becker).<sup>36</sup>

In November 1941, the bishops of the São Paulo Archdiocese assembled to discuss various issues, including Germany’s invasion of other countries, the injustice wrought against small countries and the trampling of their rights, the killing of innocent people, and the rising violence. The bishops of São Paulo ruled at this assembly that no people has the right to destroy other peoples since all are equally entitled to life and liberty. As for the war in Europe, the bishops of São Paulo based their remarks on those of the pope and proposed a compromise - restoration of the international *status quo ante*.<sup>37</sup>

The Brazilian Catholic Action also emphasized the documents in which the Church condemned the Nazism’s attitude toward the Catholic Church in

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<sup>35</sup> See *Carta Pastoral da provincia eclesiástica de Belo Horizonte*, September 17-20, 1941.

<sup>36</sup> *Pastoral coletiva do Episcopado da provincia eclesiástica de São Paulo sobre a defesa da fe, da moral e da família*, São Paulo, 1940, pp. 14–16; *Pastoral coletiva do Episcopado da provincia eclesiástica de São Paulo sobre alguns erros contra a fé e a moral*, São Paulo 1941, pp.24-26; “Meditação sobre a guerra,” *Ação Católica*, no. 9 (September, 1941), p. 277.

<sup>37</sup> *Pastoral Colectiva do Episcopado da provincia eclesiástica de São Paulo sobre erros contra a fe e a moral*, São Paulo, 22 November 22, 1941, p. 25.

Germany, Nazi racism, and Communism.<sup>38</sup> To reinforce their argument, the bishops of Brazil placed special emphasis on Pius XI's 1937 encyclical and the pastoral letters of several bishops around the world.<sup>39</sup>

### The Priesthood and the Perception of Jews as a Threat to Brazil

The "Catholicism-Brazilianism" equation, an accepted coinage in the Brazilian Catholic priesthood since the 1920s, abetted the view of Jews as enemies of Christianity and, accordingly, *personae non grata* in Brazil. This approach was manifested in the 1930s and during World War II. A clergyman of stature in the Church, such as Agnelo Rossi, who, in the 1960s, became Archbishop of São Paulo, expressed the religion-homeland nexus in 1942, in the following words: "We will defend the Church forever and thus defend Brazil."<sup>40</sup>

At that time, Rossi was national secretary for the Defense of the Faith (Secretario Nacional de Defesa da Fé) and a professor at the central clerical seminary of Ipiranga, São Paulo State. As an executive in these important Church institutions, he was able to use the official journal of the Brazilian Church, *Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira* (REB), as a forum. In an article entitled "The Jewish Problem," Rossi praised Osorio Lopes, a well-known Catholic pundit, editor of the Catholic newspaper *A União* in Rio de Janeiro, and the author of a book entitled *O problema judaico* (The Jewish problem).<sup>41</sup>

Osorio Lopes had a forum of his own, the Franciscan journal *Vozes de Petropolis*. Whenever he discussed the Jews in eras preceding the advent of

<sup>38</sup> Dom Mario Villas-Boas, "As lições dos nossos mestres," *Ação Católica*, no. 4 (December 1938), pp.117–120; "A proposito de Racismo," *ibid.*, no.1 (January 1939), pp. 29-32; "Mais dos documentos," *ibid.*, no. 3-4 (March–April 1943), pp. 65–68. On the issue of Communism, see "Varias," *ibid.*, no.19 (October 1941), pp. 308–310; "Contra o comunismo ateu," *ibid.*, no. 5-6 (May-June 1943), pp.115–118; "O Brasil e o comunismo," *ibid.*, no. 6–7–8 (July–August–September 1945), pp. 237–241.

<sup>39</sup> "Pastoral do Arcebispo de Cincinnati, nos Estados Unidos da America do Norte, interpretando as palavras de Pio XI, sobre o comunismo e o nazismo," *Ação Católica*, no. 12 (December 1941), pp. 355–361; "Pastoral dos Bispos da Inglaterra e do pais de Gales," *ibid.*, no. 11 and 12 (November–December 1942), p. 305.

<sup>40</sup> Frei Agnelo Rossi, "Religião e Historia do Brasil," *Vozes* (November 1942), pp. 773–774, in Scott Mainwaring, *Igreja Católica e política no Brasil 1916–1985* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1989), p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> Pe. Agnelo Rossi, "O problema judaico," de Osório Lopes, *REB*, vol. 2, no. 2 (June 1942), pp. 289–295.

Jesus, he avoided an antisemitic tenor and elected to discuss the Jews' festivals - in this case, Purim and its significance in Judaism - topically.<sup>42</sup>

However, when Lopes dealt with the Jewish people after the advent of Jesus and their non-acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, his writings took an antisemitic turn. In his book *The Jewish Problem*, Lopes includes Brazilian Jewry in his discussion of the menace that the Jews present to the entire world. Considered an expert on the Jewish question, Lopes published articles on this issue in the most important Catholic journals in Brazil for more than a decade.

In Rossi's opinion, the Jewish problem was worsening with each passing day. Rossi considered the Jews as enemies not only in Europe but also in Brazil and thought one should acquaint oneself with them in the sense of "know thine enemy," i.e., to learn how to defend oneself from the woes the Jews might cause. The Church should react against the Jews with an intensity commensurate with "the penetration of their evil" in Brazil. Jewish organizations, Rossi claimed, were attempting to foment sympathetic public opinion in São Paulo by arranging lectures and parties for children, thereby attesting to the latent menace of Jewish cultural organizations. He was offended by the fact that children born in Brazil were being educated in Jewish schools; "[it] perpetuates a dangerous growth that has sunk roots in our homeland and our Catholic faith, especially where it pertains to future marriage between Jews and Catholics."<sup>43</sup>

Rossi warned Catholics not to adopt the philosemites' naïve view of the Jewish problem. The view at issue was manifested in a type of literature that in part defended the Jews, such as *Porque ser Anti-Semita?* ["Why Be an Antisemite?"], a book published in 1933. This book, which became rather famous in Brazil, included articles by a group of intellectuals - including democrats, liberals, and Catholics - that castigated antisemitism.<sup>44</sup>

Rossi lauded Lopes's book *The Jewish Problem*, mainly due to its effectiveness but also in identification with the author's worldview. Rossi considered it important because it gave the priests, who were too preoccupied

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<sup>42</sup> Osório Lopes, "Purim—dia de alegria," *ibid.*, *vd* XXXIV (April 1940), pp. 238–239.

<sup>43</sup> Rossi, "O problema judaico," p. 295.

<sup>44</sup> A. C. Pacheco e Silva et alli, *Porque ser Anti-Semita?* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, S. A., 1933).

with their work to delve into religious and intellectual issues, information on any aspect of any religious issue. Rossi encouraged Osorio Lopes to continue writing about the Jews' inroads in Brazil, in order to make it clear to his readers that the Jewish problem pertains not only to Europe. In conclusion, Rossi declared Osório Lopes's opus "the best book" ever written in Brazil on this topic.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1930s and the 1940s, several low-ranking Catholic priests in Brazil addressed themselves to the Jewish issue in their writings. One of the most conspicuous was Jose Cabral, an active member of the Brazilian Fascist movement, the Integralists, who published *A questão judaica* ("The Jewish Question"), a book on the Jewish issue, in 1937. The preface to the book was written by the author Gustavo Barroso, a standard-bearer of antisemitism in the Integralist movement and in Brazil at large. Thus the book received the intellectual recognition of a stalwart figure in this mass movement, a person with a formidable reputation, and the translator of the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* into Portuguese.<sup>46</sup>

The book adds nothing to the contents of the antisemitic literature of the time; instead, it repeats prejudices culled from the literature of modern antisemitism and, in the main, stresses the threat that the Jews present to Christian civilization in the modern world.

In Cabral's opinion, the very fact that there is a "Jewish nationality" proves that a "Jewish problem" exists as well. Cabral describes the Jews as a "people" and a "race" that has been denied autonomy and territory. Since the Jews exist in the manner of a state-within-a-state, a homeland-within-a-homeland, they attempt to seize the reins of government in their country of residence. The Jews, as an ethnic minority, he said, are an inexhaustible wellspring of

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<sup>45</sup> For the continuation of Agnelo Rossi's critique of Osório Lopes' book, see "O Problema Judaico," por Osório Lopes (Petropolis: Vozes, 1942); *REB*, vol. 2, no. 2 (June 1942), p. 295. Notably, since *REB* is the official journal of the Catholic Church, the publication of a recommendation for Osório Lopes's book had the effect of expressing the Church leaders' legitimization of his views.

<sup>46</sup> Jose Cabral, *A questão judaica* (Porto Alegre: Livraria Globo, 1937). The foreword was written by the most prominent antisemitic writer in the Integralist movement, the Brazilian Fascist movement. Barroso was also a devout Catholic, an author of antisemitic literature, and the translator into Portuguese of the world's most widely distributed antisemitic literature, such as *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. He attempted to explain why Catholics should join the Brazilian Fascist movement. For more on Barroso, see Todaro, *Pastors, Priests and Politicians*; Roney Cytrynowicz, *Integralismo e anti-Semitismo nos textos de Gustavo Barroso na década de 30*, M.A. thesis, São Paulo, 1992.

problems. Cabral also distinguished between unrestrained, vandalistic antisemitism manifested in pogroms, which is forbidden to Christians, and a different form of antisemitism that he considered legitimate: “Christian defense against Jewish infiltration and takeover, to the detriment of the public.” Christians may embrace this kind of antisemitism because it is a form of self-defense.<sup>47</sup>

Cabral derived his inspiration from the antisemitic author Leon de Poncins, whom all Brazilian antisemites quoted effusively; from Henry Ford’s book *The International Jew*; and from other antisemites - French, Portuguese, and Brazilian, foremost among them, Gustavo Barroso.<sup>48</sup> He also based himself on the writings of antisemitic Argentine Catholic priests such as Father Dionisio Napal, whose book, *El Imperio Soviético*, written in the late 1920s, became a prominent manual on anti-Communism and antisemitism for Argentine Catholics. Eventually, the finest antisemitic writers of the time returned to the “classic” model, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, again accusing the Jews of attempting to usurp all the world’s power centers, such as publishing and banking, not to mention Christian society at large.<sup>49</sup>

Cabral also integrated vociferous anti-Zionism into his antisemitic worldview. He argued that the Jews in Palestine faced many obstacles: the natural barrenness of the soil, the Arabs’ objections to handing over their land, and the opposition of the Christian world to the transfer of the holy places to “the offspring of the crucifiers of Jesus.” These many obstacles in Palestine, Cabral alleged, prompted many Jews to attempt to settle in other countries. Since these territorialists discovered that Brazil was an ideal country, he said, so many Jews were trying to reach its shores that they were creating a great menace. Cabral did not overlook the traditional religious arguments against

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<sup>47</sup> Cabral, *ibid.*, pp. 30–43.

<sup>48</sup> See Cabral, *ibid.*, pp. 46, 74, where he quotes Eca de Queiroz, *Cartas de Inglaterra*, pp. 72-73; Witold Koerski, “*Israel sem máscara*,” p. 12; Leon de Poncins, *As forças secretas da revolução*, p. 195; Ford, *O judeu intenacional*, p. 11; Jose Perez; *Questão judaica, questão social* (São Paulo: Empresa Gráfica de Revista dos Tribunaes, 1933), p. 61; Mario Saa, *A invasão dos judeus*, p. 90. In references to these books, the place and year of publication are seldom provided.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 77–86, 115–152. For discussion of Napal’s book, see Dionisio Napal, *O Império Soviético* (Buenos Aires, 1926). In 1934, when the book came out in its ninth printing in Spanish, its distribution climbed to 1,000 copies. Cabral bases himself on Alfonso Arinos de Melo Franco, *Preparação ao nacionalismo: Cartas aos que tem vinte anos* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1934), p. 46.

Judaism, accusing the Jews collectively of following in the footsteps of the Talmud and not of Jesus. In the main, however, he sketched a Jews = Communists equation and traced all revolutions to Jewish instigation. In his book, Cabral mimicked fashionable ideas widely held by antisemites at the time. To sum matters up, he stated that “the Jews are dominating the world and controlling the peoples’ fate by means of international capital, publishing, and Jewish organizations.”<sup>50</sup>

A few Catholic pundits who, although closely aligned with the Brazilian Fascist movement, categorically rejected racism on Christian grounds, stressed the identity of Communism and Judaism and did not repudiate the idea of applying a discriminatory policy toward the Jews in Brazil. In fact, they adopted a hybrid creed of anti-racism and Christian antisemitism. Cabral was not alone in this manner of thinking. The Catholic writer Anor Butler Maciel of Rio de Janeiro, an activist in the Integralist movement, also criticized Nazi racism in his 1937 book, on nationalism, the Jewish problem, and Nazism, but fit antisemitic segments into his arguments. Although he condemned National Socialism, Maciel included a foreword that he lifted from a racist article by Oliveira Vianna, “Race and Assimilation,” in addition to excerpts from other antisemitic authors, such as Gustavo Barroso, and quotations from the Catholic intellectual Alfonso Arinhos de Mello Franco, *Preparação ao nacionalismo* (“Preparing for Nationalism”). Judaism, in his opinion, was above all an “internationalist” creed, and Jews were especially dangerous because internationalism was tantamount to anti-patriotism. Maciel believed that all Jews - Marxists, millionaires, and workers - served internationalism in one fashion or another.<sup>51</sup> The concept of “internationalism,” to which the Judaism-Communism nexus traced its origins, also stressed the risk that wealthy Jews represented. Many antisemites fed from Mello Franco’s trough. As for the question of immigration to Brazil, the Catholic journalist Osorio Lopes expressed his disgust with Jewish immigration as far back as 1933. He stressed the difference between Jewish immigration to Palestine and

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<sup>50</sup> Cabral, *A questão judaica*, pp. 57–66.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid; Anor Butler Maciel, *Nacionalismo: O Problema Judaico no mundo e no Brasil: O Nacional-Socialismo* (Porto Alegre: Livraria do Globo, 1937); Oliveira Vianna, *Raça e assimilação* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1932); Alfonso Arinos de Mello Franco, *Preparação ao nacionalismo*. See Lesser, *Brazil and the “Jewish Question,”* p. 125.

immigration to other countries. Jews immigrated to Palestine to build their national home; accordingly, they engaged in agriculture and settlement. Since they had no such motive when they immigrated to Brazil, such immigration should be prohibited.<sup>52</sup>

### The Franciscan Order in Rio de Janeiro and the Journal *Vozes de Petrópolis*

Priests in the Catholic orders, too, expressed prejudice and antisemitic views. Examples of such priesthoods were the Franciscan order in Rio de Janeiro and Catholic pundits who wrote for the journal *Vozes de Petrópolis*. Their attitudes on the Jewish question were heterogeneous and sometimes polarized, ranging from radical antisemitism, which accommodated all well-known modern antisemitic stereotypes, to personal and original perspectives. When they discussed ancient civilizations - Egypt, China, Assyria - they also cited ancient Jewish civilization and the Hebrew language as indicators of a culture of historical and cultural value.<sup>53</sup>

Concurrently, conventional antisemitism was reflected blatantly in the literature of the time. The book review column of the Franciscan monthly journal regularly recommended the most antisemitic books that were widely known in Latin America in the 1930s, such as that of Henry Ford and the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. From their standpoint, Ford's personality and actions gave further evidence of the power of the Jewish capitalists who had demanded that Ford repudiate his book and threatened to harm his industrial interests. Even after Ford disassociated himself from the book, it remained on sale worldwide.<sup>54</sup>

Gustavo Barroso's Portuguese translation of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* also fanned the passions of the Franciscans, who considered it a contribution that would help Christians acquaint themselves with the

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<sup>52</sup> Osorio Lopes, "Imigração judaica," *A Ordem*, vol. X (July–December 1933), pp. 584–587.

<sup>53</sup> Maroquinha Jacobina Rabello, "Carta aberta as mocas da minha terra," *Vozes de Petrópolis*, vol. XXVII (June 1933), pp. 371-374.

<sup>54</sup> A. J. Rocha, "Henry Ford, O Judeu Internacional," *Porto Alegre*, Edição de Livraria do Globo, *Porto Alegre*, 1933; *ibid.*, vol. XXVII (September 1933), p. 639.

“indefatigable enemies of God” and the facts concerning the Jews’ character and behavior.<sup>55</sup>

The Franciscans placed special emphasis on the Jews-Communists equation and recommended the aforementioned antisemitic book of the Argentine Catholic priest Father Dionisio Napal. This book, “required reading” in Argentine Catholic circles, was also translated into Portuguese. It contains not only an acrid denunciation of the Soviet world and of Communism as an ideology and a system of government but also markedly antisemitic views. The Franciscans admittedly ruled out contempt for the Jewish people, because they believed that in the “End of Days,” after the Jews accept Christ, they are to be the vehicles of the Redemption. However, they claimed, the Jewish people has “a destructive obsession” that it “projects” on and aims against Christianity. Therefore, the response of Christianity in the Middle Ages was correct because it circumscribed the Jews’ turf and kept their negative essence from spreading without endorsing hatred and persecution of Jews.<sup>56</sup>

The Franciscans’ antisemitism was also reflected in their admiration of Father Jose Cabral’s books, including *The Jewish Question*, which was also based on Dionisio Napal, among other sources. The literary critic of *Vozes de Petropolis* considered this an important book, because it showed that “The Jewish people, ordained by the Old Testament to control the world spiritually, has become a crass and brutal master and tyrant over the non-Jewish peoples.”

To legitimize the book and magnify its importance, the critic noted that its introduction had been written by the famous author Gustavo Barroso.<sup>57</sup>

Although they embraced modern antisemitism, even the Franciscans condemned racial antisemitism and ridiculed Hitler and Nazism from the early 1930s on.<sup>58</sup> They redoubled their anti-Nazi rhetoric after *Kristallnacht* by censuring Nazi Germany for its policies. They noted that the murder of vom Rath had led to a wave of torchings of synagogues and Jewish schools and

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<sup>55</sup> “Os Protocolos dos Sabios do Sião,” *ibid.*, Ano XXX (November 1936), p. 774.

<sup>56</sup> “Christão e anti-Semita?,” *ibid.*, Ano XXX (February 1936), pp.119–120.

<sup>57</sup> José Cabral, *A Questão Judaica* (Porto Alegre: Ediciones do Globo, 1937), *Vozes de Petropolis*, vol. XXXII (July 1938), pp. 456–457.

<sup>58</sup> “A mancha amarella,” *ibid.*, vol. XXX (August 1936), p. 555.

that thousands of people were being persecuted.<sup>59</sup> The Catholic priesthood in Brazil was disgusted with the violence of the Nazi regime and sympathized with intellectuals who had fled from Germany and found asylum in the United States. Brazil identified with Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein, among other prominent thinkers and scientists who had been evicted from Germany by the persecutions, and condemned the Nazi policy on their account.<sup>60</sup>

In the matter of non-Catholic immigration to Brazil, however, the Franciscans were staunchly opposed from the 1930s on. They objected to the immigration of aliens who encountered assimilation difficulties on linguistic, racial, or religious grounds. They objected mainly to the immigration of Japanese, not only of Jews.<sup>61</sup>

One of the components of Catholic antisemitism at this time was anti-Zionism. Catholic spokesmen assailed the Jews in Palestine fiercely<sup>62</sup> and, generally speaking, expressed hostility toward the Zionist enterprise and toward Great Britain for its support of the Jews. From the Catholics' standpoint, Britain should revise its policy toward the Jews in Palestine and "abandon [the policy of] building up the Jewish population there as stated in the Balfour Declaration." For Catholics, "Zionism" became synonymous with "a craving for world dominion." The Franciscans argued that a race developing "imperialistic messianism" was at issue; hence its great danger. In their view, "Zionism represents the Jews' invisible empire on earth."<sup>63</sup>

Recommending a piece of literature as good or bad depended rather strongly on the author's origin. In his review of Leon Feuchtwenger's book about Josephus, the literary critic of the Franciscan journal noted that, since the author was evidently Jewish, he saw no reason to recommend the book.<sup>64</sup>

## Decision-Makers Opposed to Jewish Immigration

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<sup>59</sup> "Idéais e fatos," *ibid.*, Vol XXXII (December 1938), p. 826.

<sup>60</sup> "Einstein e Thomas Mann nos Estados Unidos," *ibid.*, vol. XXXIII (June 1939), p. 379; "A humildade de Einstein," *ibid.*, vol. XXXIV (February 1940).

<sup>61</sup> Antao de Mendonça, "Algumas idéias em torno da imigração," *ibid.*, vol. XXVIII (March 1934), pp. 168–172.

<sup>62</sup> Sylvia Prates, "Israel contra Ismael," *ibid.*, vol. XXXII (October 1938), pp. 625–627; "A questão da Palestina," *ibid.*, pp. 382–384.

<sup>63</sup> *Idem*, "Uma situação impossível," *Vozes de Petropolis*, vol. XXXIII (February 1939), pp. 96–98.

<sup>64</sup> A. J. R., "Lion Feuchtwanger, Flavius Josephus," *Vozes de Petropolis*, vol. XXVIII (October 1934), p. 694.

The attitude of Brazilian decision-makers toward Jewish immigration became hostile in the early years of the Nazi regime. The 1934 constitution reduced the immigration quotas, and, in the second half of the 1930s, Jewish immigration became a publicly-debated issue. Politicians, diplomats, journalists, and intellectuals questioned the value of this immigration. In the majority view, Jewish immigration was harmful and undesirable because Jews were not farmers, did not know how to work, and could not be bothered with difficult labor. Their arrival would exacerbate urban congestion and disrupt Brazilian lifestyles. An antisemitic campaign among the immigration institutions gathered momentum. Even if they tried to explain their opposition to Jewish immigration on socioeconomic grounds, plainly one of the main motives was the racist-antisemitic climate.

Most researchers who have probed the question of immigration in the 1930s and 1940s agree that the antisemitic climate during those years originated in a general racist mindset related to Brazil's policy of "whitening the race" for reasons of eugenics. This policy, conceived by the ruling class and the influential intelligentsia from the late nineteenth century onward, evolved into a racist consciousness against blacks and, afterward, against Asians as well. In the 1930s, the Jews were included among the "non-European" category - "not black" but at the same time "not white." When Jewish immigration gathered momentum, black immigration was seen as the error of the past, while Jewish immigration was seen as the menace of the present. Some argue that the motives also included the ruling classes' concern about loss of control, security, and political hegemony.<sup>65</sup>

São Paulo State barred Jewish immigrants as far back as January 1937. In local statistics, a new concept was introduced in the records of in-migrants and out-migrants in this state: "Israelitas." Until then, the immigration authorities' documents had distinguished only between "Catholic" and "non-Catholic."

On June 7, 1937, five months before President Vargas established the authoritarian "New State," the Foreign Ministry - with the president's approval - issued Secret Circular no. 1127, which forbade the consuls in Europe to grant

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<sup>65</sup> As for why a racist and antisemitic climate took shape in the 1930s, see Lesser, *Brazil and the "Jewish Question,"* pp. 19-39, 63-67; and Lenharo, *Sacralização da política,* pp. 107-128.

entry visas to persons of “Semitic origin.” Consequently, Jewish immigration plummeted by 75 percent the next year. Government officials routinely turned down entry visa applications from Jewish tourists, businesspeople, and artists, who were in no way *personae non grata* under law. Practically speaking, the circular stressed the government’s anti-Jewish attitude and overt preference of European and Catholic immigrants.<sup>66</sup>

Oliveira Vianna - one of the crafters of the immigration policy, who was minister of Education in 1939, and subsequently minister of Justice - published an article in *Revista de Imigração e Colonização*, the official journal of the immigration department of Vargas’s government, on “Semitic and Mongol immigrants and their anthropological nature.” Vianna drew a connection between all ethnic groups whose entry he and other senior bureaucrats and leading politicians opposed. The opponents included the Catholic intellectual and Minister of Justice Francisco Campos; Commissioner for Immigration Affairs (Conselho de Imigração e Colonização—CIC) João Carlos Muniz; and the commander of the federal police, Filinto Muller, to name only a few. These senior officials wished to limit the immigration of Jews, Arabs, Japanese, and people of Far Eastern origin generally on racist grounds and due to their preference of white and European immigrants. These views were manifested in government entities that feared large Jewish immigration on the grounds that it would foment an upturn in antisemitism.<sup>67</sup>

Some senior government officials felt differently. Foremost among them was Artur Hehl Neiva, who, in 1939, wrote “*Estudos sobre a Imigração Semita no Brasil*” (“Guidelines Concerning Semitic Immigration to Brazil”) and presented this document to the CIC. Hehl Neiva, like the others, was a credible representative of a Brazilian bureaucracy that wished to populate Brazil with white immigrants. For this very reason, however, he considered the Jews a useful element, that could generate additional economic activities, such as manufacturing and trade and, accordingly, should be welcomed in Brazil within the framework of immigration policy. He considered the secret directive to the ambassadors in June 1937, to thwart Jewish immigration, an antisemitic

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<sup>66</sup> Lesser, *Brazil and the “Jewish Question,”* pp. 107–109; see Appendix 6, p. 197.

<sup>67</sup> See Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, *Preconceito Racial* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1988), pp. 231–240. In regard to the “whitening of the race” policy, see Thomas Skidmore, *Preto no Branco* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1976), pp. 219–239.

manifestation that clashed with the provisions of the 1934 constitution. Furthermore, antisemitism, by discriminating among white people, was incongruent with the intention of stimulating white immigration.<sup>68</sup>

## What the Bishops Thought of Jewish Immigration

Few Brazilian bishops referred publicly to the question of Jewish immigration or to the Jewish issue generally. When they did speak out, they did not do so consistently. Several lauded Brazil's freedom of immigration, as enshrined in the nineteenth-century constitution, and a few openly preferred Catholic immigration. Archbishop Becker of Porto Alegre commended Brazil for its decision on November 15, 1889, when it proclaimed itself a republic, to open its gates to immigrants from Europe. Accordingly, in his opinion, an effort should be made to integrate the foreign elements.

Becker was intimately familiar with the situation in the concentrations of German immigrants, including their schools, organizations, maintenance of German culture and language, and failure to master Portuguese. In his September 1941 reckoning of the "international situation," he could not but relate to the issue of Germans in Brazil. The Germans, suspected of collaboration with the Third Reich, espionage, and endangerment of Brazilian neutrality, were the most closely monitored ethnic group of all.<sup>69</sup>

Becker, himself an immigrant, was able to relate to the issue of the immigrants and the need to integrate them as a condition for national unity. The criterion had always been affiliation with the Catholic faith, as opposed to ethnic or racial origin. This outlook eliminated any possibility of a dilemma of religion vs. state. It was consistent both with Becker's personal expectation of fully Brazilianizing the German immigrants and also with Catholic doctrine.

However, there was no consensus on this issue. Other bishops, for example, overtly preferred European and white immigration. The Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Mota, sided with the senior

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<sup>68</sup> See Avraham Milgram, "Artur Hehl Neiva e a questão da imigração judaica no Brasil," in Nachman Falbel, Avraham Milgram, Alberto Dines, eds., *Em Nome da Fé*, (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, S. A., 1999), pp. 145–156.

<sup>69</sup> Becker, *Pastoral Letter*, 1941. On the attempt to integrate the foreign concentrations, especially the Germans, see Silva Steinfus, *O Brasil de Getulio Vargas e a formação dos blocos: 1930–1942* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1985), pp. 8–86, 424.

bureaucracy and did not change his mind even after the war. “The Church is not racist,” he stressed; it took a favorable view toward the possibility of immigration. “The Church has no preferences, but I personally, as a Brazilian citizen, prefer European and Catholic immigrants. However, I repeat, the Church is not racist.”<sup>70</sup>

The Archbishop Vasconcelos Mota’s attitude was perceived as neither racist nor antisemitic but as legitimate concern for the maintenance of Brazil’s Catholic identity in view of the non-Catholic immigration, which would impair the religious homogeneity that was synonymous with Brazilian identity. Several leading clerics did adhere to such an approach until the end of the war, and it was expressed publicly in the journal of the Brazilian Catholic Action. It is not clear if this attitude was dominant among Brazilian Church leaders. Clearly, however, such views could ease the decision-makers’ difficulties and reinforce the policy of anti-Jewish restrictions by Brazilian government officials, many of whom were devout Catholics, who spared no effort to thwart Jewish immigration to Brazil before and during the war.

### The Nature of Antisemitism at the Dom Vital Center

The journal *A Ordem* was established in 1921, by the conservative Catholic intellectual Jackson de Figueiredo, who founded the Dom Vital Center a year later. The two institutions were among the most important manifestations of Catholic activity associated with Church leaders in the 1920s and 1930s. *A Ordem* expressed the views and the philosophical and political creed of the mainstream, and, in the 1920s, their founder used it and the center to disseminate his authoritarian political views. Jackson fought what he considered threats to Catholicism: Protestantism, Freemasonry, and the Jews, who, he believed, controlled international capitalism. Figueiredo gathered a following of intellectuals who favored Catholic reaction against liberalism. In addition to Figueiredo, Father Leonel Franca exercised considerable

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<sup>70</sup> “Uma entrevista do Arcebispo de São Paulo,” *Ação Católica*, nos. 5, 6 (May–June 1945), p. 152.

influence. Their books, published at that time, became mainstays for the generation of Catholics following the war.<sup>71</sup>

Another prominent member of Figueiredo's circle was Alceu Amoroso Lima, a well-known intellectual and literary critic who had studied at the Sorbonne in Paris. When Figueiredo died in 1928, Amoroso Lima took over the management of the center and the journal *A Ordem* and became a dominant figure in Brazilian Catholicism. Since the heads of the Brazilian Church immediately welcomed the appointment, Lima's views and journal must have been amenable to the Catholic establishment in Brazil, and especially to the person who headed the Church, the primate and archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Sebastião Leme.

The 1930s were the glory days of the Dom Vital Center, which established branches in all the important cities in Brazil. By 1937, it had twenty branches and had become the most important intellectual manifestation of Brazilian Catholicism. The spiritual and moral rationales for the transformation of Brazil overcame the materialistic ones and shaped Catholic thinking.<sup>72</sup> Amoroso Lima considered Catholicism an all-inclusive worldview and believed that his center could provide Brazil with straightforward leadership in accordance with his Catholic social outlook.<sup>73</sup> Amoroso Lima turned *A Ordem* into an organ for many Catholic intellectuals and journalists.<sup>74</sup>

In the 1930s, as Hitler's regime stepped up its persecution of Jews, several dominant types of antisemitic outlooks in Brazil were evident: (1) traditional religious antisemitism; (2) modern antisemitism and the Jews-Communists equation; (3) anti-racism coupled with antisemitism; and (4) anti-Zionism as an additional manifestation of antisemitism. Of course, disapproval of Jewish immigration, rarely expressed explicitly but an integral part of the implications of the general anti-Jewish attitude, should also be included here.

## Traditional Religious Antisemitism

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<sup>71</sup> See Trindade, *Integralismo, o fascismo brasileiro*, pp. 30–32. For the impact of Figueiredo's and Franca's books on their contemporaries, see Jackson de Figueiredo, *Pascal e a inquietação moderna*; Leonel Franca, *A Igreja, a reforma e a civilização*.

<sup>72</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Indicações Políticas* (Rio de Janeiro : Civilização Brasileira, 1936), p. 20.

<sup>73</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Política* (Rio de Janeiro, 1932).

<sup>74</sup> Todaro, *Pastors, Priests and Politicians*, p. 242.

*A Ordem* dealt sparingly with the theological aspect of the Jewish issue. Amoroso Lima, who co-opted antisemitic Catholic activists onto his journal, seldom addressed himself to the matter personally. The “Jewish issue” was the concern of a small coterie of Catholic activists who became expert spokesmen on the subject. The fact that they were given a forum in this respected journal, edited by one of the foremost intellectuals of the time - a Catholic Action stalwart and a close associate of the primate – made the antisemitic component an inseparable part of Amoroso Lima’s worldview, even if he personally maintained silence with regard to the Jews. In any event, he did not take exception to the antisemitic views expressed during those years. The antisemitic journalists who became authorities on the Jewish issue are important not because of the originality of their writings but because of the legitimacy they obtained from the Church. The most prominent of them were Osorio Lopes and Plinio Correa de Oliveira.

Osorio Lopes’s stressed his censure of the Jews’ “tendency to internationalism” - an anti-nationalist and therefore anti-patriotic predisposition - and defined the Jewish people as intrinsically migrant and homeless. The Jews’ “national home,” in his opinion, is not Palestine but “the whole world”; moreover, the Jew has biological and psychological markers, because “[he] is by nature an adventurer,” an individualist, and exotic.<sup>75</sup>

Osorio Lopes’ antisemitic disposition is blatantly visible in his references to the Inquisition. Basing himself on a Portuguese historian who defended the Inquisition and the Catholic kings, he described the “invasion of the Jews” as the root of all evil. He believed the Inquisition had “many defensible aspects” and backed his claims mainly by citing French antisemitic literature.<sup>76</sup> Plinio, too, attempted to defend the Church and the Inquisition and to prove that the Church had no direct influence on the latter.<sup>77</sup>

## Modern Antisemitism and the Judaism-Communism Equation

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<sup>75</sup> Osorio Lopes, “A fisionomia de um povo,” *A Ordem* (July–December 1931), pp. 49–51.

<sup>76</sup> Osório Lopes, “A Inquisição e os judeus” (I), *ibid.* (January–February 1930), pp. 12–16.

<sup>77</sup> Plinio Correa de Oliveira, “Os ‘Horrores’ da Inquisição,” *ibid.* (July–August 1930), pp. 83–84.

In the 1930s, the Catholic Church in Brazil developed a stereotyped view of Jews from the motifs of modern antisemitism combined with the Church's own pervasive anti-Communist creed. Anti-Communism was an inseparable part of the political climate during the tenure of Vargas, who stamped out all manifestations of opposition until 1945. The Brazilian Church easily identified with these trends in view of the anti-Communist outlook in Church doctrine that became increasingly staunch in the 1930s. Thus, this doctrine was part of Amoroso Lima's worldview. After religious education was included in the curriculum of public schools under the 1934 constitution, Amoroso Lima also warned against "the threat of Judaism," Freemasonry, Spiritism, Communism, and Protestantism.<sup>78</sup>

These views took root in the Church's struggle for religious and cultural hegemony in the education system<sup>79</sup> and in view of a national debate on education in which not only the Jews were opposed. These views should also be considered in the ideological context of the conservative, anti-liberal, and anti-Communist perceptions of the Catholic elites at that time. Anti-pluralism was the dominant attitude during this period, and most of the barbs were aimed at the Communists on the political plane and at the Protestants on the religious level.<sup>80</sup>

As for the Jews, the prevalent motives were a combination of traditional and modern-antisemitic rationales. In Plinio Correa de Oliveira's opinion, for example, the "Jewish problem" originates in the fact that the Jews are "the people who murdered God and for reason of Divine punishment have been dispersed around the world for the past two millennia. This is why the Jews are a migrant people who have not commingled with any race."

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<sup>78</sup> See Carneiro, *O Antisemitismo*, p. 111. Tucci Carneiro quotes from C. da Cunha, *Educação, Autoritarismo no Estado Novo* (São Paulo: Cortez, 1981), p. 94.

<sup>79</sup> Simon Schwartzman, et al., *Tempos de Capanema* (São Paulo: Editora Paz e Terra, 1984), pp. 141–252.

<sup>80</sup> The Church's stance on Communism received official endorsement after Pope Pius XI issued his encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* on March 19, 1937. Following the encyclical, the Church leaders in Brazil issued a pastoral letter entitled *Episcopado Nacional. Carta pastoral e mandamento do Episcopado sobre o Comunismo Ateo*, Rio de Janeiro, 1937. Anti-Communism became an urgent and very troubling issue in the eyes of the Brazilian Church; see, for example, Alceu Amoroso Lima, "A Igreja e o momento político," *A Ordem* (July 1935), pp. 9–13. As for Protestantism, see Leonel Franca, S. J., *Catolicismo e Protestantismo* (Rio de Janeiro: n.p., 1933), p. 268.

As he expressed it, the Jews are graced with exceptional intellectual traits and a “special commercial ability that has allowed them to amass vast wealth and, therefore, decisive influence on business affairs.”<sup>81</sup>

This outlook ties in directly with Corred de Oliveira’s attitude toward Communism. He went out of his way to note the Jewish origins of the intellectual progenitors of Communism, Marx and Trotsky, and the entire Soviet high leadership. To prove this, he quoted François Coty, a famous cosmetics manufacturer and millionaire, who, in his book *Contre le communisme*, described the Jews’ immense pro-Communist influence and activity in France. Since the Communists had been repressed after the 1930 revolution, Corred de Oliveira claimed, and were under constant surveillance by the security forces, they had forsworn violent activity. Now, he advised, the Catholics should give thought to the Jews, who were not under surveillance and were “the enemies of the social order and much more dangerous.”<sup>82</sup>

Corred de Oliveira quoted Coty’s remarks on the “hidden forces,” the way Communism was attempting to make inroads in France, and how Catholic France was coping with the menace. Coty maintained that Communism was backed by the French Freemasons, who had captured the important positions in France. Notwithstanding this, he stressed the all-embracing influence of the Jewish capitalists who stood behind Communism the world over. In de Oliveira’s opinion, the events in France should serve Brazil as a warning so that its struggle against these enemies might end in victory. “We have an integral Catholicism... and must struggle with all our might and more vigilantly than ever to safeguard the supremacy of the ideas and principles that make up our national identity.”<sup>83</sup>

Nevertheless, these intellectuals still adhered to the Catholic principle of behavior in accordance with canon law, which stipulates humane treatment of the Jews despite their systematic exclusion from government and all centers of power. Thus, Catholics should refrain, on the one hand, from “cruelty

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<sup>81</sup> Plinio Correa de Oliveira, “A Igreja e o judaísmo,” *A Ordem* (January 1931), p. 46.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 556–559; *idem*, “O verdadeiro perigo comunista,” *ibid.* (July–December 1933), p. 555.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 556–559.

toward the Jews, since that is repulsive,” and, on the other hand, from “carelessness toward them, which is also contemptible.”<sup>84</sup>

Hitler’s accession to power did not prompt the Catholic elite at the Dom Vital Center to rethink its antisemitic views, because these views were a direct outgrowth of those previously expressed during de Oliveira’s tenure. Even after 1933, *A Ordem* continued to serve the same antisemitic writers as a forum for the articulation of the same views and themes. Although their style of writing was scholarly and restrained, the contents and message were the same. The Judaism-Communism nexus remained a central message when the Jewish issue became a matter of headlines. “The true Communist menace in Brazil is the Semitic influence,” de Oliveira charged. Then he “clarified” - in the manner of many antisemites - that he personally was not an antisemite, since to be an antisemite is “not only erroneous but also offensive to the sanctity of God.” De Oliveira added, “The Talmudic faith abounds with hostility to Christians and Western civilization; persecution of Catholics is an overt requirement in the Jewish faith, and the obliteration of the Catholic faith is an ideal to strive for.”<sup>85</sup>

### Anti-Racism Alongside Antisemitism

In the Brazilian Catholic discourse of the early 1930s, the Jewish problem was a problem not of race but of religion. “If whites, blacks, or yellow Asiatics belonged to the Jewish faith, they, too, would persecute Christianity,” Catholics argued. The solution, in their opinion, was the traditional Christian one: forced conversion; the Jews were promised that “their Christianization would be gladly and enthusiastically received.”

The Catholic pundits in *A Ordem* drew a careful distinction between a “just persecution of the Jewish religion and the crude and anti-Catholic antisemitism that is prevalent in many European countries and often serves as a platform for hateful persecution of King David’s descendants.”<sup>86</sup>

As for racism, Catholic spokesmen expressed *ab initio* opposition yet allowed antisemitism to coexist with it, neither attitude ostensibly having any influence

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<sup>84</sup> Correa de Oliveira, “A Igreja,” *ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>85</sup> *Idem*, “O verdadeiro,” *ibid.*, p. 555.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 556–557.

on the other. They cited remarks by Catholic bishops in Köln, Germany, on March 5, 1931, that did not recognize a religion based on racism and disapproved of a national church, since Catholicism means “universalism.” Yet, they argued that

Jewish writers are attempting to besmirch Hitler’s good name and subject him to the contumely of the entire world. Thus, 500,000 Jews gather in the synagogues in Germany, conspire against Hitler, and listen to the secret, hidden, and prophetic voice of the rabbis.<sup>87</sup>

The Brazilian Church, keenly aware of what was happening in Germany, seemed at first to adhere to the German bishops’ views. Catholic intellectuals at the Dom Vital Center were among the first who, from 1933 on, expressed firmly and publicly their disgust with Nazi racism and their general disapproval of National Socialism. Several reasoned that “The events in Germany are the most radical negation of the basic principles of the doctrine of Jesus.” They regarded National Socialism as “a philosophical and religious deviation.”<sup>88</sup> They continued to express their criticism after Hitler breached Germany’s Concordat with the Vatican and repeatedly backed their arguments by citing Pope Pius XI’s March 1937 encyclical, “Mit Brennende Sorge,” concerning the plight of the Church in Germany and his objections to racism.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, Amoroso Lima drew painstaking distinctions among what he called “Christian nationalism,” “anti-nationalism,” “false nationalism,” and “true nationalism,” in an effort to prove that a nationalism based on the ideas of Germany’s leading racial theoretician, Alfred Rosenberg, was a brutal theory that elevated violence to a supreme value, in total, contradiction to Christianity.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Osório Lopes, “Judaísmo na Alemanha,” *ibid.* (May 1932), pp. 413–414. Lopes quotes an article by the Jesuit father J. F. Thorning in his book, *The German Bishops and Hitler*, but further details about the book are not cited.

<sup>88</sup> Luis Delgado, “Raça e assimilação,” *A Ordem* (July–December 1933), pp. 540–543. See also João Maria, Bispo de Linz, “Verdadeiro e o falso nacionalismo,” *ibid.*, pp. 549–610.

<sup>89</sup> Pedro E. de Melo, “A sombra da cruz gamada,” *ibid.* (July–December 1938), pp. 32–44. See also Antonio Osmar Gomes, “O idolo da raça,” *ibid.*, pp. 127–130; “Igreja Católica e racismo,” *ibid.*, pp. 291–292.

<sup>90</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, “O nacionalismo cristão,” *ibid.*, pp. 367–391.

The Brazilian Church's attitudes toward Hitler and Nazi Germany were not monolithic at first, but they changed gradually in accordance with the stance of the Vatican. After the March 1937 encyclical, the Brazilian churchmen became more critical. However, their staunch and principled anti-racism did not always affect their attitude toward the Jews, and traditional antisemitism remained part of the worldview of the Brazilian Church. Still, it was not a major concern among members of the *A Ordem* circle but more a part of an inclusive, anti-liberal, anti-Communist worldview in which abhorrence of Jews was integral.

Even on the verge of World War II, the stance of the Catholic elite around Amoroso Lima was characteristically ambivalent toward the Jews. Several writers continued to publish antisemitic articles. Until a month before the war began, fealty to Christian sources did not prevent the acceptance of prejudices that were rampant in modern antisemitism.

Xavier Marques, an important intellectual and a member of the Brazilian Academy, is a case in point. On the one hand, Marques accepted Jacques Maritain's belief that, according to Christian principles, a Christian must not hate the race that gave rise to Jesus and his mother, Mary, mother of God. On the other hand, he considered Judaism "a continual undermining of the other nations." In addition, "even if the Jewish people lacks a political base, it has money, which is the source for war." These remarks, beyond hinting that the Jews are at fault for the war on the horizon, indicate that the intellectuals who wrote for *A Ordem* seem to have accepted the message of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* verbatim, i.e., the notion of a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world. Moreover, Marques urged Brazilians to beware of the Jews because "there are placid peoples, such as the Brazilian people, and there are war-mongering peoples, who melted down their gold to manufacture "artillery and shells" and are seeking to reclaim that gold by "enslaving weak peoples."<sup>91</sup>

### Anti-Zionism as an Additional Manifestation of Antisemitism

Another manifestation of antisemitism among the well-known Catholic elites who spoke for the Church establishment was anti-Zionism. This attitude

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<sup>91</sup> Xavier Marques, "Nacionalismo e imperialismo," *ibid.* (July–December 1939), pp. 154–158.

contained not only information about events in Palestine but indications of modern antisemitic stereotypes. Osorio Lopes took up the Palestine question in the first half of 1930. In his article, “The Dream of Theodor Herzl,” Lopes expressed himself rather delicately but did not conceal his hostility toward the Jews. Instead of emphasizing the prevailing antisemitic stereotypes, he attempted to track down information and statistics about the Jews of Palestine and the essence of the Jewish-Arab conflict. From Osorio Lopes’s standpoint, Zionism was an unattainable utopia: “The Jews aspire to build an autonomous Jewish state. This is a legitimate aspiration, but it will never come to pass.” He presented statistics on Jewish education and additional data about developments in Palestine in various fields. He also described the proliferating agricultural colonies and noted that “people live happily there.”<sup>92</sup>

Lopes was concerned about Jewish immigration to Brazil, because Palestine, he believed, was too short of land to meet the Jews’ agricultural needs. Therefore, the problem began when it became necessary to find additional land for these farming colonies. After all, even in Herzl’s time, Jews asked themselves, “Palestine or Argentina?” Lopes presented a painstaking account of the extent of the ICA’s Jewish colonies worldwide.<sup>93</sup> In his opinion, however, the motivation to establish farming colonies in Palestine was different from the motivation for their formation elsewhere. Lopes derived his information and inspiration from the press and from Catholic literature published in France and Argentina. He described the effervescent life in Tel Aviv and noted appreciatively the large number of well-known intellectuals in various countries who had left everything behind and had settled in Palestine to build the Jewish state. His description of life in Jerusalem, however, brought his basic antisemitic attitude to the fore.

Only a few Jews live in Jerusalem, in the shade of oak and palm trees, and they are true parasites who do nothing for the city, which is built of old buildings on untended plots. They are egoists, they tend to drunkenness, and

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<sup>92</sup> Osório Lopes, “O sonho de Theodoro Herzl,” *ibid.* (May–June 1930), pp. 211–215.  
<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211–212.

they live on money that they receive from fellow Jews in America and Europe.<sup>94</sup>

Anti-Zionism as an additional manifestation of antisemitism also appeared among the Brazilian Catholic elites who were closely associated with Church leaders, both in *A Ordem* and in *Vozes de Petropolis*.<sup>95</sup>

## Brazil and Argentina - Similarities and Differences

Was the attitude of the Brazilian Church elites toward the Jews in those years typical of the attitude of Church establishments in other Latin American countries, particularly Argentina? Did the antisemitic policy in Brazil that developed at that time display unique characteristics?

Church establishment antisemitism in Brazil, as in Argentina, was not influenced by Nazi racism but derived its inspiration from other sources. Unlike Argentina, however, only a few personalities in the Brazilian Church - bishops, priests, and laypersons alike - dealt with the Jewish question. The Jewish issue was not one of the Church's main concerns in Brazil. There, in contrast to Argentina, antisemitic writings rarely appeared in print, and even when they did, they spoke in an ostensibly objective and, in most cases, a less violent tenor. In the main, however, these antisemitic writings were free of theological elements, because the Jewish issue had not become a major theme in Catholic philosophical thinking in Brazil and the Jew was not perceived as an anti-Christ and the cause of all the country's ills.

In Brazil, in contrast to Argentina, important and famous Catholic writers and priests did not contribute to the antisemitic outpouring, and this genre did not give rise to antisemitic thinkers, as had happened in Argentina, e.g., the clergymen Julio Meinvielle, Leonardo Castellani, and Virgilio Filippo, and the author Hugo Wast. The only exception was Gustavo Barroso, a fanatic antisemite, who was identified with the Brazilian Fascist movement, the Integralists, and did not gain legitimacy from the Church establishment.

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<sup>94</sup> Osório Lopes, "O sonho," *ibid.*, pp. 211–215.

<sup>95</sup> See Sylvia Prates, "Israel contra Ismael," *Vozes* (October 1938), pp. 625-627; Sylvia Prates, "A questão de Palestina," *ibid.* (July 1938), pp. 382–384.

Although antisemitic stereotypes were rife among the Brazilian Catholic elite in the 1930s and 1940s, the antisemitic message did not make serious inroads in Brazil and did not take root there as it did in Argentina. The Jewish problem in Brazil also lacked characteristics of violence. Although the shopworn stereotypes of the “international Jewish conspiracy” were emphasized, the existence of Brazilian Jewry was not opposed. This community did not become the focal point of the antisemitic public debate or, for that matter, the object of polemics of any kind.

Ultimately, the Church elites in Brazil fashioned an independent attitude toward the Jewish question. The Primate of Brazil, Sebastião Leme, did not interfere with them in this matter, neither to condemn the Jews’ attackers nor to disapprove of their sympathizers. Although the Brazilian Catholic Church was infected with antisemitic stereotypes, it apparently did not regard the Jews as its main enemy.

It is difficult to explain exactly why the antisemitic message penetrated one Catholic country more deeply than its neighbor. It seems to have been the dynamic that took shape in Brazil during those years, along with the dominant political reality in the country that created the special antisemitic outlook that prevailed among the clerical and governing elites.

\* The research upon which the article is based was made possible through the assistance of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

**Source: *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX, Jerusalem, 2002, pp. 229-270.**